

Setting Our Minds on Things of God

This coming Sunday (Second Sunday in Lent) the gospel lesson is Mark 8:27-38. It begins with Jesus taking an opinion poll as to who people say he is. Jesus ends the poll with asking the disciples *“But who do you say that I am?”* (Mark 8:29).

Setting our minds on something can be very powerful in achieving a goal. However, if that goal is not the right thing for us it can lead us in the wrong direction. I had my mind set on being a high school basketball and baseball coach. Looking back on my life, it would have been a big mistake. Thankfully wiser people around me guided me in what God had determined for me. That is true of Peter and disciples in our reading.

This text is where Peter makes a great confession *“You are the Christ”*. (Mark 8:29). Jesus’ point in pressing this question of His identity is to get the disciples to recognize and acclaim Him as the Christ. However when Jesus foretells his death and resurrection, Peter takes Jesus aside to rebuke him for saying these things. Jesus reprimands Peter saying *“Get behind me, Satan!”* (Mark 8:33).

Jesus had given Peter an A+ for the first answer. But, he kicks Peter out of the class for Peter’s reproach of him. Jesus must reject the temptation to skip the part in the Messiah’s job description about suffering and dying.

What was behind Peter’s criticism? Like most Jews of his day, Peter expects a powerful warrior and conquering Messiah.

We have beliefs and principles which over the years have made their way into our behavior and thought process. At times we need to check how they line up with God’s Word. Our sinful flesh, too often, has in mind the things of men. This inability to accept a suffering Savior involves the refusal of the will of God. We need to take seriously the words of the Lord’s Prayer to have *“God’s kingdom come and his will be done.”* Thankfully, Jesus did not skip the plan for him to suffer and die. And God is constantly at work in our lives, leading us in what is good and right for us and those around us.

Prayer: Dear Lord, forgive me when I depend more on my human way of thinking and forget to renew my desire to see what you have to say in your Word. Thank you for continually holding your Word up before me as I go through each day. During this Lenten season once again help me to see my short-comings and rejoice in your unfailing forgiveness. Amen