

KJW21 to May 27

May 21 Su Reading 141 — Mark 9:14-29 — Healing a Demonic Boy

¹⁴ And when they came [back] to the disciples, they saw a large crowd around them, and scribes arguing with them. ¹⁵ And immediately, when the entire crowd saw Him, they were amazed. And as they ran up, they were greeting Him. ¹⁶ And He asked them, "What are you arguing with them?" ¹⁷ And one of the crowd answered Him, "Teacher, I brought You my son, possessed with a spirit which makes him mute; ¹⁸ and ^[fn]whenever it seizes him, it ^[fn]slams him [to the ground] and he foams [at the mouth], and grinds his teeth and ^[fn]becomes rigid. I told Your disciples to cast it out, and they could not [do it]." ¹⁹ And He answered them and said, "O unbelieving generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring him to Me!" ²⁰ And they brought ^[fn]the boy to Him. When he saw Him, immediately the spirit threw him into a convulsion, and falling to the ground, he [began] rolling around, foaming [at the mouth]. ²¹ And He asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood. ²² And it has often thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, take pity on us and help us!" ²³ And Jesus said to him, "'If You can?' All things are possible to him who believes." ²⁴ Immediately the boy's father cried out and was saying, "I do believe; help my unbelief." ²⁵ Now when Jesus saw that a crowd was ^[fn]rapidly gathering, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You mute and deaf spirit, ^[fn]I command you, come out of him and do not enter him ^[fn]again." ²⁶ And after crying out and throwing him into terrible convulsions, it came out; and [the boy] became so much like a corpse that most [of them] said, "He is dead!" ²⁷ But Jesus took him by the hand and raised him; and he stood up. ²⁸ And when He came into the house, His disciples [began] questioning Him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?" ²⁹ And He said to them, "This kind cannot come out by anything but prayer."

LSB Footnotes

- (9:18) Or *wherever*
- (9:18) Or *tears him*
- (9:18) Or *withers away*
- (9:20) Lit *him*
- (9:25) Or *running together*
- (9:25) Or *I Myself command*
- (9:25) Or *from now on*

Important Questions — There are six questions in these 16 verses, five of them asked by Jesus. The first one He asked was about the subject of the argument between the disciples and the scribes (v. 16). Since only the father's response was recorded (v. 17), it appears that they were arguing about why the disciples could not cast out the evil spirit. Jesus would answer that question later. The next two questions came from Jesus, both asking, "How long ...?" (v. 19). They were frustrated questions that criticized a lack of faith ("O unbelieving generation!"). There was certainly inadequate faith in both the disciples and the father. The assumption was that the disciples' faith should have been growing as they walked with Jesus. The same growth is expected in us as well. When the father pleaded with Jesus, "...if You can do anything ... help us!" (v. 22), His dismayed response repeated the question: "If You can?" This important fact was then stated: "All things are possible to him who believes" (v. 23). Faith answers all these questions. The disciples then re-asked the original question about why they could not cast out the demon. That answer was "prayer." While Jesus was praying on the Mount of Transfiguration, Peter, John, and James were sleeping, while the nine disciples left behind were arguing. I heard a sermon recently where the pastor said, "All of us agree about the importance of prayer, but we aren't doing much of it." We lack both prayer and faith. The important question for us is, "Are we growing in those areas?"

[My Faith Has Found a Resting Place - YouTube](#)

My heart is leaning on the Word,
The written Word of God,
Salvation by my Savior's name,
Salvation through His blood.

My great Physician heals the sick,
The lost He came to save;
For me His precious blood He shed,
For me His life He gave.

— Eliza E. Hewitt (b. 1851)

May 22 M Reading 142 — Mk. 9:30-32; Lk. 9:43b-45 — Another Passion Prediction

Mark 9

³⁰ *From there they went out and were going through Galilee, and He was not wanting anyone to know [about it].* ³¹ *For He was teaching His disciples and telling them, "The Son of Man is to be ^[fn]delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him; and when He has been killed, He will rise again three days later."* ³² *But they ^[fn]did not understand [this] statement, and they were afraid to ask Him.*

LSB Footnotes

(9:31) Or *betrayed*

(9:32) Lit *were not knowing*

Luke 9

^{43b} *But while everyone was marveling at all that He was doing, He said to His disciples, ⁴⁴ "Put these words into your ears; for the Son of Man is going to be ^[fn]delivered into the hands of men."* ⁴⁵ *But they ^[fn]did not understand this statement, and it was concealed from them so that they would not perceive it, and they were afraid to ask Him about this statement.*

LSB Footnotes

(9:44) Or *betrayed*

(9:45) Lit *were not knowing*

Concealed Understanding — This is the second time Scripture reveals that Jesus told His disciples about His coming death. The first time was when Peter took Jesus aside to protest, so Peter correctly took Jesus' statement literally; he just didn't want it to happen. Because this prediction was repeated by Jesus, it seems that He really wanted them to know about it in advance. On the other hand, it seems like the Father was intentionally hindering their understanding ("*...it was concealed from them*"—Luke 9:45). Why? It may have been to prevent hindering attitudes and reactions of the disciples. Fear was certainly one of those negative attitudes already present to some degree. Both Mark and Luke say, "*...and they were afraid to ask Him.*" They understood enough to make them want to avoid hearing more—fear of the future and fear of bad news. We struggle with those attitudes at times as well. Some of us might even be a little hesitant about going to heaven because so much of that future experience is unknown. There are also many things in our Christian lives that are hard to understand, and we are challenged to walk by faith. God is entirely good, His way is right, and His planned results are perfect. If we knew it all now, there would be no need for faith.

[By Faith - YouTube](#)

We will stand as children of the promise;
We will fix our eyes on Him, our soul's reward.
'Til the race is finished, and the work is done,
We'll walk by faith and not by sight
— Keith and Kristyn Getty (2009)

May 23 Tu Reading 143 — Matthew 17:24-27 — A Fish Pays Taxes

²⁴ Now when they came to Capernaum, those who collected the ^[fn]two-drachma [tax] came to Peter and said, "Does your teacher not pay the ^[fn]two-drachma [tax]?" ²⁵ He said, "Yes." And when he came into the house, Jesus spoke to him first, saying, "What do you think, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth collect tolls or taxes, from their sons or from strangers?" ²⁶ And when Peter said, "From strangers," Jesus said to him, "Then the sons are ^[fn]exempt. ²⁷ However, so that we do not ^[fn]offend them, go to the sea and throw in a hook, and take the first fish that comes up; and when you open its mouth, you will find a ^[fn]stater. Take that and give it to them for Me and you."

LSB Footnotes

- (17:24) A Greek silver coin, approx. a laborer's daily wage
- (17:24) A Greek silver coin, approx. a laborer's daily wage
- (17:26) Or *free*
- (17:27) Lit *cause them to stumble*
- (17:27) Lit *standard coin*, approx. 4 days of a laborer's wages

Exemption and Provision — There is some disagreement as to whether this tax was civil or religious, but since Jesus connected it to being exempt as sons, it may be referring to a religious tax, probably the one required in Exodus 30:11-16 for support of the tent of meeting (or temple). Peter told the collectors that Jesus was in the habit of paying that tax. There was a subtle miraculous element involved in the statement that "*when he came into the house, Jesus spoke to him first,*" i.e., before Peter had a chance to mention the tax collectors. One might suspect that Jesus saw the tax collectors through a window or heard the conversation, but the single Greek word translated "*spoke...first,*" used only here in the NT, suggests that His supernatural omniscience was involved. The second miraculous element was the fish providing the exact change. What are the odds that the first fish Peter caught on a hook would have the needed money in its mouth? They were only-possible-with-God odds! We are not told exactly how this happened, but it probably included both the miraculous arrangement of the Father and the divine omniscience of the Son. Most of us can probably remember how God, very surprisingly and exactly, met a particular need for us in the past. He still performs miracles of provision for His sons and daughters today.

[Just When I Need Him Most - YouTube](#)

Just when I need Him, Jesus is near,
Just when I falter, just when I fear;
Ready to help me, ready to cheer,
Just when I need Him most.
— William C. Poole (1907)

³³ *And they came to Capernaum; and when He ^[fn]was in the house, He [began to] question them, "What were you discussing on the way?"* ³⁴ *But they kept silent, for on the way they had discussed with one another which [of them was] the greatest.* ³⁵ *And sitting down, He called the twelve and said to them, "If anyone wants to be first, ^[fn]he shall be last of all and servant of all."* ³⁶ *And taking a child, He set him ^[fn]before them. And taking him in His arms, He said to them, ³⁷ "Whoever receives ^[fn]one child like this in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me does not receive Me, but Him who sent Me."*

LSB Footnotes

- (9:33) Lit *had come*
- (9:35) Or *let him be*
- (9:36) Lit *in their midst*
- (9:37) Lit *one of such children*

Servant Leadership — Jesus showed His omniscience again in this passage. He asked His disciples what they were discussing, not because He didn't know, but because their selfish thinking needed to be confronted. They didn't answer Jesus' embarrassing question because they knew they were wrong in their selfish talk. Jesus' message was that godly leaders must be humble and caring. That was as counter-cultural in the first century as it is in our time. Humble, caring leaders are rare, but they are attractive and effective. In what situation do you act as a leader in your family, church, or work? Are you being a servant leader? To illustrate His message, Jesus gave the object lesson of taking a child into His arms and showing His disciples how to minister to others ("*in My name*"—v. 37). It is a ministry of receiving, accepting, and loving. Children have very limited abilities, but we can receive and accept them where they are in life. It is very similar to how we are to minister to adults who are limited in physical and spiritual ways. Then, Jesus taught about what might be called a chain of reception: When we minister to a fellow human being, we are also ministering to the Son and to the Father. As Jesus would say later, "*...to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me*" (Matt. 25:40).

[Make Me a Servant - YouTube](#)

Make me a servant, humble and meek;
Lord let me lift up those who are weak.
And may the prayer of my heart always be:
Make me a servant,
Make me a servant,
Make me a servant today.

— Kelly Willard (1982)

⁶ *... whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it is better for him that a ^[fn]heavy millstone be hung around his neck, and that he be drowned in the depth of the sea.*

⁷ *"Woe to the world because of [its] stumbling blocks! For it is inevitable that stumbling blocks come; nevertheless, woe to that man through whom the stumbling block comes!"*

⁸ *"And if your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; it is better for you to enter life crippled or lame, than, having two hands or two feet, to be cast into the eternal fire."* ⁹

And if your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out and throw it from you. It is better for you to enter life with one eye, than, having two eyes, to be cast into the ^[fn]fiery hell.

¹⁰ *"See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that their angels in heaven continually see the face of My Father who is in heaven. ¹¹ ^[fn]For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost.]*

¹² *"What do you think? If any man has one hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go and search for the one that is straying? ¹³ And if it turns out that he finds it, truly I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine which have not gone astray. ¹⁴ In this way, it is not the will ^[fn]of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones perish.*

LSB Footnotes

(18:6) Lit *millstone turned by a donkey*

(18:9) Lit *Gehenna of fire*

(18:11) Early mss omit this v

(18:14) Lit *before*

Cut It Off! — The object-lesson child was still present; Jesus referred to him three times in this passage (vv. 6, 10, 14). He showed that this child not only represented humility, but also the weakness of those “*who believe in Me*” (v. 6). Grave warning is given to anyone who entices a weak believer to sin. (The words “*stumble / stumbling*” are used six times in four verses.) This warning applies not only to dreadful sinners like pedophiles, but also includes things like spreading a damaging morsel of gossip about someone, which we might be tempted to do. Jesus’ warning then turns toward self-discipline (vv. 8-9) as He uses hyperbole (intentional exaggeration for effect) to stress the importance of protecting oneself from sin. Losing a hand, foot, or an eye is better than spending eternity in hell. Paul would later warn us to “*make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts*” (Rom. 13:14). Do some of the things you watch or read raise the level of lust in your heart? Cut it off! The final application Jesus makes in connection with this child sitting on His lap is that when we see a believer stray from the truth or the fold, we should make every effort to lovingly bring them back into fellowship of the Church and the Lord. Jesus said that God cares about those who stray: “*it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones perish*” (Matt. 18:14). Are you in the habit of praying for children or grandchildren who have strayed away from the faith? Love them; send them a note! We all stay on track by keeping our attention on God.

[Be Thou My Vision - YouTube](#)

Be Thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;
Naught be all else to me, save that Thou art.
Thou my best thought, by day or by night,
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence, my light.

— Translated from an old Irish hymn
by Mary Byrne (1905)

May 26 F Reading 146 — Matthew 18:15-35 — Complete Forgiveness

¹⁵ *"Now if your brother sins^[fn], go and ^[fn]show him his fault, between you and him alone; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. ¹⁶ But if he does not listen [to you], take one or two more with you, so that BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY ^[fn]FACT MAY BE CONFIRMED. ¹⁷ And if he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as the Gentile and the tax collector. ¹⁸ Truly I say to you, whatever you ^[fn]bind on earth*

^[fn]shall have been bound in heaven; and whatever you ^[fn]loose on earth ^[fn]shall have been loosed in heaven.

¹⁹ "Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them ^[fn]by My Father who is in heaven. ²⁰ For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst."

²¹ Then Peter came and said to Him, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" ²² Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.

²³ "For this reason the kingdom of heaven ^[fn]may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. ²⁴ When he had begun to settle [them], one who owed him ten thousand ^[fn]talents was brought to him. ²⁵ But since he ^[fn]did not have [the means] to repay, his lord commanded him to be sold, along with his wife and children and all that he had, and repayment to be made. ²⁶ Therefore, the slave fell [to the ground] and was prostrating himself before him, saying, 'Have patience with me and I will repay you everything.' ²⁷ And feeling compassion, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the ^[fn]debt. ²⁸ But that slave went out and found one of his fellow slaves who owed him one hundred ^[fn]denarii; and he seized him and [began to] choke [him], saying, 'Pay back what you owe.' ²⁹ So, his fellow slave fell [to the ground] and was pleading with him, saying, 'Have patience with me and I will repay you.' ³⁰ But he was unwilling ^[fn]and went and threw him in prison until he should pay back what was owed. ³¹ So, when his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were deeply grieved and came and reported to their lord all that had happened. ³² Then summoning him, his lord said to him, 'You wicked slave, I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³ Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, in the same way that I had mercy on you?' ³⁴ And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him. ³⁵ My heavenly Father will also do the same to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your hearts."

LSB Footnotes

(18:15) Later mss add *against you*

(18:15) Or *reprove him,*

(18:16) Lit *word*

(18:18) Or *forbid*

(18:18) Gr fut. pft. pass.

(18:18) Or *permit*

(18:18) Gr fut. pft. pass.

(18:19) Lit *from*

(18:23) Lit *was compared to*

(18:24) A talent was approx. worth more than 15 years of a laborer's wages

(18:25) Or *was unable to*

(18:27) Or *loan*

(18:28) A Roman silver coin, approx. a laborer's daily wage

(18:30) Lit *but*

Forgive to Restore — Jesus' teaching continues here, from the parable of the shepherd rescuing the one lost sheep, to the situation of one member from a church straying into sin. The purpose is that of forgiving restoration, subsequent to the sinner's repentance. The restoration approach begins with a private meeting to clarify the problem and request repentance. If that fails, it should be broadened to 2-3 others and possibly to the whole church later. Will there be repentance? Will there be forgiveness? This is a delicate problem to handle, but Jesus provided a very assuring comment here: "I am there in their midst" (v. 20). He will be present to convict, direct, comfort, and encourage. Peter generously offered to forgive repeat offenders seven times, but Jesus multiplied that suggestion. Forgiveness must characterize our relationships with others. The following parable about the king

and the unforgiving servant is disturbing in some ways because of how it concludes: “*My heavenly Father will also do the same to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your hearts*” (v. 35). It is important to remember that the context here is about forgiveness, not eternal salvation. As Jesus concluded His teaching of the Lord’s Prayer, He said, “*if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions*” (Matt. 6:14-15). God will not tolerate our unforgiving attitudes toward others, and the quality of our forgiveness must be genuine, forgiveness “*from your hearts.*”

[Forgive Our Sins as We Forgive - YouTube](#)

Forgive our sins as we forgive,
You taught us, Lord, to pray,
But you alone can grant us grace
To live the words we say.

How can Your pardon reach and bless
The unforgiving heart
That broods on wrongs and will not let
Old bitterness depart?

— Rosamond E. Herklots (1969)

May 27 Sa Reading 147 — John 7:1-10 — Avoiding Publicity

¹ And after these things Jesus was walking in Galilee, for He was unwilling to walk in Judea because the Jews were seeking to kill Him. ² Now the feast of the Jews, the Feast of Booths, was near. ³ Therefore His brothers said to Him, "Leave here and go into Judea, so that Your disciples also may see Your works which You are doing. ⁴ For no one does anything in secret ^[fn] when he himself seeks to be [known] openly. If You do these things, show Yourself publicly to the world." ⁵ For not even His brothers were believing in Him. ⁶ So Jesus said to them, "My time is not yet here, but your time is always here. ⁷ The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I bear witness about it, that its deeds are evil. ⁸ Go up to the feast yourselves; I am not ^[fn] yet going up to this feast because My time has not yet been fulfilled." ⁹ Having said these things to them, He stayed in Galilee.

¹⁰ But when His brothers had gone up to the feast, then He Himself also went up, not publicly, but as in secret.

LSB Footnotes

(7:4) Lit and

(7:8) Some early mss omit yet

Not Yet Time — Jesus had already told His disciples that He would be killed in Jerusalem, but we are told here that “*He was unwilling to walk in Judea because the Jews were seeking to kill Him*” (v. 1). Why was He unwilling to go there when He knew that it was His destiny? It was all about timing. We saw earlier that Jesus was led by the Spirit to be tempted by the devil (Matt. 4:1). He did what the Father told Him to do through the Spirit. Twice in today’s passage, Jesus told His unbelieving brothers that it was not yet the right time (John 7:6, 10). The Father was working out His plan from many angles, including using the Roman and Jewish leaders. His brothers wanted Him to go to the Feast publicly, but He went secretly. They wanted Him to go now, but He went later. He wasn’t lying to them when He said, “*I am not yet going up to the feast*” (v. 8); it was that the Spirit had not yet given Him permission. It was not yet time. Jesus’ brothers still belonged to the world, so their

thoughts and directions were not motivated by God. Jesus was hated by those of the world because He told them that their “*deeds are evil*” (v. 7). How much does the world hate us? They would hate us more if we were more willing to stand boldly for the truth and oppose evil. We see some of their hatred when we stand against abortion and the confused gender program that they promote. We are to be faithful in living righteously and denouncing sin. The more we do that, the more we will become like Jesus, and the more the world will hate us. That time is here.

[Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus - YouTube](#)

Stand up, stand up for Jesus,
Stand in His strength alone;
The arm of flesh will fail you,
Ye dare not trust your own.
Put on the gospel armor,
Each piece put on with prayer;
Where duty calls or danger,
Be never wanting there.
— George Duffield (1858)