

Matthew 17:22-23

As they were gathering in Galilee, Jesus said to them,

‘The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into human hands ²³, and they will kill him, and on the third day he will be raised.’

And they were greatly distressed

Mark 9:30-32

They went on from there and passed through Galilee. He did not want anyone to know it; ³¹for 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.’ ³²But they did not understand what he was saying

and were afraid to ask him.

Luke 9:43b-45

And all were astounded at the greatness of God. While everyone was amazed at all that he was doing, he said to his disciples, ⁴⁴‘Let these words sink into your ears: The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into human hands.’

⁴⁵But they did not understand this saying; its meaning was concealed from them, so that they could not perceive it. And they were afraid to ask him about this saying



Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn

*The Little Children Being Brought to Jesus
("The 100 Guilder Print")
1647-49*

*Etching and drypoint, 1st state, 278 x 388 mm
Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam*

Today's Gospel: Saint Mark 9: 30-37

✠ 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, (1) ‘The Son of Man is to be

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betrayed into human hands, and they will kill him, and three days after being killed, he will rise again.’ (1a) 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, **(2) ‘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 **(3) whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me.’** [©NRSV]

Predicting the Passion

Today we hear the second of Christ’s three predictions of the Passion, Death and Resurrection that were recorded by Saint Mark. The prediction in Mk. 9³¹, numbered **(1)** above was preceded by the prediction we heard last Sunday in 8³¹ and will be followed by that in 10³²⁻³⁴ which, unfortunately, is omitted from our readings. The Apostles’ had proclaimed Jesus the Christ (Mk 8^{27-9¹}) and his Transfiguration (Mk 9²⁻⁸) should have left the twelve with no doubts that he was the Suffering Servant, the Messiah indicated by Isaiah. Instead, we know that the twelve were besotted by doubts throughout the ministry.

Look at Holy Week: Thursday in Holy Week, braggart Peter denies Christ and hears the rooster cry. On Good Friday most of the twelve scatter away. Then, on Easter Day, Luke records that the women told the Apostles of the empty tomb and the angelic testimony, “He is risen”, but the men asserted that the women were, at best, *confused*: “... *these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them.*” (Luke 24¹¹).

Faith requires looking at the evidence

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and making a decision, yet for many if not most adults, faith only comes after a lot of pondering time, and (though shown above in a different context) with a lot of humility, the humility that is required to accept the witness of others to things we have not seen.

When Mark compiled his Gospel ± 65 AD there was no concept of plagiarism. Matthew (± 75 AD) and Luke (± 85 AD) copied 51% and 53% of Mark, respectively, into their Gospels, but Matthew omits the passage marked **(1a)** and Luke in 9⁴⁵ justifies it. (See quotations on the page 4 from *Gospel Parallels*, B. H. Throckmorton, Jr, Editor, Nelson, 1979, page 94). The believed reason for both Matthew’s omission and for Luke’s justification is that by the time of the writing of these two Gospels the Apostles had been spread the Faith, had been martyred and were, therefore, revered as larger than life. We do the same things with our great men. We call our fellow Episcopalian, Washington *Father of his Country*; we rarely stress that he was one of the biggest slave holders in Virginia. It is conjectured that his growing guilt about his slaves was the reason that he stopped receiving Holy Communion during the last decades of his life. Most of the slaves had come from his marriage to Martha, a widow. Martha was not bothered by guilt. She was known for her rich public and private devotions.

Lines (2) and (3) are vital to our Christian living. *Who would be greatest in God’s kingdom* was debated among the rabbis. The twelve had already proclaimed him Messiah; thus, in the presence of *He Who Is The Christ*, the answer was obvious and such discussion was irrelevant. The word translated *servant* [in (2)] is, in Greek, *deacon*. In *Aramaic*, Christ’s language, *child* and *servant* are the same word, *talya*.

There is fruit here for meditation and self-examination until church begins.

Please prepare Saint Mark 9:38-50 for next Sunday.