

February 27, 2021

Lectionary Passages:

Psalm 22:23-31

Genesis 16:7-15

Mark 8:27-30



Selected Verses:

Posterity will serve him;  
future generations will be told about the Lord,  
and proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn,  
saying that he has done it. – Psalm 22: 30-31

The angel of the Lord found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, the spring on the way to Shur. And he said, “Hagar, slave-girl of Sarai, where have you come from and where are you going?” – Genesis 16: 7-8

Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that I am?” ... He asked them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered him, “You are the Messiah.” – Mark 8: 27, 29

Devotional:

Jesus asked the disciples the most important question in the scriptures: “Who do you say that I am?” Everyone has a view of who Jesus is. Some think he was a good teacher. Others think he was crazy. Some think he was a prophet pointing people back to God. Even today, almost everyone has a view of who Jesus is. The question Jesus asked Peter, he asks you today: “Who do you say that I am?”

Peter’s answer was based on his experience with Jesus. From seeing Jesus heal the sick, feed the poor, share the message of the Kingdom of God, Peter replied, “You are the Messiah.” Peter did not have a complete understanding of what that meant. In a moment, Jesus will tell them that the Messiah must go up to Jerusalem, have great suffering, be reject and be killed. Peter couldn’t comprehend that the Messiah, the Son of God, would suffer and die. That did not make complete sense.

Yet, God does not make complete sense by human understanding. God had promised Abraham and Sarah that they would become a great nation. Yet, after ten years they did not have a child to fulfill the start of the promise. Sarah knew she was beyond childbearing, so maybe thought her slave girl could fulfill the promise. Yet, once Hagar was with child, the pain of being childless was too much, and Sarah sent Hagar away. While in the wilderness, with nowhere to go, pregnant and alone. A messenger (angel) from God came and told her to return to Abraham. God’s plan was for Abraham and Sarah, yet God would also care for the child of Hagar. God cared for her when nobody else would.

Jesus, the Messiah and Son of God, cared for the people even when they would reject him and put him to death. Jesus came to fulfill the promise made long ago to Abraham, Sarah and Hagar. In Jesus Christ, God sees us in the midst of our loneliness and offers us life and life eternal.

After Peter proclaimed, "You are the Messiah," Jesus told them not to tell anyone. The meaning of the Messiah wouldn't have its full meaning until after his death and resurrection. All too often, followers today still think that is what Jesus wants us to do. "Don't tell anyone Jesus is the Messiah." Yet, the death and resurrection have brought about a new creation. People have the opportunity to have a new relationship with God. The Messiah has truly brought salvation to the world.

Today, Jesus asks you "Who do you say that I am?" What is your answer? And are you willing to follow Jesus, take up your cross and follow him, while sharing with others the good news of the gospel? Like Hagar, God comes to us in the midst of our struggles, while we are alone and cares for us. We can say, "I have seen the Lord." Then, we can tell future generations about God's faithfulness.

The church is always one generation from dying, and with the pandemic, it seems like it might even be closer. Yesterday, the Supreme Court again ruled that California cannot ban churches from meeting. The churches claim that freedom of religion and assembly gives them the right to meet and worship God. It is from these decisions that Oregon has made every mandate a "suggestion" for churches. No matter, if we remain silent about who Jesus is, how will future generations know the redeeming and delivering love of God?

#### Prayer:

Living God, we are thankful that you meet us when we are alone and in distress. You give us direction to follow you and trust you in the midst of the unknown. By the gift of your Spirit, you have revealed your salvation to us. By grace, we can proclaim Jesus is our Lord and Messiah. May we follow you to the cross and live as your disciples. Give us the words to say and the actions to do to share your love and salvation with the next generation, so that in the end every knee will bow and every tongue confess that you are Lord. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.