

Introductory

This reading has parallels in Matthew and in Luke. Matthew deals with this material in the sixteenth chapter and Luke in the ninth of their respective books. It includes Mark's rendition of Peter's Confession and of Jesus telling the Apostles what is coming up in the future; Crucifixion, Resurrection, and Second Coming, and what it means to follow Him.

All three accounts are very similar, which is to be expected since they are all three clearly talking about the same event, except that Matthew adds more dialogue between Jesus and Peter – after Peter's Confession – words that Mark and Luke leave out. None of those three parallel texts are appointed to be read at any time in the TLH one-year lectionary.

In LW as well as in LSB, the Mark text is appointed to be read on Lent 2B, and the Luke text is to be read on Pentecost 5A. Matthew 16:13-20 and 6:21-26 are to be read respectively at Pentecost 14A and 15A, respectively in LW as well. Those exact same two Matthew texts also appear as Proper 16 and Proper 17 in the LSB Series A.

We have begun this penitential Lenten Season with the Ashes of Wednesday, and then followed Jesus into the Wilderness, where He was tempted by Satan. This week we get down to the nitty-gritty of the Season, the Passion of Jesus, including the suffering He endured leading up to the Crucifixion and that event itself, where He suffered greatly.

It should not surprise us then, looking ahead, that the texts appointed for the coming Sundays in Lent speak to that same subject. On Lent 5B, Jesus will repeat the words spoken here about "going to Jerusalem." All three synoptics have Him saying that three times, and all three add specific things like "torture, betrayal" and the like to the mix.

As CFW Walther has very well taught us, we should explicitly preach the explicit Gospel every Sunday. That Walther and others who say similar things did not always do that should not trouble us. Do as he says, and not as he does. Preaching the Gospel every Sunday does not necessarily mean that we review Jesus' trip to the cross every Sunday.

In fact, if you say every Sunday that, "Jesus died on the cross to take away your sins," you will be correct, but boring, and essentially you will be repeating the Absolution. Better to be correct and *not* boring by mixing it up a bit than to be correct, but not boring. Nobody likes boring, the Gospel is not boring, so if it's boring, from whence comes that?

However, during the Lenten Season, when the texts are all pointing us in that direction, we will be talking a lot about how Jesus died on the cross to take away your sins. This is

a wonderful time of the year to review such important theological concepts as; the vicarious atonement, forensic justification, and the idea of suffering as Christian ethos.

We live in a culture that spends way too much time avoiding pain and seeking pleasure. Christians don't have to be told to do those things, but they do need to be aware of suffering as well. Today, Jesus speaks of the necessity of His suffering, and we see His followers not only shrink away from that, but they dissuade Him from any such thing.

This incident takes place near Caesarea Philippi. We have no record of Jesus ever entering that particular city, but He was often active around it. We have spoken before of the city's association with paganism and pagan gods, particularly Pan, the Greek god of nature and fertility. Some of their religious ceremonies may have been a bit racy for us.

Textual Notes

27. Fresh off the healing of a blind man in Bethsaida (22), Mark tells us that “ἐξῆλθεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς καὶ οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ εἰς τὰς κώμας Καισαρείας τῆς Φιλίππου – Jesus and His disciples went out into the villages of Caesarea Philippi.” Today Caesarea Philippi lies in ruins, but in that day, it would have been the economic and cultural center of that region.

In the Ancient World, each city generally had one or more gods connected with the city, and each god had his or her sacred space where that god would be worshipped. Probably the best-known connection between god and city is Athens, connected with Athena. Diana was favored in Ephesus (Acts 19), and Lystra liked Hermes and Zeus (14:8ff.).

The city referenced today had since ancient times been connected to Pan, was called Paneis, and the region around it was known as Panion. Pan had been created in Arcadia in Greece and exported to many places. Among gods lacking in morality and constantly wreaking havoc among men, Pan was a particularly mischievous and immoral god.

WIK describes the earlier history of Caesarea Philippi,

On the death of [Zenodorus](#) in 20 BC, the Panion, which included Paneas, was annexed to the Kingdom of [Herod the Great](#).^[15] He erected here a temple of "white marble" in honour of his patron. In the year 3 BC, [Philip II](#) (also known as Philip the Tetrarch) founded a city at Paneas. It became the administrative capital of Philip's large [tetrarchy](#) of [Batanaea](#) which encompassed the Golan and the [Hauran](#). [Flavius Josephus](#) refers to the city as Caesarea Paneas in [Antiquities of the Jews](#); the New Testament as Caesarea Philippi (to distinguish it from [Caesarea Maritima](#) on the [Mediterranean](#) coast).^{[16][17]} In 14 AD, Philip II named it Caesarea (in honour of [Roman](#) Emperor Caesar [Augustus](#)) and "made improvements" to the city. His image was placed on a coin issued in 29/30 AD (to

commemorate the founding of the city), this was considered as idolatrous by Jews but was following in the [Idumean](#) tradition of Zenodorus.¹

People would have gone there from the small towns for the same reasons we will – less often than we used to – make the one hundred sixty mile journey from Sherrard to Chicago. For Jesus to be going about from one village to another would be akin to Him going to places like Sandwich, Hinckley and Plano, growing small towns west of the city.

There may or may not be implications here that should or should not influence the way that we look at missions in our church body these days. According to conventional mission wisdom, Jesus should have been working in Caesarea Philippi, the place where there were the most people, and not in the surrounding villages, where there were fewer.

But I guess that if Jesus were using conventional wisdom, He would be spending a lot more time serving Jews in and around Jerusalem, and a lot less time in Galilee, where Jewish people were relatively fewer and farther between. The parable of different soils teaches that we sow the seed of the Word, and we're not really sure what will happen.

The Apostles went out sowing the Gospel and – like Jesus – were variously received and variously rejected at various places. Thomas went to China and India, and they killed him. Two millennia later the soil especially in China seems to be a lot more fertile than it used to be, and European soil seems to be turning into rocky, thorn-dominant ground.

It was during these travels between these villages that The Teacher questions the pupils, “ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ ἐπηρώτα τοὺς μαθητὰς αὐτοῦ - and on the way he was questioning His disciples.” The verb is in the imperfect tense – there was more than one question – and the verb is one that expects an answer from those questioned, and He gets several.

The language is not of a lawyer cross-examining a hostile witness, or of a learner seeking information, but of a teacher who is teaching the students. Jesus consistently uses the teaching method common in His day, the one that works, the one used before Progressive Education first reared its ugly head, the one that still works today when it is used.

He's a teacher schooling the students, and He's going somewhere with this when He asks “Τίνα με λέγουσιν οἱ ἄνθρωποι εἶναι – who do men say I am?” He's not inviting them to teach Him. If they know what people are saying about Him, He knows full well what people are saying. He is inviting them to think, and that's a good thing, and it works.

28. People are saying things about Jesus, and some of those things are positive. Some of them are saying things that are close, but no cigar. The possibilities being bandied about include “Ἰωάνην τὸν Βαπτιστήν, καὶ ἄλλοι Ἠλείαν, ἄλλοι δὲ ὅτι εἷς τῶν προφητῶν – John the Baptizer, and others Elijah, and others that (you are) one of the prophets.”

The language indicates that we're talking about distinct schools of thought. People are talking among themselves, or perhaps being taught by other people that Jesus is either from the John B or Elijah school of thought, or one of the other prophets. One can imagine young seminarians talking over coffee, each making a case for the right answer.

A good starting point for those connecting Jesus to John, who is dead, Elijah, who is very dead – and so are the prophets – is the fourteenth verse of the sixth chapter of Mark.

¹⁴ King Herod heard of it; for Jesus' ^[a] name had become known. Some ^[b] said, "John the baptizer has been raised from the dead; that is why these powers are at work in him." ¹⁵ But others said, "It is Eli'jah." And others said, "It is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old." ¹⁶ But when Herod heard of it he said, "John, whom I beheaded, has been raised."

In this context, we also ought to note this later reference to Elijah in the ninth chapter.

¹¹ And they asked him, "Why do the scribes say that first Eli'jah must come?" ¹² And he said to them, "Eli'jah does come first to restore all things; and how is it written of the Son of man, that he should suffer many things and be treated with contempt? ¹³ But I tell you that Eli'jah has come, and they did to him whatever they pleased, as it is written of him."

When Jesus asks the question that asks what other people are saying, the answer is easy. What are people saying about Trump? About Biden? There may well have been other questions asked between that question and the next. When I'm teaching, I seldom ask only two questions that take all of thirty seconds or fewer.

In fact, never do I teach a class for that short of a period of time. Do you? What we often have in the NT is a summary of a conversation or a teaching session. The discussion between Jesus and Nicodemus the Rabbi, do we think we have the entirety of that discussion? Not likely, but the writers include what they include.

All of life is editing, whether teaching a class or writing a sermon or writing notes on this text. If you ask a hearer what the teacher or preacher or note-writer said, the hearer will not repeat verbatim every word uttered. Different people will note different things, which is why the synoptics are all very similar, but all different.

29. Continuing to educate using the Socratic Method, Jesus asks another question, one that builds on the previous questions. Using the same sentence structure as He used in asking the first question, He now asks them who *they* say Him to be. And one man responds, "Πέτρος λέγει αὐτῷ Σὺ εἶ ὁ Χριστός – Peter says to Him, 'you are the Christ.'"

It's not the first time Peter that answers for the group – or does he? – and it won't be the last. It is further noteworthy that, of the twelve, Peter, James, and John seem to be preeminent. They got to go with Jesus to places like the Transfiguration, and Paul wines a little bit (Galatians 2:9) that the three are the "pillars of the church" in Jerusalem.

Or at least that's what they thought of themselves, according to Paul. This rising of some within group is neither profound nor mysterious. It happens every time a group happens, and it seems to me that it happens especially in a group of men, and it seems to simply be the way we're built. It's the testosterone factor, and we are by our nature competitive.

It begins at an early age, brother competing against brother, friend against friend, and it continues through adolescence, into adulthood. About what do men compete? The real question is: About what do men *not* compete? It wasn't enough that John and Peter went to the empty tomb. John made a race out of it, and he makes sure to tell us who won!

In any group of humans, and especially any group of human men, given time, the cream will always rise to the top, and given more time, one of them will emerge as The Guy. This phenomenon can be observed also in Pastors, on the circuit level, on the district level, on the national level, and anytime pastors are talking theology or on any topic.

Peter, James, and John emerge from the twelve, and Peter is The Guy, and Paul struggles to find his place among them, and that's just the way it is. The role carved out by Peter carried over to the Early Church and continues to this day. The Pope is not said to have spiritually descended from Paul – arguably the greater Apostle – but from Peter.

But that doesn't mean that Peter is speaking for the group. I've sat in enough classrooms and taught in many more to know that not everybody knows all the answers all the time. Often few or only one person knows that right answer, and at no time have I or do I think of that person who knows the right answer as the spokesman for the rest of the group.

How did Peter come to the conclusion that Jesus was the Christ? Probably for the same or similar reasons why you and I came to conclude that? Peter had the entire OT, which we contend – correctly – speaks of the coming Christ. Do you think Peter knew where Jesus was born? And then there were the miracles Jesus had been doing. There was that.

30. The teaching continues, as He “ἐπετίμησεν αὐτοῖς ἵνα μηδενὶ λέγωσιν περὶ αὐτοῦ - instructed them that they should tell nobody about Him.” The verb is ἐπιτιμάω, and it is almost always translated “rebuke,” but here is “warned” or “strictly charged.” BAG's “*warning to prevent* something from going wrong” captures the essence of meaning here.

Later on, in Mark 9, the text from Transfiguration from two weeks ago, Jesus again tells them to be quiet about that incident, but He uses a different verb, διαστέλλομαι, the word that is used to refer to “an explicit command” that is “unambiguously clear” (biblos.com). See also the examples in the MM entry for the word of how that word was being used.

What does this mean? Here, in the text that we're currently working on, Jesus tells them not to tell anybody that He is the Christ, and shortly after that, on the way down from the Transfiguration, He tells them not to tell anybody about it, but the word used to describe what He said there is the word for a clearer and more explicit command than this one.

That leads me to believe that maybe they didn't get it the first time, that they *did* begin to go out and tell people that He was the Christ. How cool would that be, to be in the inner circle of the Christ, and a slip of the tongue is not unlikely. A chapter later, He uses the stronger, more emphatic, more explicit language to tell them essentially the same thing.

After the Transfiguration He also adds "until after the Resurrection," perhaps to assure them that He is asking for only a temporary silence. The reason why they should wait until after the Resurrection to talk about these things is; that it is not until after the Resurrection that we know the whole story, including all of the events of Holy Week.

Miracles in and of themselves, and a confession of Jesus as the Christ in and of itself, seen in a vacuum, are one thing. Miracles and confessions of faith seen in the light of the Crucifixion and the subsequent Resurrection are viewed quite differently, and much more completely, and the meaning of such things becomes much clearer post-Resurrection.

Or to put it another way, what do the miracles of Jesus and Peter's confession mean if in the end you end up with a dead Jesus who stays dead and does not rise? Not a whole lot, that's what, a mere blip on the radar screen of history, just another guy of whom people said that he did miracles, the equivalent of the latest saint proclaimed by Rome.

A non-resurrected Jesus would furthermore go down in history as just another guy among unnumbered guys who claimed or were proclaimed to be the Christ, like Rev. Sun Myung Moon or That Waco Nut Job or any of the current claimants in and around Jerusalem. Read the *Jerusalem Post* online and you may find the latest him or them faux messiah.

31. After that, He began to teach them about suffering and the cross, and about the Resurrection. Not until they were all on the same page about His identity, that Jesus was the Christ and all that was meant by that title, then, after that, "ἤρξατο διδάσκειν αὐτοὺς – He began to teach" those hard but fundamental teachings of the Christian Religion.

The verb "to teach" is a in the present infinitive active form, with the focus on "the connection between the action and the doer of the action" (FGG 112), and it means that teaching is part and parcel of Jesus' identity as a person, much as it is of the pastor, the under shepherd of the Good Shepherd, and teaching and preaching are the same thing.

If you are a pastor who doesn't think he is a very good teacher, then you should probably think of ways that you can improve your teaching. Good preachers/teachers are made, not born, and it begins with understanding that truth. Once you understand that, then you have to decide that you want to learn how to do better, and then you learn and get better.

He teaches them that suffering, death, and resurrection are "δεῖ – necessary." It is important to note that He *does in fact speak of the Resurrection*, but the students seem unable or unwilling to grasp that concept, focusing instead on the suffering and death that awaits the Master, perhaps belying a certain amount of skepticism about the Resurrection.

Bold and Courageous Thomas was skeptical, and he did not believe it until he saw it.

We have talked before about that little word δεῖ, a word that is mostly translated “must,” occasionally “have to,” and never “necessary,” except by me. The word means that something unpleasant has to happen in order for something pleasant to happen at a later time, and there’s no other way to get to the pleasant except by way of the unpleasant.

I and my 6’ 5” frame yearly endure an eight hour flight in a cramped seat in coach, knowing that a couple of weeks on Waikiki is waiting on the other end, knowing that there’s no other way to get there except through coach, and the cost of that is a small price to pay for the beach. People endure things all the time for the good that follows.

Jesus endured hardships beyond a cramped flight across the Pacific Ocean, beyond what most of us can even imagine, as He was tortured by men and then forsaken by His Father. He was able to endure extreme unpleasantness, knowing the pleasantness that waited on the other end, pleasantness that would and could come only after the unpleasantness.

We also endure minor hardships here, a small price to pay for the eternal pleasantness that will come later. If we expect the Christian walk to be without tribulation, then we need to adjust our expectations. Jesus compared our earthly journey to the pains of childbirth – which I understand to be severe – and the joy of heaven to the actual birth.

The word “δεῖ” is the polar opposite of instant gratification, and it indicates instead delayed gratification, a concept that is at the heart of the Christian religion, but not often grasped by Americans, many of whom are “Christians.” If you say it like that, you will be preaching the Law in a way that makes your hearer think maybe they have broken it.

Their minds will note that “I am a Christian” and that “instant gratification is very much not a part of the Christian ethos,” and therefore “my desire for instant gratification is not a Christian thing.” Furthermore, saying it that way goes right to the heart of the matter – not so much your acts, but your attitude that leads to those acts – fruit of the Flesh tree.

32. In His speaking, “παρρησία τὸν λόγον ἐλάλει – He told all the Word.” That noun is often translated “plainly,” or “openly,” in the Gospels, but rendered “boldly” in the Epistles. To be sure, there is a connection between boldness and openness, especially if openness is going to bring you grief, but boldly is a different word from the word openly.

Why do the translators consistently make Jesus speak “openly” or “publicly” and then in their translations of that exact same word in the Epistles they will just as consistently tell Christians to be “bold?” Oh, wait a minute. My old friend King Jimmy has Jesus consistently speaking “boldly.” Nicely done! Robertson is also very good on this point.

Spake the saying openly (*παρρησιαι τον λογον ελαλει — parrēsiāi ton logon elalei*). He held back nothing, told it all (*παν — pān* all, *ρησια — rēsia* from *ειπον — eipon* say), without reserve, to all of them. Imperfect tense *ελαλει — elalei* shows that Jesus did it repeatedly.

The endeavor to discern motive is always a tenuous activity, and the journey into the mind of a translator with the goal of finding out what's bouncing around in there is not often worth the trip, but I'm thinking that those translators have a hard time with a Jesus Who is "bold," which may cause conflict, but they are okay with a Jesus who is "open."

The Culture, pop psychology, Oprah, and protestant theology – they may be at their essence the same thing – have taught us that openness is a good thing. If I were going to translate the phrase – and I will probably translate it this way on Sunday – I would use a phrase like "Jesus talked turkey" or "He pulled no punches," or something like that.

Both of those phrases are American idioms, both well-understood by my hearers, both of which get right to the heart of the matter in three or four short words. Either that, or I could deliver a theological lecture about the nuances of the word. Jesus seldom delivers lectures about vocab nuance, but often tells stories and speaks using figures of speech.

In response to the bold talk of Passion and Resurrection, "ὁ Πέτρος αὐτὸν ἤρξατο ἐπιτιμᾶν αὐτῷ – Peter began to rebuke Him." This is the second time in this pericope that the verb ἐπιτιμάω has been used to describe an action. The first time it was used was in verse thirty, when Jesus told them to keep quiet, don't tell people He is the Christ.

You may recall BAG's "*warning to prevent* something from going wrong" from the first occurrence of the word, and that same definition applies to the other two – the last one is coming soon – as well. Here, in verse thirty-two, Peter warns Jesus about the danger of going to Jerusalem. Jesus in turns warns Peter (33) of the greater danger if He does not.

33. Any attempt to sugar-coat Jesus' calling Peter "Satan" will fail. Ya, He said it, and then He explains it. The word "Satan" means "enemy," and in seeking to dissuade Jesus from the necessary work of the cross, Peter is acting not only as an "enemy" of Jesus, but has allied himself with Satan, who also would dissuade Jesus from that necessary work.

He was furthermore on the side of ἀνθρώπων, the natural man who is allied with Satan, and the third part of what Luther called "the unholy trinity." This is really a crushing rebuke, and it sounds a lot like Jesus may have been raising his voice at Peter. If He were, there would be nothing wrong or sinful about that. Peter the saint is also a sinner.

Keep in mind that the deal offered by Satan to Jesus in the wilderness, the one whereby Satan would give Jesus everything immediately, without the discomfort of the Cross, had never been taken off of the table. What a terrible temptation it must have been for the very human Jesus to take the deal, and Peter isn't helping Him. He's hurting Him.

34. At this point, Jesus "ροσκαλεσάμενος τὸν ὄχλον σὺν τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ – calls towards Him the crowds with His disciples." Among the hearers, there are people who are merely interested intermingled with Christians. He invents an idiom that has for many years been very familiar to many Christians and has even jumped into the secular realm.

Americans who may or may not have the most basic understanding of our religion will speak, without thinking, about “my cross to bear.” He says, “Εἴ τις θέλει ὀπίσω μου ἔλθειν, ἀπαρνησάσθω ἑαυτὸν καὶ ἁράτω τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἀκολουθεῖτω μοι.— if anyone wants to come behind me, deny himself, take up my cross, and follow me.”

He says this on the heels of His telling Peter to get behind Him. It’s like the football coach who keeps telling his players the same thing over and over again, and then one player does it wrong – again – and the coach yells at him and then goes “everybody, gather around.” Or like Gordon Ramsay does on *Hell’s Kitchen*, but without the cussing.

He tells each person that to follow Him means to “deny” self. The word means to choose one thing or another. There are two verbs in the Greek language for that concept; “ἀρνέομαι” and “ἀπαρνέομαι.” You note that the second one is the first one with the intensifier “ἀπ.” The second one, the one with the intensifier, is the one Jesus uses here.

To follow Jesus means a complete denial of self, not just a tweak here and there. Fasting and other bodily preparations are a good start but are not good enough. All three verbs – deny, take up, and follow – are imperatives; they are commands. The first two are in the aorist tense; focus on the act, and the last is in the present tense; focus on the actor.

Following Jesus is at the very core of what it means to be a Christian. He is our leader, and we are following behind Him. In particular, we follow Him in this world, and it leads to necessary tribulation and suffering. We endure those things knowing that one day we will follow Him into the grave, to be raised, to ascend to eternal bliss in heaven.

That word “deny,” had a special import in the first century, along with its antonym, “confess.” When an accusation was made that somebody was a Christian, that person was often brought before the magistrate (1 Cor 12:3) and invited to deny Jesus as God. The faithful Christian could not do that, by instead would confess that “Jesus is Lord.”

35. Now He launches an oxymoron and then a series of logical arguments to tell them what He expects of His followers, and what they can expect life to be like when we are following Him. All of these sayings tell the listener that it will be hard, not easy, to be a Christian, and if you are doing the Christian religion correctly, you will have hardships.

Modern American Christianity teaches just the opposite, and that doctrine seeps as if by osmosis into American Lutheranism, even into the LCMS. Instant gratification has been around for a long time, and the ancient hedonistic idea of avoiding pain and seeking pleasure is making a comeback and has come to fruition in things like the Opioid Crisis.

On my way to looking at Hedonism, I found out that a lot of cultures from ancient times on have openly believed, taught and confessed various forms of it. There is even a thing called Christian Hedonism – it has its own WIK article – and the modern roots of it are found in the Reformed branch of our religion, beginning in Colonial Massachusetts.

The “life” spoken of here is “ψυχὴν,” not “βίος.” He is not talking about losing only one’s physical life – though often it has and often it does – but instead He’s talking about essentially losing one’s very self, much more than just one’s physical life, to gain a new self; the New Man that is the Christian Man. That view is repugnant to most Americans.

Conversion to Christianity does not change some minor characteristics in a person, but much more than that, it changes that convert into a new person, touching the very heart and soul of that person. To a World that loudly declares that it *is* all about you, our religion asserts that it’s about Jesus and most decidedly it’s not about the individual.

36. Rhetorically and logically, He asks “τί γὰρ ὠφελεῖ ἄνθρωπον κερδῆσαι τὸν κόσμον ὅλον καὶ ζημιωθῆναι τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ - what good is it if a man gains the whole world and loses his soul?” The word “ὠφελέω” asks what you gain or what benefit you get even if you gain the entire world, if by doing that you lose your soul; not a good thing.

In his *Figures...*, Bullinger calls this, “sometimes we have Hyperbolic *Hypotheses*, which are impossible in themselves, but are used to express the greatness of the subject spoken of.” The meaning of this particular saying, “Mark viii. 36 Luke ix. 25 – to express the utmost gain and make the strongest contrast” and I could not have said it any better.

37. Indeed, He rhetorically and logically asks, “τί γὰρ δοῖ ἄνθρωπος ἀντάλλαγμα τῆς ψυχῆς αὐτοῦ - what should a person give in exchange for that soul?” The word “give” is “δοι,” an aorist subjunctive active form, focus on the *action* of giving something, and we could easily translate “exchange” as “cost;” how much would your soul cost to buy? .

The aorist tense emphasizes the utter irrationality and complete foolishness of *any* act that would cost a person his eternal soul. Here Jesus uses a reasonable, logical argument, and one that is easily followed. The Bible does that often. In the same way, when we preach, we should present reasonable, logical arguments, ones that are easily followed.

When we do that, we engage the brain of the listener, like Jesus engages the brains of His hearers here, even though they might not even realize that such a thing has happened to them. The brain is meant to be engaged, and people will like it that you make them think, and emotion is not our enemy, and if you create passion in the hearer, that’s a good thing.

38. Jesus uses another aorist subjunctive to talk about another possibility; “ὅς γὰρ ἐὰν ἐπαισχυνθῇ με καὶ τοὺς ἐμοὺς λόγους ἐν τῇ γενεᾷ ταύτῃ - whoever is ashamed of Me and My Words in this world,” God will be ashamed of you on Judgment Day. The word “ἐπαισχυνθῇ - ashamed,” is used eleven times in the NT, each time to say the same thing.

Christians should not be ashamed of Jesus or of His Word. The meaning of these harsh words of judgment is clear, and they are clearly directed at people who claim to follow Jesus and who take to themselves the name “Christian.” They are further directed to those who are not yet Christians but are interested; this is what it means to follow Jesus.

Do you know people who are ashamed to be a Christian? I have gotten over it, which is pretty easy to do when you live in a Christian country and are surrounded by Christians at work and at home, but Christians will occasionally be embarrassed about their religion. They might even try to hide things like unpopular beliefs or their church attendance.

The much more prevalent application of this judgment these days is to people who call themselves Christian but are ashamed of the Word of Christ. You know who I'm talking about. I'm talking about "liberal" pastors who treat the Bible as if it were their just the musings of chauvinistic, unenlightened, bigoted, hateful, judgmental white Jewish men.

Those people should know that Jesus calls them "adulterous" and "sinful," but they would probably say that Q put those words in Mark's mouth and Jesus never even said them because Jesus is too nice to say stuff like that. That doesn't keep us from calling them out on it, mostly from the pulpit because they don't want to talk to you face to face.

Those adulterous and sinful pastors, and those who are foolish enough to join them, will maybe be able to run, but they will not be able to hide on the last day, when they will have a lot of 'splainin' to do to God about their shepherding methodology. Especially those who knew better will face an eternity spent in "weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Law/Gospel

Denial/Gratification – Life on this earth is harsh, and we are denied things that other people have, beginning with commitment-free Sunday mornings and going on from there to other things. Our denial will be gratified, not generally instantly, but after a long life of denial, at which time we will spend eternity in constant, as well as instant gratification.

Cross/Crown – It was necessary that Jesus suffer and die in order for Him to rise in glory. The same can be said for Christians, who view death as the portal into heaven and escape from this fallen world.

Satan's Team/God's Team – Like Paul says in Ephesians, of ourselves, we are "dead" in our trespasses and sins and with Satan "enemies" of God. Because of the love of Christ, we have been made alive and the enmity has been removed.

Sermon Titles

Picking Up that Cross

Gratification

Being the Christ

Hymns

Lift High the Cross – LSB 837

Not surprisingly, there are lots of songs about the cross in the Lenten section. Since we will be talking about the cross every Sunday for several weeks, it might be a good idea to pick some or all of the hymns for some or all of those Sundays, thereby avoiding embarrassing repetitions and comments like, “Pastor, we just sang that last week.”

Rev. Steven L. Anderson
Pastor, Immanuel Lutheran Church
Grand Mound, IA

Resources

ACC – Manlio Simonetti, *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture* (Mark).
Intervarsity Press, 2002

BAG – Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*. Translated by
William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, University of Chicago Press, 1979

BCLY – William Barclay, *The Gospel of Mark..* The Westminster Press, 1975

FGG – James W. Voelz, *Fundamental Greek Grammar*. Concordia Publishing House,
1993

MGM – W.F. Moulton, A.S. Geden, H.K. Moulton, *A Concordance to the Greek
Testament*. T & T Clark LTD., 1978

MM – James Hope Moulton and George Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek
Testament*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1982

ODCC – F.L. Cross, Editor, *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*. Oxford
University Press, 1978

RNK – Fritz Rienecker, *A Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament*, Zondervan, 1976

RSV – Revised Standard Version of the Bible. Zondervan Publishing House, 1965

UBD – Merrill F. Unger, *Unger's Bible Dictionary*, Moody Press, 1977.

WP – A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Baker, 1930

VINE – W.E.Vine, Merrill F. Unger, William White, Jr., *An Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words*, Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1984

WIK – www.wikipedia.com

BIB – www.biblos.com

GBO – www.greekbible.com

Digital Classics Library - www.perseus.tufts.edu

Internet Classics Library – www.classics.mit.edu

Christian Classics Ethereal Library - www.ccel.org

Project Wittenberg - www.iclnet.org/pub/resources/text/wittenberg/wittenberg-home.html