

Where Is Your Mind Set?

Sermon Notes for Feb 25, 2018 at Brentwood

Psalm 22:31-38 (492) & Mark 8:23:31 (912)



Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

(Mark 8:31)

Provocative Ponderings that Call Forth Our Potential in Christ

- I want to explore a bit about what the Biblical writers mean by 'mind' – then talk about where Jesus wants his disciples to focus their minds – then make a few suggestions about what that means for the focus of our minds
- I think the Biblical writers use 'mind' to talk about I mean when I say 'soul' – it's the integration of all of our faculties of appreciation – not just information, not just knowledge, but wisdom – our instincts, our emotions, and our intellect all aligned by the Holy Spirit to love what God is doing in and for the world – it generates a deep sense of confidence in how the world is really working
- In this teaching, Jesus wants his disciples to focus their confidence on what God is doing for the whole of creation through Jesus and them – through the community that Jesus is gathering and forming – the community that will be his continuing presence in the world as God, through the continual influence of the Holy Spirit, completes the redemption that they start – it's about participating in and contributing to the Commonwealth of God – a world in which we do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with this God – that's where Jesus wants his followers' minds set – being part of his redemptive work – witnessing to it and inviting everyone to be engaged in it with their whole minds/souls
- In this teaching, Jesus is also clear about the cost of this discipleship – it will involve suffering, rejections, and deaths of many kinds – death to your old loyalties and allegiances – suffering the rejection of those enslaved to lesser loyalties – fear that arises in the midst of all this resistance and hostility to our mind/soul set
- But the last six words in our text are the most important – this chosen One of God, who is Jesus, the Son to whom God has entrusted the mission of justice, kindness, and humility, will not be broken by the suffering, give in to the rejection, or be defeated by death – the power of God's love for the whole creation that he embodies will have the last word – as all of the Gospels detail the suffering that Jesus endures, the resistance that he generates, the attempts to eliminate his influence by those in power, these six words dominate their witness and the faith of the church since – after three days, he rose again – to continue the journey with his disciples to the Commonwealth

*Notes for a sermon preached by Brian Fraser,
minister with Brentwood Presbyterian Church, Burnaby, BC*

So, what are we going to do with this ...

The invitation of this morning's text, then, is to become ever more mindful about joining in that journey, appreciating with all of our faculties the benefits and the costs of following Jesus into God's future in the care of the Holy Spirit – this world as we have constructed it is not that future – God challenges, in these tough teachings of Jesus, every barrier to justice, kindness, and humility – people who benefit from the world as it is don't like that – they will reject you, make you suffer, threaten death, and too often follow through on that threat – but there is a home beyond death, however it may come, where the delights of the Commonwealth will be enjoyed for all eternity – through all the suffering, rejection, and death, that is the hope that sustains and saves us as friends and followers of Jesus

Your Notes ...

Today's Framework for our Prayers

Thanks – for your presence in the midst of suffering, rejection, and death – giving us hope for a better life – and for the wonderfully complex ways in which you have crafted our souls to appreciate your power and work in blessing your creation ... [a time of silent prayer]

Help – sustain and strengthen all those working to relieve the suffering of those caught in the earthquake in Taiwan, including those among our Taiwanese sisters and brothers in Christ who are praying for and donating to the relief efforts – all those around the world who suffer rejection for your sake – help their resilient witness bear the fruit of justice, kindness, and humility you so deeply desire... [a time of silent prayer]

Awe – at the ways in which your Spirit surprises us in the midst of suffering, rejection, and death with hope in a life that transcends the world as it is – at the fascinating ways your Spirit draws our appreciation back to you in the midst of so many distracting claims on our attention ... [a time of silent prayer]