

He is King
Acts 1:12-26

Matthew 20:1-16

Romans 9:1-23

Responsive Psalm 19:1-10

This morning we are going to be finishing up the first chapter here Acts. In our passage this morning we find the Disciples doing what Jesus had told them to do, go into Jerusalem and wait. So let us read this morning our passage starting in verse 12, and reading through to the end of the chapter. (read Acts 1:12-26)

So we know that the span of time from the resurrection, to the ascension is about 40 days from what we are told in the first half of this chapter. I can not help but to think about the whirlwind of emotions, and thoughts that must have been going through the Disciples minds throughout this entire event. As we saw when we went through the book of Mark, throughout Jesus ministry, and during the quiet, peaceful times that he had with his Disciples he would instruct them of the times that were to come, he would tell them that he would be taken and put to death, but that it was necessary. But it was not given for them to know, they continued to believe that he was the Messiah, but they understood that he had come to bring salvation to Israel.

I took some time this week, and went through the book of Mark and picked out a few places where he had foretold of this time that we now see the Disciples in here in the book of Acts. In chapter 2, When confronted by the Pharisee's as to why his followers do not fast, he said, "Can the friends of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them they cannot fast. But, the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast in those days."

Also in chapter 8:27 "Now Jesus and his Disciples went out to the towns of Caesarea Philippi: and on the road he asked his disciples, saying to them, Who do men say that I am? So they answered, John the ?baptist; but some say Elijah;and others, one of the prophets. He said to them, But who do you think that I am? Peter answered and said to him, you are the Christ. Then he strictly warned them that the should tell no one about him. And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He spoke this word openly, Then Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. Imagine this if you will, Peter, taking Jesus, the Messiah, the Son of God.. aside and rebuking him for what he had said. It may see odd to us to read of such a thing...but I think it attests to the closeness that Jesus had with some of his disciples, that they would feel comfortable enough that they would be able to even approach him in this way. But as we see here In the following verse....it wasn't the right thing to do, for though Peter took him aside to say this privately, Jesus turned to the rest and rebuked him openly, verse 33 " But when he had turned around and looked at his disciple he rebuked peter saying, Get behind me Satan! For you are not mindful of the things of God, but of the things of men."

Mark 10:33 "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn him to death and deliver him to the gentiles; and they will mock him, and scourge him, and spit on him, and kill him, and the third day he will rise again.

Then after all of this, we still see that his disciples did not understand, and when Jesus was taken, they scattered just as Jesus told them that they would, and as was foretold in Zechariah, 13 "Awake, o sword against my shepherd, Against the man who is my companion says the Lord of Hosts, Strike the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered."

And as we know from the Gospels this is indeed what happened, and even Peter, who said that he will never deny Christ, and will stand and die with him, but we know that even he denied knowing Jesus 3 times before the rooster crowed.

So here their teacher, their friend, and the one who they believed would bring salvation to Israel was indeed captured, given over to the Roman's and put to death on the cross just as he had told them would happen. And they still yet, did not understand, they mourned his death, and doubted the accounts of the women at the tomb who claimed that they had seen him. As I had mentioned a few weeks ago, for us to look at this, and see that Jesus was telling them plainly what was to take place, and yet they still did not understand, they still did not see seems odd to us....but we must remember, they had not yet received the Holy Spirit who's purpose is to minister such an understanding, being able to see, being able to hear, and being able to understand God's words.

So now, we find the disciples in hiding, afraid for their lives, for if their teacher was found guilty and was put to death then surely they would be hunted as well....and in the midst of them Jesus appears. Can you imagine, just days after your mentor and friend is publicly shamed and put to death, he appears in the locked room where you are meeting? Such a crazy emotional rollercoaster, going from confidence and assurance in the presence of the Messiah, to running in fear, and hiding upon his death, to only again see that he is alive? And as we can gather from the first half of the first chapter of Acts, it would seem that the disciples still understand Jesus' mission to still restore the physical kingdom of Israel, for they asked him, and we see this in verse 6.

And then again, the account of his ascension, leaving again but this time it is different, this time he says he will return, and this time he says that they will be equipped with the helper, the Holy Spirit. And that brings us to our passage here today, where it says in verse 14, that after they had gathered together in Jerusalem, "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers." And out of them, look who stands up.. Peter, the one who denied Christ 3 times...he stands up in the midsts of the 120 disciple who had gathered there and says, verse 16. "Men and brethren, this scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus." This is a new man, this is not the one who in ignorance rebuked Jesus when he talked about his coming death, and this is not the Peter who ran and hid and denied him. But rather he is now understanding, he is now seeing the larger picture at play.

The disciples journey is an excellent example into God's sovereignty, and man's inability when it comes to salvation. For here we have Jesus, walking with them and telling them exactly what is going to happen...and yet they did not believe, throughout the gospels we have Jesus teaching in parables, and they did not understand, but here, we see Peter, and other disciples now understand, they now see that this was never about reestablishing Israel as power among the nations, but was something greater, something superior. God had revealed to them, has now opened their eyes to see, to understand all that they have experienced, but now seeing it through the light of the gospel, of Christ's death, and resurrection. Seeing now, how even Judas fit into the picture of God's sovereign plan.

Peter stands among the disciples and says, that in Judas, scripture was fulfilled which the Holy Spirit spoke of by the mouth of David, Psalm 41:9, "Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, Has lifted up his heel against me." Peter has now become an interpreter of scripture, and is fulfilling the role that God has him in the Church as was spoken of by Jesus in Luke 22, Jesus says to him, "Simon, Simon, indeed Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail and when you have returned to me you shall strengthen your brothers. " Judas was numbered among them, he ministered with them, he sat under the teaching of Jesus...all the while being the one who would betray him, and his betrayal was foretold and it was part of God's plan to bring salvation to his people.

In the Gospels, in the account of the last supper..Jesus says that one of them will betray him, and he says.. it would be better for him that he would have never been born. And here we see this account of what had happened to him. In the death of Judas, and the appointing of Matthias in his place, and showing that all of this was a fulfillment of prophecies, and had been foretold it demonstrates the absolute sovereign hand of God at work. The risen Lord, is not thwarted, or stalled and frustrated by human rebellion, and in fact in the case of Judas it was the very thing that was used to enact and fulfill his redemptive plan.

Think on that for a minute, Judas's rebellion, his betrayal of Jesus was the planned outcome to enact God's will in providing salvation through the death of Jesus. If we look at the world through the lens of this truth, that really should change our outlook on things. Such a thing means that there is nothing, not one thing that happens outside of God's will. That can be a hard thing to understand, that even the evil things of this world serve a purpose in God's plan...but that is exactly what we see in Judas, that is exactly what we see in the Roman Empire, and honestly, it is something we see throughout all of scripture.

Paul even wrote saying that even those who hate God, even those who are lost in their sins still glorify God...Romans 9:22 "What if God, wanting to show his wrath and make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had prepared beforehand for glory." It seems a lot of people avoid this part of the bible...for it means that some are prepared beforehand for mercy, and some for wrath. In the book of Exodus, God speaking to Moses told him this very same thing, chapter 9:13 "Then the Lord said to Moses, Rise early in the morning and stand before Pharaoh, and say to him, Thus says the Lord God of the Hebrews, let my people go so that they may serve me. For at this time I will send all my plagues to your very heart, and on your servants and on your people, that you may know that there is none like me in all the earth. But indeed for this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show my power in you, and that my name may be declared in all the earth."

For this very purpose I raised you up. God appointed Pharaoh, to be Pharaoh at that time. A man who was evil, who did not obey the word of God, and because of it suffered the punishments that God said that he would bring upon him. And all of this was so that God may show his power. People died, children died....so that God may show his power. We, especially here in the West have an unbalanced view of God...we see him as all loving and all giving, which we know he is for he has given his only son to die for us so that we maybe saved....but in always focusing on such we can lose sight in the righteous and holy God, who can not endure evil, who will not allow rebellion and sin to go unpunished.

We look at things like the account with Pharaoh, or Judas, or even all the things we see today and we think it is unfair, and unrighteous that so many should suffer so much, but we forget that there is none who are righteous, none who are worthy, and none who seek after God. All of mankind is under the curse brought by the sin of Adam. All are deserving of death, and hell...and in doing so, God is righteous, he is just, and he is holy. For this world is his creation to do with it as he sees fit, as Paul says.. Does not the potter have power over the clay, out of one lump, to make some for honor and some for dishonor. The fact that God would save any, is nothing more then a great mercy for all are deserving of wrath.

We serve an immense, powerful, eternal God who without him, there would be nothing..and who out of nothing by merely his spoken word created all things. This is the God that we serve, this is the God who loves us, before we were yet even born as scripture says...and because of that love he sent his son to die for us, taking the just punishment that we deserve upon himself so that we may be his, so that we may have a righteousness that is not our own. And if he did this for us, will he not also do more? Will he not provide? As Jesus said, "Do not worry about your life, what you will eat, what you will drink, or what you will wear, look at the birds of the air, they neither sow, nor reap, nor gather into barns yet God feeds them and you are move value then they. So why do you worry about such things? For God knows of all of these things that you need." But rather, seek him and his righteousness and all of things things he will add to you.

God is not only willing, but he is able. So many people trust crazy superstitions, or traditions, or some amalgom of a unknown power or source...yet reject God. They will believe in positive thoughts producing positive outcomes in people across the world...yet they will reject the very God who made the brain which gives those thoughts. They try to explain away the existence of God...yet they themselves only replace him with something else which has no proofs, or merit. They will reject the unchanging sovereign God, and instead worship an every changing man centered science, which is one thing today.. and another thing tomorrow. Or they will believe an a higher power, or a force, or some entity which is unseen, unknowable, and unable to be understood.. and reject a God who is knowable, who can be seen through his creation, and through his people, and can be understood by his word.

Mankind, in their sin, and in their arrogance will turn to anything other then God, which is why they are unable to believe unless first the Holy Spirit works in them, opens their eyes, and understanding to believe as we talked about last week. This God is mighty, he is powerful, and he is vengeful, and wrathful as much as he is merciful, gracious, caring, and loving, for he is also perfectly holy, perfectly righteous, and perfectly just.

It is in this way that I try to see the world, it is in this way that I try to understand evil, and understand man's rebellion toward God. For all have sinned, none are righteous, and all are deserving of death And even this death, even the sin in the world, even the evil serves a purpose in God's will. I think of just this past year even, those who have died who I knew, Aaron, in the hospital fighting for his life right now, the war in Ukraine, people seemingly needlessly dying on the whim of a Tyrant who decides their land is his now.....none of this is outside of God's will, none of this changes God's plan for this world, but not only this world, but for each and every single individual involved in all of it.

Just as with Pharaoh, just as with Judas, just as with the Pharisee's and Saducees, in seeking and plotting the death of Jesus....in all of these awful things, God's plan was fulfilled, and all of things things happened so that his power maybe known, so that we may see his sovereign hand in control, in even the evil.

Satan has no power other than the power that God has allowed, and even that is not a power at all for it only fulfills God's sovereign will. Now that should be an encouraging thought to each and every one of us, for nothing can touch us, nothing can harm us unless God has allowed it. And we know that his allowance of such things works for the fulfillment of his plan within our lives and the lives of those around us. Why did God allow me to get sick? Why did God allow Aaron to get sick? I don't know, but I do know that it was not outside of his will, it is not a surprise or something that would cause God to have to change his plans, for even this apparent evil works ultimately for his good.

And it is in that which I rest, it is in Christ which we find peace, it is in him which makes all the difficulties and atrocities of this world even make sense. This world is not chaos, this world is not in chaos, all things are exactly as they should be. When we went through the book of Mark, talking about the death of Christ on the cross....and all of the things that had to take place to get him there, the generations, the thousands of years, all of the prophecies, all of the lives, all of the decisions that were made to bring the world to the point that put Christ on the cross, and Judas in his company, and the apostles with him. This is not chaos, the world is in perfect order, it is in God's order and he is King.