

# Daily Devotions



**Monday, 10/1/2018**

**Mark 9:30-37**

In the first part of today's reading we see one of the hallmarks of foolishness. As the disciples travel with Jesus, he says something they don't understand. Rather than seek wisdom from Christ himself, they are afraid to ask. We, too, often don't understand what's going on, and rather than seek wisdom from a mentor, from the person we didn't understand or even from the Bible, we become afraid. We are afraid of looking foolish--and thus we become foolish. We need sources of wisdom in our daily life in order to know whom and what to trust. This is increasingly hard in an increasingly complex and divided society. It's too easy to get caught in an echo chamber in which we hear only ourselves. As the church, we are a place that offers wisdom from Jesus, who declares himself to be "the truth" (John 14:6). Let's do what the disciples were afraid to do, and look to Jesus for God's truth and wisdom. *Dear Lord, guide us in ways of wisdom and help us to not be afraid to ask for help and wisdom when we need it. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

Peter Clark, '16, Pastor, Our Savior Lutheran Church, Aurora, Ill.

**Tuesday, 10/2/2018**

**Psalm 116:1-9**

I was presiding at worship at the Memory Care Unit of the Immanuel Lutheran Communities in Kalispell, Montana. The pangs of death surrounded the sounds of the liturgy. Common liturgical phrases seemed to become abstruse--like shibboleths, if you will. The music was confining, because leaders regularly shout the hymn to make up for the quietude of a missing congregation. But then, if I pay attention, I see the mouth move in one or two of the huddled bodies hunched in a wheelchair. It becomes a soulful moment. All liturgy stops. The sacred text vaults into the space between us. I witness memory in these persons, even if they may not know that the snares of death encompass them. I attend to the silent voice on the lips moving ever so alone yet accompanied by our common worship. I then remember how the God of the Psalter, of Psalm 116, inclines an ear and in a strange way allows these suffering persons with the loss of communal memory to remain in the land of the living, eternally. *Oh great God, garner us with the hope that absolves fear. Provide the imagination that becomes a liaison into an age of spiritual discovery of your healing power. We lean on you with hope. Amen.*

David Rommereim, '81, Inter-faith Clergy Coalition, Whitefish, Mont.

**Wednesday, 10/3/2018**

**Mark 8:27-38**

The word "believe" refers to what we give our heart to. As we noted yesterday, the drama of Mark 8:27-38 alludes to "the cost of discipleship" as a means to practice belief. It becomes a pivot point for the Christian gospel. Mark's words keep shining forth and polishing the stars of Jesus' gospel with a confidence that even in fear and trembling, we are sustained by God's abiding presence of hope. Jesus teaches his learners what it means to live out the gospel as we walk the talk in our community. "The cost of discipleship" is a phrase that asks every baptized person to evaluate their convictions and then align them to the journey of faith Jesus walks. In this teaching he leads disciples to the center of the gospel. As a paradigmatic poet, he ushers in the faith formula that saving your life happens once you have a full sense of your calling--and then give it away. Such a gospel remains the pivot point of the Good News. *Lead me, Lord. Guide me, along the way. Let me see the good that I can do, and do it. Keep me mindful of the stakes of the matter as I practice believing according to your way. Amen.*

David Rommereim, '81

Inter-faith Clergy Coalition, Whitefish, Mont.

**Thursday, 10/4/2018**

**Mark 8:27-38**

The word "believe" refers to what we give our heart to. As we noted yesterday, the drama of Mark 8:27-38 alludes to "the cost of discipleship" as a means to practice belief. It becomes a pivot point for the Christian gospel. Mark's words keep shining forth and polishing the stars of Jesus' gospel with a confidence that even in fear and trembling, we are sustained by God's abiding presence of hope. Jesus teaches his learners what it means to live out the gospel as we walk the talk in our community. "The cost of discipleship" is a phrase that asks every baptized person to evaluate their convictions and then align them to the journey of faith Jesus walks. In this teaching he leads disciples to the center of the gospel. As a paradigmatic poet, he ushers in the faith formula that saving your life happens once you have a full sense of your calling--and then give it away. Such a gospel remains the pivot point of the Good News. *Lead me, Lord. Guide me, along the way. Let me see the good that I can do, and do it. Keep me mindful of the stakes of the matter as I practice believing according to your way. Amen.*

David Rommereim, '81, Inter-faith Clergy Coalition, Whitefish, Mont.

**Friday, 10/5/2018**

**James 3:13--4:3, 7-8a**

In this week's readings we have seen how the foolish and unrighteous contrast to the wise and righteous in their reactions to hardship. Now we learn how this plays out within the church as a community. The church that James is writing to is caught up in the middle of social upheaval and an uncertainty about how to deal with those changes. James does not specifically indicate what the issues are or which side of those issues he is on, but he reminds everyone of the need for mercy and peace. James also differentiates between earthly and divine wisdom. Earthly wisdom seeks political power and attracts ambition, while divine wisdom is peaceful and "full of mercy." Conflict itself is seen as the result of foolishness. These conflicts are not born of being correct or of being wise. They result from greed, covetousness and a desire for earthly pleasures over divine wisdom and understanding. No wonder this passage rings so true today. *Dear Lord, we submit ourselves to your will and ask for your guidance in ways of peace and mercy. Amen.*

Peter Clark, '16, Pastor, Our Savior Lutheran Church, Aurora, Ill.

**Saturday, 10/6/2018**

**"Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise," ELW 834**

*1 Immortal, invisible, God only wise,  
in light inaccessible hid from our eyes,  
most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,  
almighty, victorious, thy great name we praise!*

*2 Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light,  
nor wanting, nor wasting, thou rulest in might;  
thy justice like mountains high soaring above  
thy clouds which are fountains of goodness and love.*

*3 To all, life thou givest, to both great and small;  
in all life thou livest, the true life of all;  
we blossom and flourish like leaves on the tree,  
and wither and perish, but naught changeth thee.*

*4 Thou reignest in glory; thou dwellest in light;  
thine angels adore thee, all veiling their sight;  
all laud we would render; oh, help us to see  
'tis only the splendor of light hideth thee!*

This hymn is an old and classic reminder that all wisdom comes to us from God. When we rely on ourselves for anything, we are foolish. This is especially apparent if we look at the original hymn's fifth verse:

*Great Father of Glory, Father of Light,  
Thine angels adore Thee, veiling their sight;  
But of all Thy good graces this grace, Lord, impart:  
Take the veil from our faces, the veil from our heart.*

The hymnist asks God to impart to us some of that wisdom and truth that is God's exclusive domain. We are so lost in our own foolishness that we need obstructions removed from our eyes and hearts in order to see and to recognize truth and wisdom that might actually be standing right in front of us. *Dear Lord, remove the veils that block us from seeing your wisdom. Help us to recognize our own foolishness and to turn to you for the wisdom we so deeply need. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

Peter Clark, '16

Pastor, Our Savior Lutheran Church, Aurora, Ill.

**Sunday 10/6/2018**

**"O Word of God Incarnate," ELW 514**

*1 O Word of God incarnate,  
O Wisdom from on high,  
O Truth unchanged, unchanging,  
O Light of our dark sky:  
we praise you for the radiance  
that from the hallowed page,  
a lantern to our footsteps, shines on from age to age.*

*2 The church from you, dear Master,  
received the gift divine;  
and still that light is lifted  
o'er all the earth to shine.  
It is the chart and compass  
that, all life's voyage through,  
mid mists and rocks and quicksands still guides, O Christ, to you.*

*3 Oh, make your church, dear Savior,  
a lamp of burnished gold to bear before the nations  
your true light, as of old;  
oh, teach your wand'ring pilgrims  
by this their path to trace,  
till, clouds and darkness ended, they see you face to face.*

This hymn is another that acknowledges that the only wisdom and truth we can have come from God and are incarnate in Christ. The hymn is structured to reflect on how we receive that wisdom and try to share it. God sends the incarnate Word of Wisdom and Truth to us in the form of Jesus Christ. That Word is a lantern that pierces the darkness of our hearts to allow this wisdom in. The church is granted this gift from God as a place and community that carries on Christ's legacy and continues to preach God's wisdom to help us make it through this life. Finally, we ask for God to help us as the church because we know we can't do it on our own. Ultimately, we are reminded that all wisdom and truth come from God; what little we might have is not our own, but a gift of God's grace. *Dear God, help us to look to you for wisdom and to point to you when others seek wisdom from us. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Peter Clark, '16

Pastor, Our Savior Lutheran Church, Aurora, Ill.