

Introduction

1. The third time's the charm they say.
 - a. In today's passage, Jesus predicted His impending death for the third time.
 - b. One would think that after this third prediction, His disciples might hear and heed what He said.
 - c. However, their response was not as expected.
 - d. Jesus' words would finally "click" for them after the events that Jesus predicted actually happened.
2. **Read Mk 10:32-34.**

A. On the Way to Jerusalem (32a)

1. "They were on their way up to Jerusalem"
 - a. We are at key point in Mark's gospel.
 - b. Jesus had travelled south through Perea ("Jesus . . . went into the region of Judea and across the Jordan" – Mk 10:1) and would soon cross back over the Jordan near Jericho (cf. Mk 10:46).
 - c. He and His disciples now approached the vicinity of Jerusalem and the home turf of Jewish leaders.
 - d. Any direction from which you approach Jerusalem, you "go up" as Jerusalem sits on a mountain top.
 - e. Jesus would go up from Jericho (elevation = 846 feet Below Sea Level) to Jerusalem (elevation = 2,635 feet Above Sea Level) along the rugged and steep Jericho Road which passes through a portion of the Wilderness of Judea. They would go up 3,841 feet in a distance of about 20 miles.
2. Jesus "was leading the way" (Gk., *hen proagon*)
 - a. Jesus was a man on a mission and did not look back.
 - b. Times for teaching still lay ahead, but events would quickly unfold according to Jesus' prediction.
 - c. Warren Wiersbe notes, "As Mark wrote his account of the Savior's journey to Calvary he must have meditated much on the great 'Servant Songs' in Isaiah 42-53. 'For the Lord God will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed' (Isa 50:7). We cannot but admire the courage of God's servant as He made His way to Calvary, and we should adore Him all the more because He did it for us" (Warren Wiersbe, *Be Diligent*, 125).
 - d. James Brooks adds, "Rabbis usually walked ahead of their disciples, but Mark had something more than that in mind by his statement 'with Jesus leading the way.' He pictured Jesus as resolutely pressing toward his goal, as deliberately going to his death. The steadfast determination on the part of Jesus produced the astonishment and fear" (James Brooks, *Mark*, 166).
3. The disciples were "astonished" (Gk., *ethambounto*) and those who followed Jesus along with them were "afraid" (Gk., *ephobounto*).
 - a. They all knew they were going into enemy territory.
 - b. Jesus had already drawn the attention and ire of Jewish leaders on many occasions (cf. Mk 2:6ff, 2:18ff, 3:1-6, 3:22, 7:1ff).
 - c. The disciples did not understand His actions which they found to be dangerous and incomprehensible.
 - d. The others who followed were not only confused but flat out scared by Jesus' undaunted charge into the hands of His enemies.

B. Jesus' Third Prediction of His Death (32b-34)

1. Jesus had made this same prediction twice before using similar words.
 - a. The first time, "He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again" (Mk 8:31).
 - b. The second time Jesus said, "The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after three days he will rise" (Mk 9:31).
 - c. This third time Jesus said, ". . . the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles, who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three days later he will rise" (Mk 10:32-33).

2. There are three key, common points in all three predictions:
 - a. The Son of Man, Jesus, speaks about Himself.
 - b. Men will kill Jesus, and it will be a painful, ugly death.
 - 1) Jesus will be rejected, delivered into the hands of men, condemned, handed over to the Gentiles, mocked, spat upon, flogged, and finally killed.
 - 2) Jesus must have had in mind scriptures such as Ps 22:6-8 and Isa 50:6, especially in regard to the graphic description in His third prediction.
 - 3) All of these predictions are fulfilled as recorded in Mk 14:53-16:8.
 - c. Jesus will rise from dead three days after His death.
3. Wiersbe notes two unique pieces of information included in Jesus' third prediction. Wiersbe writes, "In the first two announcements (Mark 8:31; 9:31), Jesus had told them *what* would occur, but now He told them *where* His passion will take place—in the Holy City of Jerusalem! In this third announcement, He also included the part that the Gentiles would pay in His trial and death . . ." (Wiersbe, 125).
4. The disciples made foolish responses to all three of Jesus' predictions of His impending death.
 - a. After the first prediction, ". . . Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him" (Mk 8:32).
 - 1) Peter only said what the other disciples must have been thinking.
 - 2) Peter received a rebuke from Jesus, "'Get behind me, Satan!' . . . you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns" (Mk 8:33).
 - 3) Jesus taught them that true discipleship in His kingdom requires self-sacrifice. Jesus said, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me" (Mk 8:34).
 - b. After the second prediction, the disciples engaged in an argument about who among them would be the greatest in Jesus' kingdom (cf. Mk 9:32-37).
 - 1) The disciples "did not understand" (Gk., *hagno*) (Mk 9:32).
 - 2) They argued "about who was the greatest" (Mk 9:34).
 - 3) Jesus gave them a rebuke with another lesson on discipleship when He said, "Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and servant of all" (Mk 9:35).
5. In our next lesson on January 6, we will see how the disciples' response to Jesus' third and final prediction.

C. Questions for Reflection

1. Are you as willing to take on suffering for Jesus as you are to enjoy the glory of life with Him?
2. Are you following Jesus with fear or expectation of where He will lead you?
3. Have you ever been misunderstood as you resolutely were on mission with God?
4. Do the opinions and comments of others dissuade you from your God-given mission or spur you on to complete it?
5. Have you counted the cost of following Jesus?
 - a. Are you taking up your cross daily and following Him?
 - b. Are you seeking to serve the least in Jesus' name?
6. How do you respond when God calls you to sacrifice yourself, your interests, your ways, your opinions for the good of the kingdom? Do you shrink away in fear or set your face like flint toward the kingdom goal?
7. Daniel Akin concludes, "God has a plan for your life crafted to the *last detail*, the *last breath*, the *last beat of your heart*. He was sent to serve. He sends us to serve. Count the cost!" (Daniel Akin, *Exalting Jesus in Mark*, 230).