

Presbyterian Church of Henderson

Worship Service 10:00 AM

March 7, 2021 - Third Sunday in Lent

Gospel of Mark Series

Ringing of the Bell

Welcome and Announcements Pastor Eric Hoey

Organ Prelude Kristin Jones, Director of Music

*Call to Worship

The message of the cross sounds foolish to the world;

But to us it is the power of God!

We proclaim the scandal of Christ crucified.

The foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than our strength.

Let us worship the Lord!

*Hymn PH 517 "We Come as Guests invited"

1 We come as guests invited
When Jesus bids us dine,
His friends on earth united
To share the bread and wine;
The bread of life is broken,
The wine is freely poured
For us, in solemn token
Of Christ our dying Lord.

With wonder and thanksgiving
For love that knows no end,
We find in Jesus living
Our ever-present Friend.

2 We eat and drink, receiving
From Christ the grace we need,
And in our hearts believing
On Him by faith we feed;

3 One bread is ours for sharing,
One single fruitful vine,
Our fellowship declaring
Renewed in bread and wine:
Renewed, sustained, and given
By token, sign, and word,
The pledge and seal of heaven,
The love of Christ our Lord.

*Call to Confession

Despite all that God has taught us, we still act foolishly; we are still weak. In the cross of Christ, we find forgiveness and grace. We confess our sins, trusting in God's wisdom and strength rather than our own.

*Prayer of Confession (unison)

Merciful God, how fickle we are; we sin against you without even knowing it. Clear us, we pray, of any unknown sin, and save us from willfully ignoring your way. Let your commandments rule and guide us. Forgive us for worshiping anyone or anything except you ; keep us faithful. Forgive us for failing to honor all our relationships—with those closest to us and those who are distant neighbors. Help us to speak words of blessing and kindness, rather than words that belittle or destroy. Turn us away from violence, falsehood, and selfishness. Forgive us for thinking everything depends on

our efforts and power, for you are the God who made us, led us out slavery, and has brought us into the community of faith. Help us to depend on you alone and to rest in your peace. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

***Assurance of Pardon**

Brothers and sisters, in Jesus Christ, crucified, risen, and coming again, we are forgiven and set free to live in faithfulness with God and with one another! Thanks be to God!

***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

God of Glory, we cannot hear the heavens proclaim your handiwork, though the speech of the skies must be magnificent. We cannot hear what day and night are singing about you, though their song must be both bright and deep. Yet, somehow you are made known to us through our own foolish proclamation. It is only by the power of the Holy Spirit that your Word can be heard in our words. Open our ears to what you are saying to us today, we pray; and perhaps we may also hear echoes of your glory in the broad firmament above. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

First Reading Exodus 20:1-17

Then God spoke all these words:

I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me.

You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me, but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments.

You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not acquit anyone who misuses his name. Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God; you shall not do any work—you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns. For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and consecrated it. Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you. You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your

neighbor's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

Second Reading Mark 9:15-48

When they came to the disciples, they saw a great crowd around them, and some scribes arguing with them. When the whole crowd saw him, they were immediately overcome with awe, and they ran forward to greet him. He asked them, "What are you arguing about with them?" Someone from the crowd answered him, "Teacher, I brought you my son; he has a spirit that makes him unable to speak; and whenever it seizes him, it dashes him down; and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid; and I asked your disciples to cast it out, but they could not do so." He answered them, "You faithless generation, how much longer must I be among you? How much longer must I put up with you? Bring him to me." And they brought the boy to him. When the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. Jesus asked the father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood. It has often cast him into the fire and into the water, to destroy him; but if you are able to do anything, have pity on us and help us." Jesus said to him, "If you are able!—All things can be done for the one who believes." Immediately the father of the child cried out, "I believe; help my unbelief!" When Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You spirit that keeps this boy from speaking and hearing, I command you, come out of him, and never enter him again!" After crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse, so that most of them said, "He is dead." But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he was able to stand. When he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?" He said to them, "This kind can come out only through prayer."

They went on from there and passed through Galilee. He did not want anyone to know it; for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, "The Son of Man is to be betrayed into human hands, and they will kill him, and three days after being killed, he will rise again." But they did not understand what he was saying and were afraid to ask him.

Then they came to Capernaum; and when he was in the house he asked them, "What were you arguing about on the way?" But they were silent, for on the way they had argued with one another who was the greatest. He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all." Then he took a little child and put it among them; and taking it in his arms, he said to them, "Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me."

John said to him, "Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us." But Jesus said, "Do not stop him; for no one who does a deed of power in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me. Whoever is not against us is for us. For truly I tell you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ will by no means lose the reward.

"If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were hung around your neck and you were thrown into the sea. If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is

better for you to enter life maimed than to have two hands and to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame than to have two feet and to be thrown into hell. And if your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and to be thrown into hell, where their worm never dies, and the fire is never quenched.

SERMON "Lessons on Following Jesus"

Mark 9:14-41

- ILL: When I lived on the West coast, I used to go with friends on these week long bicycle excursions.
- We would travel with 50-60 lbs of gear that had our tents, sleeping bag, clothes, and cooking supplies.
- We have explored the CA coast, the OR coast, and rode the San Juan and Gulf islands.
- The CA coast had these mountainous roads in the northern half of the state where we would climb these long, steep hills for hours on our bikes.
- We would always tell ourselves as we take a break from the agony of hill climbing that "There are always two sides to every mountain" which meant there was going to be a long downhill stretch to enjoy.
- In the same way, when we encounter a mountain top experience with the Lord, most of the work was getting there, the apex is at the top where you feel closest to God, but on the other side you always face the reality of normal life.
- Because we all know that you cannot live on the mountain top forever.
- At the midpoint of the Gospel of Mark, at the mount of Transfiguration, Jesus fully reveals himself to Peter, James, and John.
- As they descend the mountain, Jesus and his inner core leaves their mountain top experience.
- From this point onward, Mark will not specifically emphasize the divinity of Jesus, but show his readers how Jesus is training his disciples and preparing them for his Messianic departure
- This morning I wanted to look at some of those lessons he emphasizes to his disciples on what it means to follow Jesus.

1. Prayer Leads to Greater Faith

14 When they came to the disciples, they saw a great crowd around them, and some scribes arguing with them. 15 When the whole crowd saw him, they were immediately overcome with awe, and they ran forward to greet him. 16 He asked them, What are you arguing about with them?"

- The mountain top experience is over, and the first thing Jesus, Peter, James, and John encounter is an argument.
- Welcome to real life and the everyday routine
- The remaining disciples are arguing with the scribes; Jesus appears, and the crowd identifies Jesus and runs to greet him.
- Mark does not mention why they were arguing, but what ever it was, it was dropped with the arrival and presence of Jesus.

- Nowhere else in Mark is Jesus received with such enthusiasm by the crowds, only here in this text.

17 Someone from the crowd answered him, Teacher, I brought you my son; he has a spirit that makes him unable to speak; 18 and whenever it seizes him, it dashes him down; and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid; and I asked your disciples to cast it out, but they could not do so."

- A man in the crowd addresses Jesus.
- Notice the respect the man had in addressing Jesus by calling him teacher/Rabbi.
- The man tells the story of his son who had a spirit that makes him mute and demonstrates all the symptoms of epilepsy, and how he brought him to the disciples who could not cast out the spirit.
- This was a legitimate request because Jesus gave the disciples authority over evil spirits.

19 He answered them, You faithless generation, how much longer must I be among you? How much longer must I put up with you?

- In Jesus' own humanity, this text sounds like he was having a bad day.
- The phrase "faithless generation" must be referring to the disciples.
- In this statement Jesus reveals his bitter disappointment with the disciples because in a crucial moment they had failed because of their lack of faith during Jesus' absence.
- This verse demonstrates Jesus was weary with his disciples' spiritual thickheadedness.
- The phrase "How much longer must I put up with you?" implies that Jesus will be gone from their presence due to his death and resurrection.
- Jesus' followers are expected to have full faith in his power whether or not Jesus was present, and that they must continue his ministry in the same power that he manifested.

Bring him to me." 20 And they brought the boy to him. When the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. 21 Jesus asked the father, How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, From childhood. 22 It has often cast him into the fire and into the water, to destroy him; but if you are able to do anything, have pity on us and help us." 23 Jesus said to him, If you are able!—All things can be done for the one who believes." 24 Immediately the father of the child cried out, I believe; help my unbelief!"

- This next section is about the faith of the father.
- The man says, "if you are able to do anything, have pity on us and help us."
- Jesus says, "I am able! —All things can be done for those who believes.
- Jesus is saying that everything is possible if the man had the faith in what Jesus could do for him.
- The emphasis then is not on the quantity or quality of our faith but on solely the power of the Master with whom we are joined by faith.
- The father says, "I do believe, help me in my unbelief."
- Jesus then performs a miracle and casts out the demon.
- Afterwards in a private conversation, the disciples asked why they could not cast out the demon.

29 He said to them, This kind can come out only through prayer."

- The disciples had failed because they had not prayerfully depended upon God's power.
- They trusted on past successes and had failed.
- Faith sets no limits on God's power, but it submits itself only to the will of God.
- For Mark, prayer is not primarily a way of getting what we want from God.
- Prayer is not a certain formula for exorcism, nor a technique.
- Prayer is a space where we come to terms with God's will.
- It is the place where we trust God implicitly and leave the results up to the Lord.
- This is the greater faith, Jesus hopes to pour into his disciples before he leaves this earth.

1. Prayer Leads to Greater Faith

2. Suffering Leads to Glory

30 They went on from there and passed through Galilee. He did not want anyone to know it; 31 for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, The Son of Man is to be betrayed into human hands, and they will kill him, and three days after being killed, he will rise again." 32 But they did not understand what he was saying and were afraid to ask him.

- Jesus' public ministry in Galilee is coming to an end, and he desires to spend time teaching his disciples privately, particularly about his suffering and death.
- Mark makes it clear, that this is where Jesus places an emphasis on the training of the twelve for a second time in Mark.
- Notice the play on words when Jesus uses the phrase that he calls himself, "Son of Man" in contrast the "human hands"
- Or in other translations "the Son of **Man** is going to be delivered into the hands of **men.**" (NIV, NASB)
- Jesus is saying that his pending death is necessary for his glory.
- However we know from Mark that Jesus will have difficulty getting the disciples to understand.
- What made things worse, it that the disciples did not ask questions about what Jesus meant.
- Their own perceptions of a reigning Messiah needed to be changed to an understanding that Jesus' suffering would bring about a greater glory for God.

1. Prayer Leads to Greater Faith

2. Suffering Leads to Glory

3. Service Leads to Honor

33 Then they came to Capernaum; and when he was in the house he asked them, What were you arguing about on the way?" 34 But they were silent, for on the way they had argued with one another who was the greatest. 35 He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all."

- Notice this particular incident is right on the heels of Jesus' self-giving statement of humility that he had to suffer and die.
- What do we find here in this section of text?
- A DIRECT contrast between the self-giving nature of Jesus and the self-promotion of the disciples.
- The disciples were arguing who was the greatest.
- Matters of rank was very important to the Jews.

- Remember when Jesus was teaching at a dinner party about who takes the seats of greatest honor?
 - It is possible the privilege of what happened to Peter, James, and John in witnessing Jesus' transfiguration fueled this debate.
 - When they get to Capernaum, Jesus sits down with his disciples and begins to teach them how HIS values are different from what the world values.
 - Jesus is teaching that being the first is not about climbing to the top
 - It is just the opposite, and it comes from putting everyone before oneself as a servant.
 - The path to being the greatest is through being a "servant of all."
 - The greatness of the kingdom was not determined by status but by service
- 36 Then he took a little child and put it among them; and taking it in his arms, he said to them, 37 Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me."*
- To illustrate Jesus' point he uses a child.
 - Now in a Greco-Roman society, the most respected person is the older mature adult, and the least in society is a child.
 - When Jesus uses the word welcome, it is what people climbing for higher social status does to try earn influence and connection with people more powerful people than they are.
 - They welcome them.
 - Jesus is telling his disciples to forget all about rank, pre-eminence, prominence.
 - Instead, they should treat the "least of them" with the greatest amount of respect.
 - This means they were to focus their attention on not being the greatest but "welcoming" the lowest or those with the greatest need in society.
 - They should welcome such a child "in Christ's name" on Christ's behalf.
 - This is the service that leads to honor or being the greatest

1. Prayer Leads to Greater Faith

2. Suffering Leads to Glory

3. Service Leads to Honor

4. Loyalty Leads to Fruitfulness

38 John said to him, Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us."

- John brings up to Jesus that they saw someone casting out demons in Jesus' name using Jesus' authority even though he was not one of the twelve.
- Notice how John offered his remark as a declaration
- He did not ask for Jesus approval.
- He seems to assume this was the right course of action
- The disciples felt they had proprietary rights to have been commissioned by Jesus to cast out demons and no one else.
- Who was this man that John mentions?
- He must have been a Christian who heard and believed the teaching of Jesus, but did not have the opportunity to establish a close relationship with the Twelve disciples.
- All we know is that he had been casting out demons in the name of Jesus and was probably successful in contrast to the recent failure of the disciple's attempt.
- John and the others strongly disapproved of this behavior.

39 But Jesus said, Do not stop him; for no one who does a deed of power in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me. 40 Whoever is not against us is for us. 41 For truly I tell you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ will by no means lose the reward.

- Jesus tells his disciples not to prevent the man from doing his ministry.
- He gave the benefit of doubt to the unknown believer.
- The man is actually a part of the team as a follower of Jesus Christ.
- The casting out of demons was done by God's power, and Jesus power was not limited to the Twelve.
- Jesus makes the point that people can only do miracles in his name if they are in a proper relationship to Jesus himself.
- Notice the issue is not about who can do it or who cannot, but people loyal and dedicated to Jesus will bear fruit because of their faith.
- Verse 41 Jesus broadened his words to include other ministry activities besides exorcism.
- Even one who belongs to Christ and preforms the smallest act of hospitality in Jesus' name (such as giving a cup of water) will be participating in God's kingdom.

1. Prayer Leads to Greater Faith
2. Suffering Leads to Glory
3. Service Leads to Honor
4. Loyalty Leads to Fruitfulness

- These are the four lessons Jesus was teaching his disciples before he went to the cross.
- Rather than trying to teach everything before Easter, we are going to slow down in Mark taking a break to look at the Easter passages related to Palm Sunday and Easter, and continue our messages in Mark after Easter
- Next week is Presbyterian Women's Sunday. Come out and support the women of our church!

Offering

The house of God is not a marketplace for buying and selling. It is a house of prayer, a place of healing and restoration, a place where we bring before God our provisions to be used for present needs. Let us bring our tithes and offerings 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

O Lord our God, we want to follow all your commandments—to love only you, not worshiping the things of this world; to love our neighbor freely, not desiring for ourselves something they possess. Accept these offerings, we pray, and teach us to be generous, giving fully of ourselves that we may truly be the body of Christ in this 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

Holy God, you have called us to live before you and with one another in all faithfulness. Unable to live as you intend, we inflict harm and hurt on others and on ourselves as well. In all these ways, we know we grieve your heart also. Hear, then, our prayers of intercession. Restore us to communion with you and one another that we might live in the freedom you have bestowed. We pray for people who are victims of crime, from petty theft to murder.

We pray that those harmed will find healing and will dwell in safety. Hold especially close to your heart, O God, those who have lost a loved one to violence; and help us to offer tenderness and care in their struggles and grief. We pray also for those who have committed crimes, that they may seek and find forgiveness, and begin a new life of responsibility and integrity before you and in the community.

We pray for healing and reconciliation where trust has been broken, hostility has flared, or misunderstanding has grown. Restore us not only to one another, but reconcile us to ourselves and to you, loving God. If restoration proves beyond hope, then grant new beginnings and possibilities for all. In every relationship, we seek your grace as we honor others by caring for them, being truthful, and working for their welfare. Root out in us any jealousy toward what others possess, and let generosity grow in and among us instead.

Gracious God, we pray for those who are ill, in mind, body, or spirit; for those lonely and isolated from community; for those burdened by guilt or grief, by depression or despair. Do not let us turn inward as a church, lest we shut out or neglect those who long for a community of welcome and companionship.

Send us out in love, with open eyes, ears, and hearts. Make us true neighbors to one another and true children of your own calling. We pray in the name of Christ, who has come to set us free, 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.

Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

Words of Institution
Communion
Prayer

***Hymn** PH 92 "Beneath the Cross of Jesus"

1 Beneath the cross of Jesus
I fain would take my stand,
The shadow of a mighty rock
Within a weary land;
A home within the wilderness,
A rest upon the way,
From the burning of the noontide heat,
And the burden of the day.

2 Upon that cross of Jesus
Mine eye at times can see
The very dying form of One
Who suffered there for me;
And from my stricken heart with tears
Two wonders I confess:
The wonders of redeeming love
And my unworthiness.

***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)