

LENT 2 B

Mark 8:31-38

### **The Old, Old Story**

Part of the Gospel this week reminded me of an old story.

It seems that a new preacher had come to preach in the church  
and the Senior Warden and the Parish Council was a little worried.

The Church depended on two sisters, up in years,  
that supported most of the budget.

The last preacher didn't last long because the sisters  
had stopped giving and coming to church.

So, the new preacher was duly warned several days in advance.

He visited around the church and found that there were two subjects  
that seemed to be on everyone's mind.

Everyone seemed to be concerned about  
abuse of alcohol and gossip.

Sunday came and the preacher gave his sermon

he saw lots of smiles during the part of his talk on alcohol  
and lots of head nodding when he covered the section on gossip.

When the service was over, he was shaking hands at the door  
when the two sisters began to hurry by  
in an obviously upset condition.

He stopped them and said "**Good morning, ladies, how are you,  
and what did you think of my message today?**"

One sister said "**I really liked what you had to say on alcohol**",  
then the other sister jumped in and said,  
**"until you went from preaching to meddling".**

Meddling is what Peter seems to be doing.

Jesus is trying to explain that he is part of God's plan.

Now recent scholars would say that this is really the early Church  
explaining why Jesus had to die  
and what it really takes to follow God in the example of Jesus.

What will it gain the preacher to keep the two sisters happy  
and lose the congregation?

What will be my gain to keep everyone else happy

and lose an abundant life I believe God is offering me?

If God is with us, who can be against us?

Sometimes it is hard because, the people who will oppose us  
have our ***"best interest in mind"***.

The problem is that we all have human minds

and do not open ourselves to the mind of God often enough.

We struggle to live our lives by the faith of Abraham

while having our frequent conversations with those around us  
and our own experience which thinks like humans think.

It is our comfort that we know that the grace

and mercy of God covers all our missteps.

It is however key to remember that Abraham

looked up to see the ram, so keep looking up for the messengers  
that God may be sending.

God will support us in taking up our purpose as followers of Jesus,

even when those around us and even when

the little voice in our minds

is trying to convince us to do something else.

We are called to take up the purpose of our lives.

Now, to finish the old story.

When accused of meddling the new preacher replied,

***"Well now don't take what I said about gossip so personally.***

***I know you spend many hours on the phone***

***working on spreading the word***

***about what's going on at church.***

***So, I would like to have you be the Chairperson***

***of our new Telephone communications program".***

What we feel our calling to do, can do the work of God

if we are willing to keep our connection with God

as the source of our purpose in service of God. Amen.