

The Second Sunday in Lent
March 1, 2015
Amazing Grace Lutheran Church - Pastor Chip Wilke

Mark 8:31-38

He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. "Get behind me, Satan!" he said. "You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men." Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels."
(NIV)

The rebuke came swiftly and sternly as Jesus looked at his disciples and said to Peter: *"Get behind me, Satan! ...You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men."* I wonder how many times Jesus has looked at me and my life, or at you and your life, and thought the same thing. Couldn't we benefit from such rebuke? For what do we have in mind – the things of God or the things of men?

Examine your time for example. How much time and effort do you spend chasing earthly pursuits and pleasures compared to focusing on spiritual things and taking time in the Word – do you have in mind the things of God or the things of men? When we get a pay raise or come into some extra money what do we think of first? Do we think of what we can buy for ourselves or how now we will have more for the Lord and more to serve our God with - do we have in mind the things of God or the things of men? When friends invite you to come along to a party where you know bad things are going to happen or they want you to join them in doing something you know is wrong, but you know if you don't go or do it you might be shunned or lose these friends - do you have in mind the things of God or the things of men? How about when we pray asking that the Lord's will be done but are not all that happy when His will isn't in line with our will - do we have in mind the things of God or the things of men? When you meet people and gain new friends do you think only about what you can enjoy with them on earth, or do you strive to see they too gain an eternal friend in Jesus - do you have in mind the things of God or the things of men?

By now I'm sure you understand the truth I want us to consider today as we look at this portion of God's Word. I pray Jesus' powerful Word moves us to see how worthless it is to gain the whole world if we forfeit our soul. I pray His Word teaches us to lose our life for Jesus and His gospel, knowing that Jesus has already saved it. I pray we are never ashamed to confess our love for and trust in Jesus as our one and only Savior from sin. So are you ready to carefully consider this heart piercing question: **Do we have in mind the things of God or the things of men?**

Why did Jesus rebuke Peter for having his mind on things of men? If you recall the apostle Peter, speaking for all the disciples, had just given a beautiful confession of faith. When

Jesus asked them who He was Peter rightly said Jesus is the Christ the Son of the living God. Jesus commended this answer and said only God the Father could have revealed this to Peter. But now Jesus goes on to tell the disciples what it means that He is the Christ. ***“He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again.”***

Jesus tells them on the road ahead of Him there will be much suffering. There will be much rejection. There will be death. Yes, Jesus will be killed. Jesus spoke plainly about this.

Peter did not like what he was hearing. In fact, ***“Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.”*** Can’t you understand why Peter didn’t want to hear this? He loved Jesus. Why would Jesus have to suffer so much? Why would He have to be rejected? There is no way Peter wanted to listen to the truth about Jesus being killed! But even for bold Peter this is going too far. He pulls Jesus aside and starts to rebuke Him. Did Peter forget He just confessed this Man he is talking to is the Son of the living God?! Did Peter really think he knew better than Jesus?! Peter had his own agenda. He misunderstood, like the other disciples, what it meant that Christ would restore the kingdom of Israel. Peter was looking, even in the Garden of Gethsemane for a kingdom that would be won by a sword. He wanted the nation of Israel to return to earthly prominence. He wanted to be free of the tyranny of Rome. None of this will happen with a Christ who suffers and dies. In Peter’s eyes it was time for Jesus to show His power not weakness.

How wrong was Peter? Not just wrong to think he could rebuke Jesus, but think about what he wanted. He wanted an earthly kingdom. He wanted Jesus to avoid suffering and death. He wanted Jesus to go down a much different road. And now Peter was speaking not words from God, but words of the devil. Peter had his mind not on things of God, but on things of men. So Jesus: ***rebuked Peter. “Get behind me, Satan!” he said. “You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men.”*** Do these words jump out at you? They always have for me. Jesus looks at His disciple and friend and says: ***“Get behind me, Satan!”*** Do you know of what it reminds me? The devil isn’t afraid to use even those closest to us to knock us off the right path.

Satan wants our hearts and minds to be set on anything other than the things of God. He wants your minds on things of men and he isn’t afraid to use your closest friend against you. I’ve seen it too often even among spouses. The Christian spouse is influenced by the unbelieving spouse and, after some time, no longer has their mind of things of God but only things of men. I’ve seen it in children who have gotten mixed up in the wrong crowd and as the Bible teaches bad company corrupts good character. I’ve seen it in the visible church that teaches that the Christian life is a road of prosperity and glory, and certainly not a road of suffering and hardship. I see it in you and me. We have our minds on the things of men when we fall in love with the things of this world and put them ahead of God. We have our minds on the things of men when we put our wants and will above the Lord’s will. We have our minds on the things of men when we are afraid to suffer even a little for our faith and when we are ashamed stand up for Jesus and His Word.

Thankfully, while Peter had and we all too often have our minds on things of men, Jesus had His mind on the things of God – always. Remember when Satan showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world and gave Jesus an easy way out. The devil said just a little bow to me and all this can be yours without going to any cross – Jesus refused because Jesus had His mind on the things of God. In the Garden of Gethsemane, when Jesus prayed asking if there was another way other than Him having to drink the full cup of God’s wrath for all sin – Jesus added and

meant it when He said but “Lord, your will be done.” Jesus had His mind on the things of God. When Jesus with scourged back and thorn torn head continued to struggle and stumble as He carried the wooden beam of His cross up Calvary’s hill, Jesus had His mind on the things of God. As Jesus suffered many things, as Jesus was rejected, as Jesus was killed, and as, after three days, Jesus was raised again, Jesus had His mind on the things of God.

Now Peter, with his sins all paid for, with a peace with God that goes beyond all human understanding, and with a heavenly inheritance that will never perish, spoil, or fade, learned it is far better to have in mind the things of God rather than the things of men. I pray we learn this too. As you know I am holding a Call to serve a couple of congregations in Wisconsin. All the things you factor in when deliberating a Call can make it a very difficult process and it is why I ask for your prayers. There is really no wrong decision whether I keep serving the Lord here or whether I serve the Lord somewhere else. But pray the Lord leads me to a decision for the right reasons – that I keep in mind the things of God and not the things of men. I pray the same for you with anything you do in life. I pray we listen to Jesus and ask ourselves daily: **Do we have in mind the things of God or the things of men?** For I do know the things of God that He wants for each of you - that you be and live as His child today, tomorrow, and forever. Amen.