

**Pastors' Bible Class
Watertown, WI
January 29-30, 2017**

Mark 7:31-8:31

Mark 7:31-37

31 – 35 Could there be a more beautiful picture of Jesus than the one we have here! Again the condition is one of hopelessness and helplessness. But so deep and profound is the condition that the man brought to Jesus lived in a world of silence in which he may have understood only his misery and that wordlessly. Worst of all, he cannot hear the voice of Jesus or about him, so that he could come to him on his own. He is brought by a crowd whose intentions he cannot understand and whose actions likely produced not hope but fear, as suggested by Jesus' behavior with the man.

But look at Jesus! He ignores the advice of the crowd - - prayers he answers in his own way, a way always better than the way we thought up. And look at how much better his way is in this case. Did he take him by the hand? Did he put his arm around the man's shoulder? Whatever he did, he did it in such a way as to inspire confidence, trust. We see Jesus again as so often taking into consideration the specific circumstance of the individual. Removed from the crowd, see how the man responds to Jesus: He lets Jesus touch him, even lets him stick his fingers in his ears and on his tongue.¹ The man could only interpret Jesus' actions as well-meaning. Even Jesus' looking up into the sky and sighing - - how often in exasperation and frustration, in profound sadness and anguish had the man himself done that?

And then – are you ready for it? Behold again the power of the Word! As at creation and as in the creation of faith so here: Jesus speaks into a void incapable of responding; and then with his Word he creates the capacity and fills it!!! Yes, fills it: Note the magnitude of the miracle; if we may assume that the man was born this way, from whence comes it that he has a vocabulary and concepts capable of being expressed in words, concepts of which he previously knew little or nothing and words that he speaks plainly (the plainly refers not merely to words that are understandable but as well to the thoughts those words express - - he doesn't just babble *hubahubahuba*.)

36 -37 Once again we cannot help but notice it: Jesus knew full well that this miracle would be publicized with fulsome voice, and that that would hinder him in his ultimate mission. Nevertheless so great was his compassion that he performed it anyway. That the people would act as they did is altogether reasonable and understandable; what Jesus asks for however is not a reasonable response but first and always a *sacrificium intellecti*; rare are his doctrines or commands where such is not the case.

¹ Clearly, given the age in which we live, we have to find less tactile ways of showing compassion/empathy. That's sad, *aber doch*.

And that bids us consider: What is the ultimate and primary purpose for which we have ears to hear, a mind to understand what is heard, and a tongue to speak what we know? Is it not that we should hear the voice of Jesus, that we should ponder and treasure what he has said, and then that whatever we say should reflect that we have listened to him? Think of the leper in Mark 1, and before that of Saul's sacrifice in 1 Sam. 15.

Here the crowd indeed listens and ponders well. But then it goes about doing whatever it wanted. If, as they say, Jesus has done all things excellently, then reason should conclude that this command to keep silent was also excellent. But we always know everything better than God does and are more ready to advise him than to respond as he bids us.

Still the confession in itself is worth pondering: If he does all things excellently, then the infliction of suffering and crosses that occasion cries despairing of human help and fastening alone on his promises must be excellent too, *nicht wahr?*

Mark 8:1-26

1 – 9 The miracle of the feeding of the four thousand is presented with such simplicity and yet has embedded in the account such beautiful lessons. It is absent the drama so rich that accompanied and resulted from the earlier feeding of the 5,000.

Notice the verb that Jesus uses in vs. 2. (In German: *Mich jammert des Volks!*) It is used here in reference to physical needs. Think of that in contrast to eastern religions that seek a total separation of body and soul; monasticism does the same. How good it is to know that Jesus is not merely aware of those needs; the needs concern him deeply in and of themselves. An exaggerated spiritualizing of Jesus misses that consoling point, a point especially comforting in times of physical need or peril.

It is also worth observing that here it is Jesus who brings the need to the fore - - not the crowd, not the disciples either. Surely the thought must have flit through their minds; but if it did, they neither express it nor seem worried about it. What kind of preaching must that have been that so many and so attentively, so apparently without worldly concerns even for their next meal *sought first the kingdom of God and his righteousness*, confident or satisfied that whatever was necessary Jesus could/would provide. Luther picks up on exactly this thought in the Small Catechism explanation to the Fourth Petition.

And speaking of Jesus' omniscience - - and in the process getting also to the spiritual benefit of physical need - - Jesus could have prevented this dilemma very easily by sending the crowd away sooner. So then, in need that he could easily avert, need that he himself has caused, he bids us give thanks that it wasn't averted. For how else would we come to learn of and give thanks for his compassion in all our needs and cares, be they spiritual or physical? Again, they are never as far apart as we sometimes pretend.

The disciples seem to have learned some of these lessons from the earlier feeding of the five thousand. Notice the plain, drama-less discourse with the disciples. There is no hunting for what the crowd might still have left over from what they might have brought. There is just Jesus

question of how much the disciples themselves still had left. When they tell him, there no exasperated cry of *But what difference can that make?* No, the matter is all in Jesus' hands, his problem, not theirs. *This isn't really our problem, Jesus; it's yours, and we trust you to do what you will, yes, "to do all things well."* Notice too how Jesus as usual asks a question not because he doesn't know the answer; he asks to highlight a point about to be made.

A few other things worthy of note: This time the disciples do not initiate the conversation with the unasked-for advice that they gave before the feeding of the five thousand: *Send them away!* Notice too the verb in vs. 4: in the feeding of the 5,000 they were concerned about finding enough to give everyone just a little; here they speak of satisfying (completely) the hunger of the crowd. That whole business of learning from past experiences of Jesus' providential care, a care which is designed to increase our trust in him, we too often miss. Either we forget the past rescue, yes, and the past benefit gained from tribulations, or we conclude: *But this time is different!* It's an especially useful matter to consider in *Seelsorge* for the young and then for the very old. For the rest too - - but these two groups need that instruction in especially critical periods of life, of trial, of the need for triumph over the most horrendous assaults of the devil.

Not to be lost in all of this is the devotion of this crowd. They clearly were after more than a side-show-miracle worker. If that's all they wanted, they could have left as soon as they got whatever miracle they were seeking; we would not imagine that they brought their suffering to Jesus and that he just put them off for three days while he continued speaking/teaching. What amazing teaching that must have been! It would seem obvious that most came expecting to stay for a while; otherwise they would have been in some discomfort long before the three days were up. In the earlier feeding of the five thousand, the crowd appears to have gathered spontaneously. But here one rather has the impression that the people had come out purposefully, looking for Jesus. But now, whatever supplies they had brought with them are gone. So too the disciples; they likewise apparently had enough to stretch for a while. But now they are down to the last of it.

That Jesus went on teaching for three days might have something to do with the region itself: It rarely saw Jesus, was far from any place where Jesus spent most of his time, was populated by a mixed multitude of Jews and Gentiles. The very remoteness of the region might well have enhanced the wonder and awe of the populace at the two miracles (the healing of the demon possessed who became a missionary of sorts ((Mark 5:18-20)), and that of the man who was deaf and dumb), as well as an appreciation for Jesus' coming to them at all. Think of the frequently striking difference in the attitude of those who have been Lutherans forever and those newly won by the gospel they had never heard before or heard it only in a mangled form.

Jesus notes that many had come from a distance! How did they know he was there? Picture it: Messengers go fleet-footed from one *Dorf* to another: *Jesus is here! Mach' schnell!* On Sunday morning may we be faithful in giving those who come reason to say with the Psalmist: *I was glad when they said to me: Let us go into the house of the Lord!*

Isn't it interesting that Jesus says *Grace?* He the creator and the provider? His thanks to his Father and ours moves us to marvel at his attitude of delight in and thanksgiving for the providence of God for his ever-needy children. His was certainly not just a perfunctory, pro

forma prayer. By the way, when we pray: *Komm Herr Jesu, sei unser Gast*, who is really guest and who is host?

The whole account provides a fine commentary on Matthew 6:25-34. The degree of God's generosity is underlined by the word used here for *basket*; it is the same word that is used in Acts 9:25 for the basket used by Paul to escape over the wall of Damascus.

Notice the smaller miracles, almost lost in the size of the big miracle: Consider the behavior of the crowd. Additionally, what principle does Jesus illustrate by failing to match the gift with the need? Note the very different ending in the crowd from the ending after the feeding of the 5,000: These may have learned more from their stay with Jesus than those 5000 did.

Notice too the points of contrast between this feeding and the feeding of the multitudes in the wilderness during the Exodus. Can you think of reasons for counting this miracle the superior/more blessed of the two? Could one be in Jesus' choosing to need help???? What joy is there in that point for pastors and for our members in their station in life too? Note too how as is so usual in God's economy of things: Lowliness for the servant is evident, glory remains hidden - - who praised the disciples for their humble service that Jesus gave them the honor of performing? No, if the people remembered anything from the day and the miracle, it was Jesus! What do are we anxious that people remember coming out of church or from our years in the ministry? The service is lowly, the glory for us hidden - - and that's the way we should want it, so that Jesus may be all in all. That sometimes we get to share a bit in the glory is frosting on the cake.

Luther in a sermon for the Feast of Sts. Peter and Paul on Luke 5:1-11 makes an observation apropos here: *There is work and there is worry about outcomes; the work Jesus gives to us, and the worry about outcomes he reserves for himself; too often we get it backwards - - "Why doesn't God do this and that? I'm so fretful about how things will turn out!"* Something especially for pastors to think about as our work becomes ever more difficult. In this instance the work was lowly and easy. But whether for a moment light and easy or difficult and frustrating the glory is that Jesus lets us be, indeed choses to *need us* to be the waiters at his banquet table. *When we forget that, we betray a lack of trust in the efficacy of the means of grace.* Later in Acts 6 the apostles will have the preaching and teaching of the Word keeping them so busy that they will not be able to wait tables anymore.² But where the need is, there the servant wants to be found, a servant never too important to stoop and bend if that's what's needed.

Oh to have such a care for Jesus' sheep that we prepare as best we can to be good waiters rather than just good enough as we feed their souls. Oh to have sheep who are not restless and annoyed if the sermon goes over 15 minutes or the Bible class is just too much to expect of people busy with important things to do and places to go. At least let the reason for their restlessness not be our own haphazard preparation.

At the same time what a reason for joy in that people show up at all! That they listen! That they do respond with gratitude to Jesus for those he sends to care for them! It's always a miracle and more than we have a right from ourselves to expect - - *again, appreciate the effectiveness of the*

² And in the context of Acts 6 one wonders if they were very good at that anyway.

means of grace, of Jesus' own faithfulness to his Word and promise! Consider how grateful Jesus was that these thousands put aside every earthly care just to listen to him! Consider as well how he blessed them for it both spiritually and now even physically.

These two miracles, that of the feeding of the 5,000 and then this feeding of the 4,000 stand in such sharp contrast to most of Jesus' other miracles. The others for the most part are done for the benefit of one and indirectly for the benefit of a few friends or relatives of that one. And so often those miracles are accompanied with the stern command to keep the miracle a secret. But these two are so public, so impossible either to deny or keep secret. They are performed like book ends to the observance of Passover that year as Jesus begins the final year of his earthly ministry. They indisputably proclaim his deity as now he begins his final year and his triumphal march to the cross.

10 – 13 Dalmanutha is on the northwestern coast of the Sea of Galilee, sparsely populated. Whether the Pharisees heard that Jesus was up there and came looking for him or that Jesus went from there to Capernaum where the encounter took place is disputed. Matthew includes the Sadducees in this confrontation. Mark reports it only in summary fashion as an introduction to what follows.

What's interesting about the encounter is that as hostility to Jesus mounts, friendship between people who despise one another can be set aside in the interest of a common attack on Jesus. Can you think of interesting combinations in our day of the same ilk? One of the more telling in the past was the union between atheist/secularists and "conservative"/nationalistic Protestants, an alliance that included liberal churches as well, against parochial schools; that hostile alliance became particularly close and fierce during the times of the world wars.

The call for a sign from heaven puts into sharp contrast Jesus' credentials established by his many miracles and the sign his enemies wanted. First of all, Jesus' miracles always had not his own benefit but that of others in mind. His opponents want flashes from the sky that will benefit no one; of course, they assume that in any case Jesus would not be able to produce such a sign.

Signs it should be noted always point to something beyond the sign itself; a sign is a means, not an end. Thus Jesus' signs point both to his deity and no less to his compassion. A sign that had only the first would be out of character for Jesus, who came to seek and to save the lost; and he would do that by the compassion that would soon reach its height on the cross.

The signs from heaven are numerous in the Old Testament (Lev. 9, Josh. 10, 1 Sam. 7, 1 Kings 18, et al.); but almost all of them³ have this in common that they demonstrate the power of God over his enemies - - the Pharisees and Sadducees should be careful what they ask for! And is that in fact the point Mark's account makes by the unfinished account (provided in Matthew) of the discourse? It is worth noting that those signs from heaven delivered God's faithful people but did not change much in those who were not already believers.

See again how beautifully the human and divine natures of Christ are united in his person: The God-man sighs in exasperation and sorrow over the stubborn unbelief and that to their ruin of

³ There are possible exceptions, e.g 2 Chron. 6-7.

this generation. (There are incidentally only three generations, no matter how we consider them: before Christ came, after he came, in heaven; or the generation that believes, the generation that does not believe, the generation glorified already in heaven.)

We might want God to demonstrate his power in these days when the tattered bride of Christ appears weak and helpless and increasingly so; but only the Word changes hearts. It is as Jesus said: “Even if one would rise from the dead ...” So we may point even to the miraculous proofs of the gospel’s power evidenced in the continued existence of the church; we may point to all that Christians have done as proofs of their gospel created faith; it makes no impression at all on the persistent foes of the gospel, any more than Jesus’ miracles made on most of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Nevertheless it will all stand on the Last Day as a witness against unreasoning unbelief.

Mark’s leaving off of Jesus’ answer is striking, akin to that dread passage in the Passion account: “Jesus gave no answer” (Luke 23:9). When he stops speaking, when he sends the promised famine of the Word (Amos 8:11), then all is truly lost! Always the warning/reminder of Isaiah 66:2 is in place!!

14-21 How quickly concerns about the bread-basket reassert themselves! Jesus’ primary concern he expresses with two verbs, one directed primarily at paying attention, the other chiefly at taking the matter to heart, seriously. Leaven is used in the Bible in both a good and a bad sense, here obviously in the latter. The point is that the small hidden germ has as its very nature that it is not content to stay small; it always spreads and grows until it permeates the whole. So, be it the self-righteousness of the Pharisees or the carnal security of Herod. (How insulting to the Sadducees to be thus indistinguishable from Herod, a point obvious but in polite society no doubt not referenced!) *Jesus use of the present tense and the doubling of the verb make his point one we dare not lightly pass by!*

Again in vs. 17, two verbs; the first emphasizes thinking, the second points more to applying what has been thought through and understood. Notice the dramatic use of the perfect tense when Jesus speaks of hardening and then cites a passage used more commonly for the obdurate. That underscores for us too the possibility that by carelessness and indifference, sloppy exegesis and even more sloppy doctrinal and practical application of the Scriptures we end up in the same place with the obdurate; that’s the way leaven works - - how masterfully Jesus uses rhetoric and ties everything together in such short sentences. By the way, once leaven starts to work, the process cannot be reversed - - how rare it is that one who has fallen from the truth into error ever returns to the truth; no, the leaven of error just keeps spreading to the harm of the one who holds to it and to the damage of those he infects. *The two verbs and the perfect participle encompass all three organs of the soul, namely reason, will and emotion with will always the most important.*

In vs. 21 we may find an interesting parallel as we seek to answer Jesus’ question between this incident and other kinds of questions that come up and leave us only with a paradox for an answer. Here and so many other times the disciples just didn’t catch on: That they didn’t is laid at their own feet, their own fault; that after Pentecost they did get it is ascribed solely to the work of the Holy Spirit, is altogether to God’s credit as his gift. What a mystery: Everything wrong in

our understanding is our own fault; but understanding is alone the gift of God; everything wrong in our sanctification is our own fault; but every good work is first and foremost that which God works in/through us. So reason exerts itself rightly in searching the Scriptures and applying the Word in doctrine and practice; in either self-righteousness or carnal security to refuse such exertion is the leaven of the Pharisees and of Herod; the dread consequences will come and we will have no one to blame but ourselves. But for continuing orthodoxy and growing sanctification we have only God to thank and praise.

22-26 Jesus is going back and forth in these remote regions on the northern shores of the Sea of Galilee. Here he is in Bethsaida on the north-eastern shore - - not in the Bethsaida near Capernaum.

The miracle of healing this blind man is unique among Jesus' miracles. But it has some features that are common to all of his miracles and those commonalities take away most of the curiosity about the unique features of the miracle. The commonalities: the miracle manifests Jesus' omnipotence and his compassion; the miracle emphasizes Jesus' compassionate omniscience - - he always deals with the specific needs of the individual - - it's never with him "One size fits all." *Thus in a way we can say that each miracle is unique* - - a point worth remembering when preaching on texts that contain miracles.

"Touch him!" - - always advice for God! The best prayers in the gospels are those that simply express the problem/need, and leave the rest to Jesus.

As to the uniqueness of the miracle: In so many of the miracles of healing the particular, the individual need is obvious and it is easy to apply what Jesus does to our particular and equally obvious needs; consider the example of the woman in Mark 5:25 ff. But here, apart from the obvious need for healing, the way that Jesus deals with the man suggests needs hidden from us. But Jesus knew what those needs were. How many have needs hidden? No one knows what may be in the heart of many or all who sit in front of us on Sunday morning. No one may know what particular very individual needs lie deep within the recesses of your heart either. Everyone wears a mask to one degree or another. But Jesus knows. And Jesus deals in the unfolding of his Word and of individual histories with those needs perfectly and one at a time. That fact hidden in this miracle gives it its own unique glimpse into the always knowing and still compassionate heart of the Savior. At the risk of allegorizing: Jesus often uses means that are not so pleasant to bring us to a fuller awareness of our lack of merit or otherwise of our desperate need; and then he brings us too only bit by bit to a full satisfaction of that need; he always brings down the mighty from their seats and exalts them of low degree - - sometimes that takes a while. (*Er handelt mit uns oft stufenweise.*)

MARK 8:27 – 31

THE ROLLER-COASTER BEGINS!

These verses mark the half-way point in the gospel, and the beginning of a shift from an emphasis on Jesus' deeds as evidence that he is the Son of God and promised Savior to an emphasis on his teaching of the same - - without leaving altogether aside the proofs in deeds.

8:27 When Jesus asks questions, he is not looking for information, but setting up a teaching opportunity; his question will help clarify the thinking of the disciples and put it into proper perspective. We follow Jesus' example in, for example, teaching the Catechism by means of questions. The disciples have come to correct conclusions about Jesus: he has demonstrated by word and deed that he is indeed the Son of God and the Messiah.

Now it is time:

- a) to put their conclusion in the proper perspective of truth in its sharp contrast with error - - something that we always need to do too, lest we get confused about the distinction and its importance; *Peter's emphatic answer is in part polemical.*
- b) to begin deepening their understanding of what it means that he is the Son of God and the Messiah, just how expensive that is for him AND then will be for them; again, something never to be left far out of mind, lest we join the herd in thinking that Jesus is great and following him is nice too.

28 - 30 One answer to Jesus' question is that of Herod whose conscience perhaps bothered and frightened him. Another answer is that of those who knew a little of the Bible's promises concerning the coming of the Messiah but who couldn't be bothered to think the matter through to see that Jesus was much more than Elijah had ever been. The third answer is that of those who thought even less and just concluded that Jesus was another prophet - - odd that that conclusion didn't impress them more than it seems to have, given that there had been no prophets except for John the Baptist in over 400 years. ALL THREE answers have one thing in common: Jesus is no more than a man. IT IS EASY TO DISMISS JESUS' CALL WHEN WE JUST PUT HIM IN THE CLASS OF A MORTAL AND NOTHING MORE; IT IS LIKEWISE EASY TO IGNORE HIM EVEN IF WE SEE HIM AS GOD, BUT AS GOD WHO JUST CAME FOR A LOVING VISIT; ALL SUCH IGNORE THE ALL IMPORTANT CHRISTOS, THE ONE ANOINTED TO BE PROPHET, PRIEST AND KING (Matt. 16:16).

People have so many varied opinions about who Jesus is. That brings people to the conclusion: "Who can know? Whatever your opinion is, that's the truth for you." Jesus will have none of that. He doesn't answer Peter by saying: "That's nice; your opinion is a good one, even better than the others, though the others are not without merit." The Greek of Peter's answer with the use of the pronoun and then the definite article is emphatic; there is a bold and unequivocal tone to his answer. Peter's confession shows that he and the others have come to the conclusion already announced by their former teacher, John, as to Jesus' person; but the rest of John's designation of Jesus as the Lamb and its significance is not yet clear to them. They confess their faith, in short, as to his person; now it will be Jesus' mission to unfold his work in all its stark and glorious detail before he enters into his Passion.

We see Peter in one of his few shining moments- - but as always, let the one who thinks he stands, take heed lest he fall. Peter speaks well, but listens not quite so well, as we shall see.

As good as the confession is and as correct, it is but the beginning of their understanding, an understanding which Jesus now will begin to fill out. For that reason it is not time for them to become true "Apostles" i.e. those "sent out with the message." Furthermore, were they to broadcast their conclusion now, it would foster false messianic expectations in the crowd, like

those demonstrated after the feeding of the 5,000 when they wanted to take him away and make him a king - - an inclination which Jesus had to ward off not only in the people generally but even in the disciples whom he quickly separated from the crowd and sent them into a boat, lest they yield to a temptation to join in such a movement (Mk 6:44, Jn 6:14). Only after Pentecost will they be fully ready.

31 The disciples understood that Jesus was the Son of God and the Savior. What they did not yet understand was how 1) How expensive salvation would be; 2) How great, beyond measure the mercy, love and grace of God that he himself would undertake to pay the price. Notice every detail of the verse:

It is necessary - - the necessity makes clear the enormity of the need - - were the need for our salvation relative or trivial, it would not be necessary to pay so high a price, nor would the one paying it have to be the Son of God.

It's worth our while to sink a bit deeper into this whole matter of necessity. Consider what in our lives is necessary and what is contingent - - categories related to those of *essence* and *accident*. Things necessary for our lives are to a considerable extent things imposed on us from the outside, by nature: air, water, food, etc. Are there other things that we have chosen to call necessary for our existence, matters of essence and not accident? What in God is necessary? Clearly nothing that can be imposed on him by nature and nothing that we can impose on him. Everything in God that is necessary must be by his free choice. And so what does he choose to call necessary? Suffering! Death! - - How many sermons are there in this one word *necessary*? Air, water, food are necessary because of my nature; I have decided to make necessary wife and children, at least some money, my house, car, cell phone, at least 7 hrs. of sleep, sports, other recreations, -- what else might you add to the list? Opps, I forgot to mention: suffering, death, the constant of the Word and sacraments, God! But look by contrast at what Jesus calls necessary for himself and why! Think of Jesus' words to Mary: *Eins ist not!* (Luke 10:42). How absolute is that in our thinking, in our behavior? Worth thinking about.

In considering the above we come again to see exegesis to such a large extent as a matter of peering through a key hole into the mind of God. We peer and peak, turn this way and that, and at best we arrive at speechless awe just looking into a corner, now this one, now that? What will heaven be like when we see him as he is?! Does the thought make it a bit easier to see why heaven has to last such a long time?

the Son of man - - must pay! For it is man who sinned, not God. It is to God that the price must be paid, and therefore the payment can only be made by THE Son of man who is at the same time God himself.

he must suffer many things - - Jesus will now spend more and more time with the disciples in as much seclusion as he can manage to get them ready for the horrible scene they will witness of the many things he will suffer. He gives here the beginnings of an outline.

Notice in this outline that Jesus' death will not be from a mob like the death of St. Stephen, nor will it be anonymous assassination, nor incidental to one of the many uprisings common in the day. No, his suffering will be a legal murder brought about by the highest religious and political figures of the land. His suffering will be on display for all to see, his public humiliation total. *If we were giving advice to the Sanhedrin, we might have suggested a secret murder that would have gotten them off the hook of any possible criticism from the crowd. After all they had shown their sensitivity to public opinion when plotting to make sure that the Passion did not occur during the Feast, and elsewhere as well, when z.B. they declined to answer Jesus' question about the origin of John the Baptist's teaching. BUT it was necessary! that it happen just as it did.*

He must rise after three days - - As total as the disgrace and pain of the Passion, Jesus' regularly ends his discussion of it with the promise as well of his resurrection.

It strikes us as strange that the disciples were so slow to grasp this oft repeated prophecy of suffering coupled with that of ultimate glory and triumph. That's just how deeply they were influenced by the messianic expectations of the day - - IT'S ALWAYS HARD TO KNOCK OUT CULTURAL ASSUMPTIONS AND REPLACE THEM WITH THE WORD OF GOD, EVEN IN OURSELVES!! It isn't as though these promises of Jesus regarding his coming Passion were unknown or unheard of from the O.T. Quite the contrary there are any number of graphic descriptions of the Savior's suffering there. Still it took Jesus' own explanation of these as z.B. for the Emmaus disciples on Easter Sunday when Jesus opened up their understanding of all the prophecies in the O.T.

Notice THE PLACES: Jesus' teaches about his Passion in out of the way places, largely out of the reach of his most powerful enemies; but when the time comes for these prophecies to be fulfilled, Jesus will deliberately go into the jaws of his foes, so that nothing will slow down or hinder the fulfillment of what is necessary. What of his humiliation was foretold in a whisper to a few is fulfilled in a shout and for all to see; what was promised however of his exaltation after three days is hidden from view; no one sees it. And he will later call those blessed who have not seen and yet have believed - - another exaltation of the means of grace, of the office of preaching.

NOTICE TOO who will inflict the suffering: it is every class of the Sanhedrin, priests, scribes, teachers of the law i.e. Sadducees and Pharisees - - people who hated one another are united in their conviction that Jesus must die in this way. Notice too the implication that they will hand him over to the govt. to do the dirty work for them (the passive verb, "will be handed over") - - a govt. that they hated as much as they hated one another.

FOR JESUS TO FULFILL THIS PROPHECY HIS DEVOTION TO OUR SALVATION MUST BE ABSOLUTE, TOTAL, COMPLETE; HIS ATTENTION TO OUR REDEMPTION UNDIVIDED. *Would that we could find a moment to repay him in kind - - that we cannot only magnifies still further the nature of both our absolute need and of his perfect love for us.*

Jesus "spoke the word plainly." There was no metaphor or parable or *meshal*. There was no possibility of misunderstanding.