

Presbyterian Church of Henderson

Worship Service 10:00 AM

March 21, 2021

Gospel of Mark Series

Ringing of the Bell

Welcome and Announcements Pastor Eric Hoey

- Looking for greeters, ushers, and a counter for April. Please sign up in the back.
- THESE DAYS The new These Days devotional books are now available. Pick one up in the back of the sanctuary
- PALM SUNDAY Hosanna!! On Palm Sunday March 28th all children and youth are invited to meet in the fellowship hall at 9:45 am to get a palm branch. Together will be walk around the sanctuary at the beginning of service during a song as we celebrate Jesus and Palm Sunday.
- EASTER EGG HUNT As we prepare for the Children's Easter Egg Hunt we would appreciate any contributions of small candies and toys that can fit in a plastic egg. You can bring them to the church office or leave them in the kitchen in the collection box by Sunday, March 28th. Thank you to our "egg-ceptional" church family!
- LENTEN WORSHIP SERVICE This week's Henderson Area Ministerial Association Lenten Worship Service will be Wednesday, March 24th at 12:00 pm and will be hosted by St. Paul's Episcopal Church. The service can be viewed online at www.facebook.com/St.PaulsHenderson.
- HANDBELL CHOIR In preparation for the Easter season, the handbell choir will resume rehearsals on Thursday evenings at 6:30 pm in March. If you are interested in participating, please contact Kristin Jones at the church or at 812-867-1883.
- PW SPRING GATHERING The Presbyterian Women of West Kentucky will be having a Spring Gathering on April 15th from 9:30 am to noon via Zoom. The topic will be Kindness Is Contagious. For additional information or to register contact Chris Krueger at 270-519-6445 or ckruegerap@bellsouth.net. The deadline for registration is April 12th.
- Gospel of Mark Zoom Bible Study is on Wednesdays at 7 pm. Please join us on what it means to follow Jesus. ZOOM Meeting ID: 984 3627 7403, Passcode: 500727
- Christian Community Outreach The requested need for HCCO in March is bar soap. Please place items on the table in the Fellowship Hall

Organ Prelude Kristin Jones, Director of Music

*Call to Worship

Jesus said, "When I am lifted up, I will draw all people to myself."

Blessed be the God of our salvation who bears our burdens and forgives our sins.

*Hymn PH 469 "Morning has Broken"

1 Morning has broken
Like the first morning,
Blackbird has spoken
Like the first bird.
Praise for the singing!

Praise for the morning!
Praise for them, springing
Fresh from the Word!

2 Sweet the rain's new fall

Sunlit from Heaven,
Like the first dewfall
On the first grass.
Praise for the sweetness
Of the wet garden,
Sprung in completeness
Where his feet pass.

Mine is the morning,
Born of the one light
Eden saw play.
Praise with elation,
Praise every morning,
God's re-creation
Of the new day!

3 Mine is the sunlight,

***Call to Confession**

Let us pray for the cleansing of our hearts, confessing our sins to the One whose mercy is everlasting.

***Prayer of Confession** (unison)

Redeeming God, we confess that we have not loved you with our whole heart, and have not loved our neighbors as we ought; we have strayed from your commandments. Do not remember our sins, but forgive our iniquities, that we may fix our eyes on you and sin no more, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

***Assurance of Pardon**

Sisters and brothers, by the faith of Christ, your sins are forgiven. May you delight in the joy of your salvation.

***Gloria Patri (PH 579)**

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

***Passing the Peace**

Please turn and bow to someone out of respect and love— "The peace of Christ be with you"

Prayer for Illumination

Your Word, O God, has power to change our lives and to create a whole new world. As we meditate on your word this day, fill us with your Holy Spirit, that we may treasure your word with our whole hearts and fix our eyes on you. Amen.

First Reading Jeremiah 31:31-34

The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the LORD. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, "Know the LORD," for they shall all know me, from the

least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

Special Music Handbell Choir

Second Reading Mark 10:1-31

He left that place and went to the region of Judea and beyond the Jordan. And crowds again gathered around him; and, as was his custom, he again taught them.

Some Pharisees came, and to test him they asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?" He answered them, "What did Moses command you?" They said, "Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of dismissal and to divorce her." But Jesus said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart he wrote this commandment for you. But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female.' 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate."

Then in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter. He said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her; and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."

People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it." And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.

As he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: 'You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; You shall not defraud; Honor your father and mother.'" He said to him, "Teacher, I have kept all these since my youth." Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said, "You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." When he heard this, he was shocked and went away grieving, for he had many possessions.

Then Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!" And the disciples were perplexed at these words. But Jesus said to them again, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God." They were greatly astounded and said to one another, "Then who can be saved?" Jesus looked at them and said, "For mortals it is impossible, but not for God; for God all things are possible."

Peter began to say to him, "Look, we have left everything and followed you." Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields, for my sake and for the sake of the good news, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this age—houses, brothers and sisters, mothers and children, and fields with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first."

SERMON "The Paradoxical Teachings of Jesus"
Mark 10:1-52

- A paradox is a statement containing certain qualities that are contradictory or opposed to accepted standards.
- In this later half of the Gospel of Mark, the focus is on Jesus' teaching to prepare his disciples for his departure.
- I am not sure Jesus was intentionally teaching with a particular method;
- But in the following verses, we find five statements that are interesting paradoxes.
- Today we will be only looking at four of those statements
- I would imagine the paradoxical nature of Jesus' teaching was a memory aid to the discovery of truth of how the Kingdom of God is directly opposite of the cultural norms.
- Let's look at some of these paradoxes.

1. Two Shall Be One

1 He left that place and went to the region of Judea and beyond the Jordan. And crowds again gathered around him; and, as was his custom, he again taught them.

2 Some Pharisees came, and to test him they asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?" 3 He answered them, "What did Moses command you?" 4 They said, "Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of dismissal and to divorce her." 5 But Jesus said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart he wrote this commandment for you.

- Jesus leaves his homebase where Peter lived in Capernaum and begins his journey toward Jerusalem.
- Some of the Pharisees came to test Jesus about the topic of divorce.
- The subject of divorce was highly controversial in the Jewish community because of two differing views.
- One, had a strict view of divorce which was permitted only on the basis of adultery and one had a lenient view of divorce where the husband could divorce if he finds anything objectionable.
- According to Deuteronomy 24:1-4, a man could divorce his wife if he finds "something objectionable about her."
- Guess which view was the prevailing thought?
- The lenient view was very popular because it treated women be like property and dismissed on a whim.
- Jesus cuts to the chase to get to the heart of the matter by asking questions to get to God's intended will and purpose in marriage.
- With Jesus' question about Moses' command, he was able confront their flawed view of marriage.
- This is why Jesus says, "Because of your hardness of heart he wrote this commandment for you."
- They were the ones using this text as a loop hole to allow men to have full dominance and control to divorce whomever they wanted.
- Jesus sets the truth.

6 But from the beginning of creation, God made them male and female. 7 For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, 8 and the two

shall become one flesh. So they are no longer two, but one flesh. 9 Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate."

10 Then in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter. 11 He said to them, Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her; 12 and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."

- Jesus immediately turns to the beginning of creation as God's original plan for humanity.
- Jesus is simply teaching there is a permanence in marriage and to stop creating excuses for divorce!
- Larry Hurtado writes, "The effect of Jesus' position forbidding divorce was to reject the notion that the wife was the man's property and to insist upon recognition of the woman's right in marriage based upon the original creation pattern.
- Jesus is emphasizing that it is God who joins together husband and wife, and God intended marriage to be one of permanence.
- These verses are not the only Bible texts on divorce and remarriage.
- To cover this topic, one would need to look into all the other texts in Scripture to understand this topic which we are not covering today.
- All Mark is saying is that marriage is meant to be permanent compared to the the prevailing understanding of the religious leaders
- Two shall be one is a beautiful paradox of God's original plan for marriage to confront the culture that tries to defile this original plan.

2. Adults Shall Be as Children

People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. 14 But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. 15 Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it." 16 And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.

- This is the second time Mark brings up Jesus' encounter with children.
- People are bringing children to Jesus for a blessing.
- The disciples sternly spoke to the children trying to protect their master.
- In one of the few times Jesus had become angry, the text says he was indignant toward the disciples.
- WHY? Because these are the ones the disciples considered unimportant when it comes to following the Master.
- Jesus begins this paradox by announcing that the children were better kingdom examples than the adults.
- We like to tell children to behave like adults; Jesus tells adults to model themselves after children.
- Children are not to be excluded, because they characterize the required attitude of the true disciple.
- If you think about it, the child is entirely dependent upon the parent in the very nature of who they are.
- Total trust is at the center of a child's existence.
- So it must be for the disciple.
- This is why group after group have so far in Mark failed to enter into the kingdom.

- Everyone around Jesus has all brought their own agenda—religious leaders, his own family, the needs of the crowd.
- Only those helplessly needing to be healed, and occasionally the disciples, have that self-abandoning trust like that of a small child.
- We enter God’s kingdom by faith, like little children: helpless, unable to save ourselves, totally dependent on the mercy and grace of God.
- We also enjoy God’s kingdom by faith, believing that the father loves us and will care for our daily needs.

3. The First Shall Be the Last

As he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” 18 Jesus said to him, Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone.

- When we look at parallel gospel accounts, various authors offer a little more description of this man.
- Mark says he is a man of great wealth.
- Luke says he was a ruler and a man of great wealth
- Matthew adds that he was a young man
- When you combine all three descriptions, we come to the popular designation for him as the “Rich, young, ruler.”
- So this rich, young, ruler demonstrating his youthful, determined vigor “runs” and “kneels” before Jesus.
- He addresses Jesus as “Good Teacher and asks what he must do to get eternal life or life in the coming kingdom of God.”
- On the exterior the rich, young, ruler had everything the world could ever want.
- He had money, status, power: why would he even need to come to Jesus for anything?
- Because deep inside, his soul cried out for something else.
- He wanted to ask a holy man how he could be at the top of his spiritual game.
- Jesus responds, “Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone”
- What Jesus is doing here is challenging the man’s faulty perception of “good” as something measured only by human achievement.
- Human achievement was the rich, young, ruler’s whole life, and he had much to demonstrate for his success.
- But success was not enough to take away that unfulfilled feeling that caused this man to approach Jesus in the first place.
- See phrase “no-one is good except God alone”
- Some will look at this text and claim that Jesus is denying his divinity to be less than God.
- But when you think about it throughout the Gospel of Mark, Jesus is always downplaying his true identity.
- Does that mean he was not God? NO!
- Jesus ministry constantly downplayed his true identity—
 - Mark 1:25, “I know who you are the Holy One of God” “BE quiet” Jesus said sternly.
 - Mark 1:34 “he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was.”
 - Mark 3:12 he gave them strict orders not to tell who he was.
 - All the times he called himself the Son of Man rather than the Son of God

- After the Transfiguration, Jesus gave Peter, James, and John orders not to tell anyone what they have seen (until his resurrection).

19 You know the commandments: You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; You shall not defraud; Honor your father and mother.” 20 He said to him, Teacher, I have kept all these since my youth.”

*21 **Jesus, looking at him, loved him** and said, You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.” 22 When he heard this, he was shocked and went away grieving, for he had many possessions.*

- By the way, v. 22 is one of the saddest verses in the Bible.
- It is the only instance where someone who had a need came to Jesus and left without the need being filled.
- It is not because Jesus pushed the man away.
- With deep love and compassion for the man, Jesus invited him to do something contrary to the previous direction of his whole life.
- If the young man is to find the childlike way of following Jesus, then he must loosen his grip in the very thing that he trusted in the most, wealth.
- No matter how much we are loved by God, our choices will either call us to follow Jesus or turn from the call because it is too costly.
- Also note, the way to follow Jesus is not that he was calling everybody to become destitute, but Jesus is emphasizing that **nothing** must come between a person and their devotion to God.

23 Then Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, How hard it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!” 24 And the disciples were perplexed at these words. But Jesus said to them again, Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! 25 It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.”

- In verse 24, the disciples were perplexed at these words.
- In the understanding of the disciples, money in that day was a blessing of God.
- If a person lived righteously in the OT, God would bless through wealth and material possessions.
- Verse 25, uses a memorable Jewish proverb to depict the impossible: the largest animal in Palestine to go through the eye of a needle the smallest opening than for a rich man who trusts in his riches to enter God’s kingdom.
- Q: SO is Jesus condemning wealth?
- I think being rich in the New Testament means the greedy, dishonorable rich who takes advantage for the poor so that they can become rich.
- When Jesus asks rich young ruler to sell all that he has and give to the poor, Jesus was asking him to redistribute his wealth among those who lack the necessities of life because their portion has been taken from them.

26 They were greatly astounded and said to one another, Then who can be saved?” 27 Jesus looked at them and said, For mortals it is impossible, but not for God; for God all things are possible.”

- The disciples were asking, if it is impossible for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God then who can be saved?
- Jesus offsets their concern by declaring that salvation is impossible by humanity’s own efforts, but only through the grace of God.

28 Peter began to say to him, *Look, we have left everything and followed you.*" 29 Jesus said, *Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields, for my sake and for the sake of the good news, 30 who will not receive a hundredfold now in this age—houses, brothers and sisters, mothers and children, and fields with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life.*

- Peter claims that they have left everything to follow Jesus.
- In a sense, he is saying what reward do we get?
- Again, he is only thinking in material honors in God's kingdom.
- Jesus responds by acknowledging the disciple's allegiance to him and the gospel because it entailed a break with old ties—home, loved ones, or property.
- Jesus is also saying specifically to his disciples who made the break will receive a hundredfold new ties with fellow disciples.
- Notice the second list in v. 30 is missing "fathers" and added "persecutions" both now and in the age to come.
- God becomes their father of their new spiritual family.
- Persecutions were added by Mark for the reader to recall when Jesus said earlier, "If any wants to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me."

31 *But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first.*"

- Jesus is saying the following Jesus is
 - Not about control, or male dominance (marriage teaching)
 - Not about position or authority (children teaching)
 - Not about money or trying to earn eternal life (rich, young ruler teaching)
- BUT a humility that reverses everything our society teaches us to obtain.
- Rewards in God's kingdom are not based upon earthly standards like rank, priority, perks, duration of time served, personal merit, or sacrifice, but on commitment to Jesus and following him faithfully.

Offering

Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and takes on new life, it remains just a single grain. With grateful hearts, let us bring the fruit of our lives to God.

*Doxology

Praise God from whom all blessing flow.

Praise Him all creatures here below.

Praise him above the heavenly host.

Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost

*Prayer of Dedication

As the high priest Melchizedek blessed Abraham and offered his tithe of bread and wine at your holy altar, may our gifts be made perfect through Christ to glorify you and bless the world. Amen.

*Affirmation of Faith (Apostle's Creed)

Minister:

Brothers and Sisters in Christ, what do you believe?

All:

I BELIEVE in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into

hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

Prayers of the People

Create in us a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within us.

During the final days of his earthly life, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears, and in faithful obedience, he opened the way to eternal salvation. Let us open our hearts this day as we lift up our deepest needs and concerns to the One who is mighty to save.

We pray for all leaders and people, that by the power of your cross you would drive out all violence, domination, and injustice in our world as you draw us to your Christ.

We pray for our war-ravaged world, that you would teach us to walk together in your way of righteousness and peace.

We pray for the vocation of the church, that our prayers would bear the fruit of action as we hear the cries of pain and suffering of those in need.

We pray for the poor, the terrified, and the oppressed, and those who are too much alone, that they may find a home in you as we serve them in your name.

As your son anticipated his death on the cross in light of your steadfast love, may all who have died or who are dying be at rest in your eternal care. Through Christ, with Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, we glorify you, almighty God, with unending thanks and praise, and now, with confidence as children of God, let us pray:

Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory forever.
Amen.

***Hymn** PH 97 "Go to Dark Gethsemane"

1 Go to dark Gethsemane,
All that feel the tempter's power;
Your Redeemer's conflict see,
Watch with Him one bitter hour;
Turn not from His griefs away,
Learn from Jesus Christ to pray.

2 Follow to the judgment hall;
View the Lord of Life arraigned;
O the wormwood and the gall!

O the pangs His soul sustained!
Shun not suffering, shame, or loss;
Learn from Christ to bear the cross.

3 Calvary's mournful mountain climb;
There, adoring at His feet,
Mark the miracle of time,
God's own sacrifice complete;
"It is finished!" hear Him cry;
Learn from Jesus Christ to die.

4 Early hasten to the tomb
Where they laid His breathless clay:
All is solitude and gloom.

Who has taken Him away?
Christ is risen! He meets our eyes.
Savior, teach us so to rise.

***Benediction**

The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace both now and evermore.

***Organ Postlude** (please be seated for the postlude)