**Jesus again predicts his being killed and rising again** 4/8/24dkm md

Read: Isaiah 53, Mark 9:30-50

Text: Mark 9:30-32

Psalms: 104:24-36, 41:4-13, 22:1-8, 118:15-22, 72old

It was the year AD 29 and Jesus was into what would be the last year of his ministry. He had become very popular because of his miraculous signs and because of his teaching. But, knowing he would soon be killed, he wanted to spend time teaching his twelve disciples. He took them way up to Tyre and Sidon. He came back to Galilee but then went away again, this time to Caesarea Philippi. On the way to this place, Peter confessed, ‘You are the Christ’, but his understanding of Messiah or Christ was in fact misunderstanding (8:29). Calling himself the Son of Man, Jesus explained that he must suffer at the hands of the religious leaders, be killed, and after three days rise again (8:31). This announcement was met with a rebuke from Peter. Suffering and death was not part of Peter’s understanding of what Messiah would do. Jesus had to rebuke Peter for his bold and undeserved rebuke.

Do you sometimes wonder how you, and people around, you would react if Jesus appeared in our midst? As I drove along the other day, I thought how Jesus would probably get about in a car, rather than on foot or on a donkey! And then I wondered if people would flock to hear him in a big stadium and be amazed at his mighty works and words. I suspect there would be a great deal of scepticism and even cursing, like Jesus received from the Pharisees back in AD29. What about people who call themselves Christians? Would we be listening carefully and taking in the words of Jesus, or would we be offering him advice and even correcting him as Peter did? There are many today who find what we read in the Bible so hard to accept that they want to change the Bible. They might be reluctant to do this, so just read parts that they like, parts like the Christmas story or the sermon on the mount.

**1. Truth advanced**

A week after Peter’s confession and being rebuked, Jesus took him, along with James and John, up the mountain where they saw Jesus transfigured, and heard the voice of God in the cloud. God told them to listen to his beloved Son. So, after coming down from the mountain and seeing Jesus heal a demon-possessed boy, Jesus told them a second time that he would be killed and rise again on the third day (9:30). Even while coming down from the mountain Jesus referred to the Son of Man rising from the dead (9:9). Would Peter and the others listen and believe him this time?

The essence of what Jesus said is the same in this second prediction, but there are some differences, some additional truth. He previously said he would suffer at the hands of the religious leaders, which was understandable given their hatred and threats towards Jesus. But to be ‘betrayed into the hands of these men’ was additional information (9:31). It was something that shook this group of twelve disciples. The idea that one of them would betray Jesus was unthinkable- but who else was in a position to betray him.

‘Into the hands of men’ means the religious leaders, the elders, chief priests and scribes referred to in his first prediction (8:31). ‘He came to his own but his own did not receive him’ says John referring to Jesus (John 1:11). How tragic when your own people turn against you. David’s son, Absalom, conspired against him and attempted to destroy him. Remember the words of Psalm 41.9: ‘Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me’. Sadly, many churches are destroyed not by violent persecution but by in-fighting of the members. James condemns the proud, and the wars and fights they bring to the fellowship (Ja 4:1).

The Jewish leaders would act against Jesus after he was betrayed or delivered into their hands by another Jew and indeed a disciple of Jesus. To be betrayed unto death does not point to a glorious death. To be betrayed by one close to you is a most heinous act. Jesus, the sinless Son of God, would experience one of the most sinful acts of man, that of betrayal, before being condemned to death.

**2. Truth feared**

The other difference in this second prediction is the change from necessity to certainty, from ‘must’ to ‘will’, from ‘must suffer…and be killed’ to, ‘will kill him’ (9:31 cf. 8:31). Jesus being killed would be no accident, nor would it be some lone assassin. Some had attempted to kill Jesus already, but his time had not yet come (Luke 4:29). What he was telling his disciples is that his time would come, it would come according to the sovereign plan of God. He, the Son of Man, would be betrayed and killed by men.

The disciples did not understand what Jesus was saying but were afraid to ask him (9:32). Maybe they remembered Jesus’ rebuke of Peter when he spoke up telling Jesus he was wrong. The disciples became downcast and sorrowful at such a suggestion- or what they now understood was a certainty (Mat 17:23). They had just been told to listen to Jesus but what he told them as they made their way back to Capernaum was not good news as far as they were concerned. We know that it is good news because Jesus was going to be ‘delivered up for our offences and raised for our justification’ (Rom 4:25).

Jesus would not change his message because they did not understand or because they did not like it. He will go on telling them because what he was telling them was true. He will go on telling them until his message changes them, changes their hearts. It was not until after his resurrection, and the coming of the Holy Spirit, that the disciples understood his words; their hearts were changed, and they understood the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ.

Jesus will go on to tell them a third time, and with even more horrific detail, before he ends up on the cross, and in the grave (10:33,34). On this third occasion he says he will be condemned to death and delivered to the Gentiles. The Gentiles were the Romans, and it was the Romans who executed condemned men by crucifixion; the Jews stoned people to death. Moreover, the Gentiles, as in Romans, were brutal towards men who were not citizens of Rome. There was no law to stop them from open mockery and brutality. And this is what Jesus would experience, as he says in this third prediction: ‘They will mock him, and scourge him, and spit on him, and kill him’ (10:34). This is exactly what happened to Jesus in the Praetorium at the hands of Roman soldiers (15:16-16-20).

We might think the idea of being raised from the dead on the third day would have given them a measure of hope, but they failed to grasp what Jesus was saying. They reluctantly accepted that he would be killed, but rising from the dead was more than they could grasp. Do you think you would have grasped this truth any better if you were there at the time? Do you really believe that Jesus rose from the dead on the third day? While Mark has, ‘He will rise the third day’, Matthew has, ‘HHe will be raised’ (Mat 17:23). We might ask how Jesus was raised and by whom. He was raised with a different but still recognizable body. Three of the disciples had just seen Jesus transfigured on the mountain, but in his resurrection, he was not yet clothed in dazzling white, with his face shining like the sun. He would of course, be taken up into heaven in this resurrection body.

‘He will rise on the third day’ suggests that Jesus will raise himself, and this is true. Jesus said of his life, ‘I have power to lay it down and power to take it up again’ (John 10:18). Matthew’s, ‘He will be raised on the third day’ suggests the agency of the Father, which is also true. ‘This Jesus whom God raised up’ (Acts 2:32, also Acts 10:40, Rom 4:24). It is also written that Jesus was vindicated in the Spirit (1Tim 3:16). The Triune God is a God of power, power to raise the dead, as seen in the resurrection of God the Son. Paul the apostle wanted to know more of Jesus and ‘the power of his resurrection’ (Phil 3:10). This power is way beyond any power in this fallen world or in the heavenly realms, apart from the Triune God. The disciples struggled to comprehend this power, and the apostle Paul wanted to know more of this power. What about you?

Do you believe that you will rise from the dead, on judgment day? If so, why are you living as if this world is all there is? Why are you more focused on your children getting a good job than you are in their salvation? Jesus said he is coming again on the clouds of heaven and ‘will send his angels to gather the elect from ... one end of heaven to the other’ (Mat 24:31). We do not know exactly who his elect are, but we do know we have a duty to teach the Bible to our children and pray for them, and to preach the gospel in all the world and pray for all men (1Tim 2:1).

What stopped the disciples from asking Jesus what he meant by rising on the third day? What stops us from asking questions? Is it fear, fear of hearing the truth? For many this is the case; they stop their ears whenever they hear the name ‘Jesus’. For others it is pride; they do not want to expose their ignorance. For the disciples it was understandable ignorance, but still they were embarrassed to ask. If we do not ask, we will not get an answer. Jesus said, ‘Ask and it will be given to you’ (Mat 7:7). When we refuse to ask, we are left in the dark. The disciples were overcome with sorrow (Mat 17:23). Jesus did not want them to be sorrowful; he wanted them to understand so that they could support him as he faced the cross.

Some people have no understanding of eternity, of the resurrection, or of heaven and hell, and they do not want to understand. They are ignorant, and proud of it. Ask them about life and all they can talk about is sport, cars, gadgets, or food. They prefer to remain in the dark about the eternal destiny of their soul. Others have questions but they are afraid to ask. Maybe they are afraid to show their ignorance. Let us never be like this.

We cannot imagine Jesus ever making anyone feel ashamed at asking him a sincere question. They were afraid because of their pride. Are you ready to ask questions about sin and salvation, and about Jesus, who is the way, the truth, and the life? How we rejoice when we see children and adults searching their Bibles, and asking more mature believers, ‘What does this mean?’