

Christ's First Announcement of Suffering

Preached in New Hope Reformed Fellowship Church, Middleville, MI, on Sunday morning, March 20, 2022 by C. VanSteenselen.

Text: Mark 8:31-33

Psalter 318:1-2

Psalter 113:5,7

Psalter 187:3-4

Psalter 196

Congregation,

Many in the world suffer. We hear of rumors of wars. We hear about wars. Many are killed. Others suffer severely. Do we have compassion? Yes, even the true church suffers. Many are persecuted. Others are put in prison camps. Again others are abandoned by their family or ridiculed. If we think about that, it might cause us to tremble. If we would undergo those things, would we stand?

But an even more severe suffering took place. That was 2000 years ago. The suffering of the Son of God. He was suffering under His Father's wrath. And that for sinners. Today, we will hear about Christ's first announcement of suffering. Ah, it is so misunderstood. Yes, it is even rebuked. No, this is not man's way of salvation but God's. It is certainly necessary. That is why church can and will be saved. It is only because of Him. Let's hear to this message today.

Theme: Christ's First Announcement of Suffering

I. Suffering by the Leaders

II. Suffering by the Disciples

III. Suffering for Sinners

I. Suffering by the Leaders

Background

Before we go into our passage, let us look to the background of our verses. What has happened before? First, we see two feedings. The first the 5000 men. Christ had five loaves and two fishes. The leftovers were 12 baskets with crumbs (Mark 6:33-44). The second feeding was with the 4000 people. Here, Jesus used seven loaves and few fishes. This time, seven baskets were left over (Mark 8:1-9). Besides these feedings,

Christ had also healed various people. One was the daughter of a Syrophenician woman (Mark 7:24-30). Another was a deaf man with speech problems. Jesus had opened his ears and loosened his tongue (Mark 7:31-37). Again another was a blind man. Jesus healed him in two stages. At the first stage, he saw people walking as trees. In the second stage, he saw everything clearly (Mark 8:22-26). Further, Jesus had warned against the Pharisees. He told the disciples that they were hypocrites. They kept the law outwardly but not with their heart (Mark 7:1-23). Yes, they desired a sign, but it was not given. Jesus warned against this leaven of the Pharisees (Mark 8:10-21). Finally, we see Peter's confession. He says, “Thou art the Christ” (Mark 8:27-30). Right after that follows our text.

His Suffering

Our text shows that Jesus would suffer. We read in verse 31, “And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things.” It is interesting to read, “He began to teach.” No. This was nothing new. Often we read that Jesus “began to teach.” For example, he began to teach by parables (4:1-2). His whole ministry existed of teaching. Yes, and He did it with authority (1:22). Also, that He “begins to” do something is not new. At other times, Jesus began to “sent forth” (6:7), “told what would happen” (10:32), and “cast [some] out of the temple” (11:15). What then is new? Well, here He begins to teach about the sufferings of the Son of Man. Matthew describes it as He “began to show.” But who is speaking here? It is the “Son of man.” What is that? A Messianic title. This title has two aspects. First, it is related to suffering, killing and ministering. Half of its uses in Mark has this meaning. For example, “How it is written of the Son of man, that he must suffer many things, and be set at nought” (Mark 9:12). Second, this title is related to power and authority. Yes, the Son of Man had authority to “forgive sins” (2:10), to be “Lord of the Sabbath” (2:28), and to “come with the clouds” (8:38). But where did Mark get this title from? It is found in Daniel 7. There we read, “One like the *Son of man* came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days...There was given him dominion...and a kingdom, that all...should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion” (Dan. 7:13-14). In our text, the focus is on His suffering. At the same time we must say that He did it willingly and freely. He has the power to lay down His life. But what is this Son of Man going to do? We read, He “must suffer many things.” This must is a divine must. He has to execute God's divine plan. He must suffer. Both in body and soul. In body He will crawl as a worm. He will be scourged. In His soul, he will feel

the rejection and forsaking of His Father. He will feel the wrath of His Father. Finally, His body and soul will be separated.

Application

Congregation, are we taught by Son of Man? First the basics. What? Who God is. That He is holy and righteous. That He cannot deal with sinners. Have you then also felt the authority of His Word? If it is well, it began to read you. Then, it pierced through the depth of your heart. It was shining in all areas of your heart. No, nothing remained hidden. But there must also be more. If it is well, you were also taught about the sufferings of Christ. Yes, taught *that* He suffered. That He did it as almighty God. That He did it freely and willingly. Not only that, but also that He must suffer. It could not be without. It had to be this way.

Unconverted friend, the title Son of Man means that He suffered. But that is only one side. There is also another side. He has all authority and power. He will come with the clouds. If you will meet Him, are you then ready? Daniel says that everyone shall serve Him. Then He will also have an everlasting dominion over you. If you do want to be willing now, then you will serve Him unwillingly. Then He shall have the victory over you. But He is still willing to teach. Ask Him, “Teach me who thou art. Teach me thy sufferings.” If not, you are like the Jewish leaders. They rejected him.

His Rejection

This rejection by the leaders we find in verse 31, “And be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes.” Yes, this Son of Man will “be rejected.” Some time before, Christ had quoted that from the Old Testament, Psalm 118. We read there, “The stone which the builders *rejected* is become the head of the corner” (Ps. 118:22, Mark 12:10). He said that after the parable of the vineyard. The husbandmen beat the servants and killed the son. Right after that parable, the Jewish leaders seek to kill Jesus. But now how would Christ be rejected? First in His teaching. How do we see that? Well, they were angry when Jesus became honest with them. He told that they were hypocrites. Afterwards, they tried to catch Him by His words. For example, they asked him if they had to pay taxes. They laid before him the case of the women who married seven brothers. They wanted to know what the greatest commandment was. They tried to take him by craftiness (Mark 14:1). And finally, Judas discussed with them how he could deliver Jesus unto them (Mark 14:10-11). After they caught Jesus, they sought false witness. Finally, they found some that said that Jesus would break

down the temple (Mark 14:55). But they did not only reject Jesus in His teaching. No, also Him in His Person. They denied that He was the Messiah and the Son of God. What a suffering! Ah, He had told them, “I am Son of Man. I will come with the clouds” (Mark 14:62). But they called it blasphemy (Mark 14:64)! Think about that! This is the exact reason why they condemn Him. This is why they want to put Him to death. What a rejection.

But who do reject him? We read that they are “elders, chief priests, scribes.” No, we do not read of the Roman government. We do not hear about the common people, although did it too. But it says, “elders, chief priests, and scribes.” That means the Jewish and religious leaders. Those that surely had knowledge of the Bible. Those that had many traditions. The hypocrites. Yes, these men were related to temple worship. They had the authority. Paul, for example, asked letters of the high-priest to persecute Christians (Act 9:1). What are then some of their names? Annas and Kajaphas. Compare it to today, such would be our ministers, elders and deacons. And especially they reject the Son God, the Savior.

Application

Are there those in our midst that reject Jesus Christ? Then you are like these elders, chief priests, and scribes. Then Jesus Christ is a threat for you. It can be that you want to maintain many religious traditions. But we have to tell you, the outward will never save! How often do you not reject Christ? And how do you do that? For example, when He teaches by His Word, you will not listen. You think that you can do it without the Word. When His Person is proclaimed in the preaching, you despise Him. Maybe you even want to get rid of Him or you get angry with such preaching. Do you see? You are in the same position as those Jewish leaders. But we should tell you, you caused Jesus Christ to suffer! Do you think that this will go unpunished? Do you think that God will allow it? No! It will testify against you.

Those that know Christ, was it not true? How many years did you reject Him? No, before, you did not want to be saved. But God was more powerful. He showed that you had rejected Christ. That sight caused you deep sorrow. You saw, I have rejected Him. Yes, and that in all things. What a blessed place that was. It humbled you in the dust. Then you cried out, “LORD is there forgiveness for such rejection?” Ah, then it could be silent for years. Maybe you even thought that God rejected you. You experienced much anxiety. If that is your case, remember this, God will never reject a

true seeker. But now the question is, did the leaders in our passage only *reject* Christ? No. They also wanted to kill Him.

His Killing

The announcement of Jesus' killing we find in verse 31, “And be killed, and after three days rise again.” You can also translate “be killed” with “to slay or to put to death.” Yes, Caiaphas, the high-priest would even prophesy this. He would say “Ye know nothing at all, Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not” (John 11:49-50). John comments that this was a prophecy. But why was Christ's killing needed? That the whole nation sinners perish not! Think about that. But why did these Jewish leaders want to kill Jesus? Well, they thought He “blasphemed,” and made Himself “equal with God.” We read, “Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he...said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God” (John 5:18). What were other reasons that they wanted to destroy Him? One commentator mentions four things. First, He took their authority away. Second, He was a threat to their religious system. Jesus pointed out their hypocrisy. Third, He had no respect for their traditions. He ignored them and called these traditions man made rules. Fourth, He ate with sinners and publicans. They could not believe that the true Messiah would ever do that. The root of all this was to maintain their pride and themselves. How would they kill Him? They delivered Him to the Roman rulers. He would be scourged and crucified.

Application

May we ask you, how has it impacted us that Christ was killed? Is it far away from us? Do we not even care? Do we maybe think, it was long ago, so it does not affect me? But do we then understand the reasons for His killing? Think about this. What if someone else took our authority? Destroyed our religious system? Disregarded our traditions? Would we not respond in the same way? Would we not want to get rid of that person? No, we do not so much differ from the Jewish leaders. Oh, yes. If our religion gets touched, we are on fire. But have you also realized what the Jewish leaders did was God's eternal plan? Yes, it was prophesied in the Old Testament. But may we ask, did this death already become personal? What? “Better that one Man dies, than the whole nation?” When the Holy Spirit applied this to the heart, you know that it is better that One dies, than I eternally.

Believer, Jesus was put to death but not for himself. No, that was for you. Why? That

you will not perish. Oh, yes, what a painful death. If you know this, then you have also learned other things. Yes, I had to give up my authority. I will no longer be my own king. I had to give up my own ‘religious system’ to be saved. It would only be possible in His way. Ah yes, I was a sinner. But He wanted to eat with Me. What a blessed Savior! In our text we see that Jesus suffered by the Jewish leaders. But was it only by them? No, it also happened by the disciples. Our second thought.

II. Suffering by the Disciples

Jesus’ suffering by the disciples is seen in two things. First, He is misunderstood. Second, He is rebuked.

He is not Understood

In the first place, we see that the disciples did not understand Jesus’ announcement. We read in verse 32, “And he spake that saying openly.” This phrase “He spake...openly” is only found in Mark. But it is so different than the disciples heard before. They often heard, “Do not tell it,” or “do not publish this.” For example, when Jesus healed the deaf and impediment men (Mark 7:31-37), we read, “He charged them that they should tell no man” (Mark 7:36). When the blind man was healed in two stages, he was not allowed to tell it in the town (Mark 8:22-26). Some moments ago, Peter had confessed Jesus, “Thou art the Christ” (Mark 8:29). Even then, they had heard, “He charged them that they should tell no man of him” (Mark 8:30). But why did Jesus not want it? He did not want to give a wrong impression. They might think that He was a miracle worker and one that gives free food. Later, they want to make Him king indeed. No, not of the heavenly kingdom but an earthly. But that was not Christ’s purpose. No, He came to proclaim a heavenly kingdom. Second, if many would know that Jesus was the Christ, the Messiah, it would provoke the religious leaders to more anger. Gill says that it would cause jealousy with the Romans. The religious leaders thought that the Messiah would save them from the Romans. This would give much trouble. That is why Jesus told people to be silent. But now we read that He spoke to them “openly.” What a contrast! Before, no one was allowed to tell anything. They had to remain silent. But now they hear that Jesus spoke about this matter openly. Yes, He did it with boldness and plainness. But what does He speak about? His suffering, rejection, and killing. Do we see, congregation? All the disciples misunderstood Christ. Even they thought of Him as an earthly king, a miracle worker, and a Messiah to save them from the Romans. But Jesus came to suffer and to die. Yes, and that to save a people in life. Let us not forget, that this misunderstanding is

deeply painful for the Lord Jesus. Even His closest friends did not understand Him.

Application

Congregation, is it not true? How often do we not understand the LORD? When the LORD speaks His “kingdom” and man’s “salvation,” we look for glory and honor. And do we not want to have a God who does miracles and gives outward blessings? But when suffering comes, we do not understand it. We are even opposed to it. What are our thoughts of God? When it comes to conversion, do we not want to ‘work’ for God? To do something to be saved? But then God says, “No. You need the suffering Servant.” First, it is not understood. Why can I not do it myself? Yes, that can even be after confessing the greatness of God. Like Peter, “Thou art the Christ.” May we ask you another question? What is your picture of Christ? Do you need Him only to solve ‘some’ issues? Or to build an ‘external’ kingdom? But do you need Him in His sufferings, rejection and killing? Have you learned that by heart? But God’s people do not only misunderstand God. They even rebuke Him. The same happened with the disciples.

He is Rebuked

We can read of this rebuke in verse 32, “And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him.” Yes, Peter. Who is he? He is one of Christ’s closest three disciples of Christ, together with James and John. He had seen more miracles than others. He had been on the mount of transfiguration. Many times, he was the spokesman of the disciples. Think about his confession. That is why Peter acts in our verse. It is also what others thought. What does he do? We read, he “took.” That means he took Christ to himself, took him aside and away from the rest. It was certainly with good intentions. It might even have been with affection as we read of a similar case in Acts, “[Apollos] began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they *took* him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly” (Acts 18:26). That was out of care. With love. They desired to improve things. But what will Peter do? We read, he “began to rebuke Him” (8:32). Why is that? Well, he just confessed Christ as the Messiah. He saw a glorious kingdom in the future. But, Gill says, now all his hope is destroyed. What did Peter say? We do not find this in Mark but in Matthew. There Peter says, “Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee” (Matt. 16:22). That means, if I can help it, it will not happen. Think about the garden of Gethsemane. He will defend Jesus with the sword. Yes, Peter wants to warn and admonish his Master. Ah, that rebuke. This is what Jesus had done as well. He told the

devil to be silent (Mark 1:25). But now it is Peter. But Peter, how can you do that? He is your Master. You have just confessed Him as Christ. And do you now think that you know better than Him? What a suffering must that have been for Christ! He was not only misunderstood but also rebuked. But it is unfair! It is Unjust. He had told them for a purpose. What a pain. He suffered now also inwardly. No, not only from the leaders but also from His disciples.

Application

Believer, do you see? Even those that have been much taught by God have a wrong heart. They can think that they know better God. Yes, even after grace. Sure, it can be out of love. Maybe you have said, “LORD, why this way? No. This cannot be. A Christ that would suffer for me? What a shame. Can I not be saved in an other way?” And when the LORD teaches, does it not become true? Then all hope for an earthly ‘kingdom’ is destroyed. But do you not realize, child of God, that God ‘suffers’ by your resistance? Ah, let Him teach you. Submit to His will. Whatever way that will be.

Unregenerate listener, how often have you not rebuked God when difficulties came? Have you not had that you were angry with God? Would you then not say, “That not the right way! It is unfair to do that to me. Do I not live according to thy commandments? Why me?” Friend, you have to learn that the LORD is sovereign. It means that He is free in doing what He wants. Submit yourself to it. Then you will have a blessed life. Then will learn that He suffered for such sinners. Yes, those that are unwilling to be saved. And still, He did. This is what we will see in our third thought.

III. Suffering for Sinners

For Enemies of Salvation

We see first that Christ will suffer for enemies of salvation. Verse 33 says, “But when he had turned about and looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me, Satan.” Who did He look upon? It is “on his disciples.” No, not only Peter but all his disciples. Notice that only Mark writes this sentence. But remember that Peter assisted Mark in writing his gospel. Nevertheless, it shows that all the disciples thought the same. Peter is simply spokesman. And what does Christ then say? We read, “Get thee behind.” That means, do not hinder My plans. Follow Me. Do not go in front of Me. Later in this chapter, Jesus will say, take up thy cross, deny yourself, and follow Me. But then? Jesus says something surprising, “Satan.” Was Peter then the

devil in person? No! He was certainly a child of God. But he is wrong here. What does “Satan” mean? Adversary. Someone that stands against you. Think of the vision of Joshua, the high-priest. We read, “He shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand *to resist him.*” (Zech. 3:1). For our verse, Matthew clarifies why Christ this says, “thou art an *offense* unto me.” (Matt. 16:23). He is a stumbling block. It is like the doctrine of Balaam. We read in Revelation, “The doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a *stumblingblock* before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication” (Rev. 2:14). The same word. But why was this an offense? Well, it was a temptation for Christ not to go the way of suffering. The thought of hell and Satan is, if you do not suffer, that makes your life much easier. But that will also mean, no salvation! It is the same as the temptation in the wilderness. There Christ uses the same words, “Get thee hence, satan” (Matt. 4:10).

Application

What lessons can be found in this passage. Jesus shows to go after Him. To deny self. To take up the cross and follow Him. What is this against the nature of man. Why? We love to make our own decisions. We want to be king. But we need to learn to bow under the kingship of Christ. He knows what does.

Another thought is this, what if God would call us “Satan.” How would we respond? Would we get angry? Or would we understand? Do you see? We are enemies of our own salvation. We resist like Peter did. Yes, even more. We are enemies of grace. We desire to “do” things for our salvation but not want to “be saved.” But if God shows us what we are with the Holy Spirit blessing, it will humble us in the dust. Then we will cry out, “LORD what have I done! What enemy am I of my salvation. Wilt thou forgive it?” No. The sufferings of Christ is not according to man’s plan. That is what we will hear next.

Not According to Man's Plan

How do we know that Christ’s death is not according to man’s plan? This is what we hear from verse 33, “For thou savourest...the things that be of men.” What does the word “savourest” mean? It has the idea of to think of, or to have in mind. What kind of things then? “Things that be of men.” What do we need to think of? Two things. First, the coming of an earthly kingdom. The disciples had a very earthly view of King Jesus. They thought that they would all become governors. It would only get better.

No, there was no suffering in view! That was unfitting! That would reveal a weak King. No, they foresaw that Jesus would gain many followers. They would become the respected leaders of the land. Second, there was a human view of the way of salvation. They did not want to deny themselves, suffer, and become nothing. Ah, by nature, no one seeks after God. Then we think to go from strength to strength. But that is not true. When God truly teaches, it will reveal weakness after weakness. From good to worse. From a little sinner to a great sinner.

Application

Is the Bible not true? No one seeks after God. That is also the case for each one of us. When we grew up, did we seek God? No! In fact, we hate God. We hate salvation. We think that God is a tyrant. He is an enemy. If you have never experienced that, we urge you to examine your salvation! Without that experience you miss the Biblical way. Unregenerate listener, this about you! No, not about your neighbor. Do you see that what Christ says is true? Ah, do then repent.

A word to those that have learned to seek God. May we ask, why do you seek? Is it to become a better Christian? Is it to have some peace and some light? And what is your view of God? Do you think to obtain a good place in the kingdom God? Ah, then you are like the disciples. In that case, it is all wrong. Have you learned that it is only for God's grace that you sought Him? Yes, you wanted to run away. You desired to live in the world. But God sought you. He found you. Then it is also true that you have to be taught about the true way of salvation. Ah, at the beginning, you think, I have repented from some sin. It will only go better, and I will serve God more. But what did you learn? That you are totally weak. Yes, even dead in yourself. Even after grace, you cannot do it if it is not given. What do we mean? You cannot repent, stop sinning, or even pray! You have to learn that all needs given. Only then you can flee from sin and truly pray. Do you have knowledge about that, friend? A hypocrite knows nothing about that. He thinks that he can always pray. He assumes that he can always believe. But that is not true for God's people. They learn that they are totally dependent on God. If it were not for Him, they would never persevere. They would surely enter hell. But by God's grace, they became a needy sinner. Then they needed Jesus Christ in all things. Yes, more and more. Then it became a wonder that God wanted to listen to them. But with all of this, the question arises, what is God's plan salvation?

According to God's Plan

This plan we find in verse 33 also, “For thou savourest not the things that be of God.” What is God’s way of salvation? From all eternity, God has chosen a people to life. Yes, they are chosen in Christ. And therefore, they *must* be saved. But it has to be done in the right way. First, in a way of justice and then by the way of mercy. This is the reasons why the Messiah must suffer first. Only after that He can be exalted. Let us first look at His sufferings. Why was that? Because God knew that only in this way He could be both just and merciful. If He would punish His son, He could forgive the sinner. But then also the exaltation of the Messiah would come. He will be raised from the tomb, ascend into heaven and come again to rule. Yes, this is all according to God’s prophesy. Think about the mother promise in Genesis 3:15 and Isaiah 53. What a suffering is found in this chapter. He was bruised, and it pleased God. Can you imagine what that is? It pleased the Father to bruise His own eternal Son! Why was that a pleasure? Because the Son did His Father’s will. He did it willingly. Why? That church can be saved! Ah. That is the pleasure of the Father. What then? To see a church spotless before Him.

Application

Let’s draw some applications. How is salvation worked in a person’s life? The same as with Christ. First, there will be humiliation, a going down, a coming into the dust, and a denying of self. That is absolutely necessary. Many ‘Christians’ today lack this. They do not want to know about it. But this is the way of the true church. Do you remember what Christ said? Those that want to save their lives, spiritually, will lose it. But God’s people will experience more. At their death, they will also be exalted. On earth that was all in part. At the Lord’s Supper there can be those moments of heavenly glory. Those Elims. But at that day, they will receive it in full. Then they will reign with Christ and exalt God forever.

Those in our midst that are unwilling to be humiliated. A warning to you. If you do not want humiliation, you will never have exaltation. No, never. If you want to have your exaltation now, you will receive your humiliation forever. Then you will be forever in the dust. Let that not be your case, dear friend. Beg God, “Show by thy Spirit who I am. Teach me to become humble. Teach me to pray.” Let us be saved in an honest and in a just way. If that is the case, then God will hear. But at His time.

Conclusion

We have heard the first announcement of Christ’s suffering. What a depth if you think

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about it. He suffered threefold. First, by Jewish leaders. Second, by the disciples. Third, for the true church. The question to us is not, do we know that He suffered. But, was it also for me? Yes, friends, this is necessary to know. We cannot live without this knowledge. For those without, we say, God still hears enemies. Cry then unto Him. And those with this knowledge, ask the LORD, “LORD, show me more depth of Christ’s sufferings.” Why? Because we often see so little of it. But if God shows, what a depth will you then find in it. He for me! Otherwise, I would have eternally perished. But now Christ did it for me. What a blessed Savior. Then He will also receive all the glory, honor, and power. Amen.