

Daily Readings

Please note: We began the year by focusing our attention on the gospel of Mark. We are now halfway through Mark. The rest of Mark's gospel focuses on the final weeks of Jesus' life before the crucifixion. This is week seven of our reading from Mark.

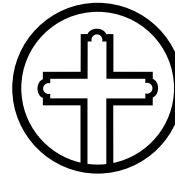
Monday, February 23 – Mark 10:45-52. This section in Mark does not have a literal time line. Instead, each of the stories is making a point about the message of Christ and its acceptance. The inclusion of blind Bartemaus receiving his sight at this point in the gospel is an reminder of the blindness of the Jewish leaders and the disciples. Can you identify times in your life and faith when you were blind?

Tuesday, February 24 – Read Mark 11:1-11. All four of the gospels include the triumphant entry into Jerusalem at the beginning of the week before the crucifixion. The sadness of Jesus as he rides the donkey, points out his disappointment that his followers have missed his eternal intent. They are blinded by their physical needs. What do you want from Jesus? Are you limiting the power of Christ in your life with physical human needs?

Wednesday, February 25 – Read Mark 11:12-25. Here Jesus is recorded cursing a barren fig tree and then clearing the temple of those religious leaders who are cheating the people. In other words, the time has come to leave behind those who no longer bear fruit for the Kingdom. Are you bearing fruit for the Kingdom of God? What kind of fruit?

Thursday, February 26 – Read Mark 11:27-33. This is an interesting and difficult passage. Jesus is challenged about his authority and refuses to answer. Instead he requires the religious leaders to take a stand – which they refuse to do. What stand are you being asked to take for the gospel? Would you risk all for Jesus?

Friday, February 27 – Read Mark 12:1-12. The parable of the wicked tenants is a direct affront to the religious community and their historical tendency to reject God's prophetic leaders. What prophetic message are you struggling to accept? Are you willing to follow Godly leaders no matter how uncomfortable?



TRIETSCH

STUDY GUIDE & DAILY READINGS

Sunday, February 22, 2009

Love at Last Sight (Week 3)

Final Focus — Envisioning a Lasting Love

Genesis 1:27

God created human beings; God created them godlike, reflecting God's nature. God created them male and female.

Genesis 2:21-25

God put the Man into a deep sleep. As he slept he removed one of his ribs and replaced it with flesh. God then used the rib that he had taken from the Man to make Woman and presented her to the Man. The Man said, "Finally! Bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh! Name her Woman for she was made from Man." Therefore a man leaves his father and mother and embraces his wife. They become one flesh.

I Corinthians 13:13

But for right now, until that completeness, we have three things to do to lead us toward that consummation: Trust steadily in God, hope unswervingly, love extravagantly. And the best of the three is love.

Ephesians 5:21

Out of respect for Christ, be courteously reverent to one another.

The Word from the Bible, the Message

Genesis 1:27

1:27-28. As God concludes the act of creation, God creates humanity as male and female. The language here is complementary in nature to give the understanding that the man and woman are to help each other and complement each other. Humanity is the crown of creation where God embraces humanity as a whole. There is something sacred in the way that man and woman fit together. God blesses humans with responsibility over creation and the ability to reproduce. Humanity is to join God in His will for order.

Genesis 2:21-25

2:21-23. In chapter two of the creation story, the narrative describes the man’s relationship with woman on different levels. Adam is created first. The name Adam literally means one who comes from the dirt or “dirt man.” God quickly realizes that it is not good that man should be alone. The creation of animals only partially addresses the human need for community.

The creation of woman is different from that of man. While Adam is created out of the dust or dirt of the earth, Eve is created out of Adam. Eve is literally translated the “lady of life.” While Adam is shaped and molded like a potter creates a jar, Eve is constructed like one would build furniture. Much has been written about the differences in these images, but the primary point is that the differences between men and women have existed from the very beginning of creation.

Taking the story of creation as a whole, Adam’s relationship with the woman involves authority in naming her; irrepressible joy in at last finding her; and dependence and companionship as she was made from his rib (they are part of the same).

2:24-25. Man and woman belong to each other because originally they were one flesh. From the beginning men and women were intended to share life and the interdependence that life requires.

I Corinthians 13:13

13:13. The final words in these paragraphs on spiritual gifts, unity, and love begin with, “**So faith, hope, love abide**” (or last forever). The more literal translation should be: “**Now (for the present) faith, hope, love remain**” – that is, they are important. Paul is making a theological statement about love in relation to hope and faith with the Kingdom of Heaven comes and we will see all things perfectly. Inherent in this statement is the question: When sight replaces faith and hope is consummated, what need will there be before them? Paul appeals to the Corinthians to turn from their interest in the spectacular gifts to value the higher gifts. The call of Christ is to value love above all else to make love the aim in everything.

Ephesians 5:21

5:21. The counsel concerning the relationship of husbands and wives are greatly expanded in Ephesians (contrast Colossians 3:18-19). In some ways this passage is difficult because of the parallel Paul draws to the relationship between Christ and the Church. With regard to the marriage relationship itself the author has four basic convictions:

- (1) The husband and wife relationship is based on mutual submission and not power and authority.
- (2) As declared in scripture (Genesis 2:24) husband and wife become one. The unity of husband and wife is illustrated by the intent described in the Genesis creation story – male and female He created them.
- (3) The husband is regarded as the head of this body (1 Corinthians) and takes the leadership in maintaining unity and mutual submission.
- (4) The husband has the greater responsibility in the marriage relationship as illustrated by the greater number of responsibilities.

The analogy drawn between marriage and the relation of Christ to his church provides another deeper aspect to this relationship. Christ’s love was self-sacrificing and sanctifying. This new relationship is based not on control, authority or power, but rather on a servant’s heart and action.
