

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY (YEAR B) Sunday 15 September
2024

EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

FOLLOWING CLUES

EXPLORING NEXT SUNDAY'S THEME

Introducing the Gospel

Peter's confession of faith (Mark 8: 27-38)

Peter's confession of faith is a significant turning point in Mark's Gospel. Up to this point the emphasis has been on the hidden and secret nature of Jesus' Messiahship. Up to this point only the spirit world has recognised Jesus for who he really is. Now the secret is out. Peter had been following the clues and putting the pieces together. However, no sooner does Jesus accept the title Messiah than he also qualifies it. He is not the warrior Messiah, whom some were expecting, but a fully human Messiah who is destined to suffer.

Our image to stimulate reflection on this passage is *following clues*.

Core extract from the Gospel (Mark 8: 27-30; for reflection throughout the week)

On the way to Caesarea Philippi Jesus asked his disciples,
'Who do people say that I am?'
And they answered him,
'John the Baptist; and others, Elijah;
and still others, one of the prophets.'
He asked them,
'But who do you say that I am?'
Peter answered him,
'You are the Messiah.'
And he sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him.

Gospel prayer (for use throughout the week)

Lord Jesus Christ,
you made yourself known to Peter,
and Peter recognised you as the Messiah.
Make yourself known to us,
when we break bread in your name;
that we may proclaim you,
our Lord and Saviour.
Amen.

READING NEXT SUNDAY'S GOSPEL

Mark 8: 27-38

Peter's Declaration about Jesus

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?' And they answered him, 'John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.' He asked them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Peter answered him, 'You are the Messiah.' And he sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him.

Jesus Foretells His Death and Resurrection

Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, 'Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.'

He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.'

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ENGAGING WITH THE THEME

Dwelling with the text (Mark 8: 27-38)

Begin exploring Mark's presentation of the events at Caesarea Philippi by employing the SIFT approach of Sensing, Intuition, Feeling, and Thinking. You may find that one of these approaches comes easier to you than the others. But it is worth trying all four.

- What details in the passage catch your attention (Sensing)?
- What big ideas in the passage spark in your mind (Intuition)?
- What most touches your heart in the passage (Feeling)?
- What most stretches your mind and makes you think in the passage (Thinking)?

Thinking and talking

Identify topics within the passage that can get you thinking and talking. Here are some ideas to get you started.

- Why does Jesus begin the conversation by asking 'Who do people say that I am?'
- What is the significance of John the Baptist, Elijah, and one of the prophets?
- Why does Jesus make the question more personal 'Who do you say that I am?'
- What led Peter to give his answer 'You are the Messiah'?
- What does this narrative say for us today?

Using your Bible

Explore how Matthew and Luke develop this narrative.

- Matthew 16: 13-28
- Luke 9: 18-27

Explore some of the clues offered in Mark's Gospel.

- Mark 1: 21-27
- Mark 1: 40-44
- Mark 3: 7-12
- Mark 4: 35-41
- Mark 6: 41-43

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Exploring online

Widen your exploration of Mark's presentation of the events at Caesarea Philippi by looking up some of the following themes and others of your own choosing.

- Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi
- Messianic secret
- Suffering Messiah

Drawing on experience

The image to stimulate reflection on Mark's presentation of the events of Caesarea Philippi is *following clues*. Draw on your experience of following clues. For example:

- What games have you played following clues?
- What clues do you look for in assessing people?
- What clues do you look for when you are feeling lost?

What have you learned about following clues?

Creating and making

This section offers pointers to some creative activities that may be inspired by Mark's account of the events of Caesarea Philippi or by the image of following clues.

- Make a collage about following clues.
- Make a poster of the clues that led Peter to recognise Jesus as the Messiah.
- Make a poster of the clues that lead people to recognise Jesus today.
- Create a reflection, poem, or prayer on the theme of Peter recognising Jesus as the Messiah or on the image of following clues.

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**Liverpool
Cathedral**

EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

Each week we are inviting people in their homes to look forward to those Sunday services that follow the Revised Common Lectionary Gospel readings. We employ the SIFT approach (Sensing, Intuition, Feeling, and Thinking) to encourage reflection on the Sunday Gospel. We are suggesting a variety of ways in which people of all ages, and households working together, may engage with the Gospel reading and celebrate that engagement with shared activities.

Our invitation then is for you to share your reflections, prayers and photos of your creative work with the Cathedral by emailing them to smc.lesliefrancis@gmail.com.

These materials have been developed by the Canon Theologian of Liverpool Cathedral working in collaboration with the staff team here at the Cathedral, and with sponsorship and support from the St Mary's Centre in Wales.



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