



Queen Anne

LUTHERAN CHURCH

*Called to Proclaim God's Love in Christ for Every Person*

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✧ *In Worship Today* ✧

Pastor	The Rev. Dr. Dan Peterson
Cantor	Kyle Haugen
Lector and Intercessor	Jacqui Darroch

*This service of worship can also be listened to online. Go to [queenannelutheran.org](http://queenannelutheran.org) and click on "WORD OUT" to find audio, video, and print resources for worship at home, as well as resources to use with children.*



## SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT

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February 28, 2021

Our 52<sup>nd</sup> "Word Out" audio transcript, marking one year.



### Prelude

*Improvisation on SOJOURNER*

### Welcome

P: Welcome, this second Sunday of Lent, to Queen Anne Lutheran Church. Wherever you are listening, whatever challenges you might be facing, we invite you into this space: one where you can hear the good news through proclamation, spoken and sung; a time where you can be still, and know God is God.

After Peter confesses his belief that Jesus is the Messiah, Jesus tells his disciples for the first time what is to come. Instead of glory and triumph, the Son of Man will undergo suffering, humiliation, and finally, death—all, presumably, as a consequence of the life he lives for others, as well as the justice he proclaims as a corollary of the kingdom from God.


### Greeting

☩: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

☩: **And also with you.**

Gospel Acclamation (*congregation may join*)

Galations 6:14

**G:**   
Let your stead - fast love come to us, O Lord.

  
Save us as you prom - ised; we will trust your word.



**P:** May I never boast of anything  
except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
by which the world is crucified to me,  
and I to the world.

**G:** (*as above*) **Let your steadfast love come to us, O Lord. Save us as you promised; we will trust your word.**

The Holy Gospel:

Mark 8:31-38

**A:** The Holy Gospel according to Mark, the eighth chapter.

**G:** **Glory to you, O Lord.**

**A:** <sup>31</sup>[Jesus] 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.<sup>32</sup>He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. <sup>33</sup>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."

<sup>34</sup>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. <sup>35</sup>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. <sup>36</sup>For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? <sup>37</sup>Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? <sup>38</sup>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.”

**A:** The Gospel of the Lord.

**G:** Praise to you, O Christ.

## Sermon

*Peter's Protest: Why Must Jesus Die?*

Pastor Dan Peterson

Our Gospel reading for today raises serious, almost insuperable difficulties.

According to Mark 8:31 Jesus tells his disciples for the first time what is to come: that he will suffer, die, and rise again. Peter doesn't understand, but who can blame him? Nobody expected a *suffering* messiah, a vulnerable messiah, or what one commentary calls a “martyr-messiah” (*The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, p. 73). People expected a messiah who would usher in the messianic age and presumably overthrow the Roman government.

I have sympathy for Peter. Not only did he give up everything to follow Christ; he did so without knowing the direction the one he was following would ultimately take. Had he been told at the beginning what Jesus tells him now – eight chapters into the story – he might have reconsidered!

No wonder Peter protested, even if now, as the legendary 80s pop music artist Phil Collins once put it, he was *in too deep*.

Peter's protest against Jesus' mission to become a martyr-messiah was not only a problem for him. It is a problem for *us*, as we try to determine what it means to follow Jesus 2,000 years later. Did he come simply to suffer and die? What about the first half of Mark's Gospel, where Jesus focuses on proclaiming the good news that God's kingdom was dawning in history? Where, moreover, did Jesus' purpose originate? Was it from God? Was it

part of God's plan, and if so, did Jesus have any choice in the matter? What consequences, finally, would the suffering and death of Jesus have on his followers, many of whom later in the first century were themselves facing persecution and martyrdom?

We can't, of course, answer all these questions here, but we can address a couple of them briefly, not only as an intellectual exercise, but also as a way of understanding what it might mean *to us* to follow a suffering messiah – a martyr messiah – today.

### **A Few Preliminaries**

Let's start with the question of purpose.

We know from the beginning of Mark's Gospel that Jesus came to proclaim a message of life, justice, and renewal. When Jesus is baptized, the evangelist tells us that God tore the heavens apart. The Holy One of Israel who had become silent was now speaking again. His kingdom had come near!

Of course, Jesus wasn't only proclaiming the advent of God's kingdom. He was manifesting it, making it real in people's lives. Consider the arc of his ministry: he heals, he restores, he forgives, he reconciles; he inspires sharing, he encourages caring, humbling the powerful while lifting up the poor. No wonder the Gospel of John, which rarely mentions God's kingdom, nevertheless discloses Jesus' purpose in a way totally consistent with Mark. "I came," Jesus says in John 10:10, "that they may have life and have it abundantly."

When Jesus tells Peter, therefore, that he 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," Peter's reaction makes perfect sense. "You came to die?" we can imagine him asking. "I never signed up for this!"

### **Jesus' Purpose**

Why was Jesus suddenly talking about his death, and what made it sound like this had become his purpose? One clue appears in v. 31, the same verse we've been citing.

According to our translation, Jesus tells his disciples that he “must undergo” the fate he has predicted. As one commentary points out, “‘Must undergo’ expresses the determinism of God’s plan” in spite of the fact that “Peter cannot imagine a messiah who suffers and dies” (*Jewish Annotated New Testament*, p. 87). Another says likewise. “The verb for ‘must,’” it explains, referring to the original Greek of the New Testament, “has the sense of compulsion in accordance with God’s plan” (*The New Jerome Bible Commentary*, p. 614).

If, therefore, Jesus “must undergo” persecution and death according to God’s will, we have another problem. Is Mark’s Christ merely a passive participant, an instrument, a tool, in the unfolding of the divine plan? Is he telling Peter and the others that he has no choice, that he must undergo these things out of pure necessity?

We can answer this question first by an inference. If Jesus had no choice, his struggle in Gethsemane would have been meaningless. “Father,” he cries, “for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet not what I want but what you want” (Mark 14:36). Here Jesus resists the temptation to flee even as he seeks to align his will with God’s. The very act presupposes his freedom.

Even more compelling to me is the text we’ve been examining, Mark 8:31. When Jesus says he will rise again, as another commentary observes, we can see that he “is not the passive instrument of God’s action; he will not ‘be raised’ from the dead (as he is in the parallels to this in Matt. 16:21 and Luke 9:22), but he himself will rise. This probably anticipates a theology of atonement [that is, what Jesus accomplished on the cross] which centers in the victory over the final demonic enemy of man, death” (*Interpreters One-Volume Commentary on the Bible*, p. 658).

Jesus dies, in short, so that we may live! The will of God, we discover, is not that Jesus should die on the cross; it’s the resurrection, the new life for you and me that follows. Unfortunately, the only way to get to *new* life is through death, hence why Jesus “must undergo” it.

## Looking Back and Then Ahead

Notice now what we've done. We have clarified God's intention according to Jesus in Mark 8:31, showing how his prediction regarding his fate was consistent with his message and ministry from the beginning. Jesus came that we might have life, and Jesus died for us to have new life. His use of the active voice (*he will rise* rather than *he has been raised*) addresses our question about the role he played as well. Jesus was not a passive participant. He willingly and courageously stood up "in the name of love," as another 80s pop music artist puts it, and for *that* reason he was executed.

The fact that Jesus courageously faced the opposition of the elders and authorities among his own people as well as imperial Rome shows, finally, the true nature of his prediction. Jesus was not a fortune-teller. He didn't have a crystal ball into which he could look to see the future. But surely, as an astute observer of human nature, he had a sense, an "intimation of the fate that awaited him in Jerusalem" (*Jerome*, p. 614). Crowds followed him everywhere, and Romans don't like crowds.

Jesus' decision to turn to Jerusalem offers a blueprint for what it means to follow him. "The way ahead will be difficult," he tells us. "You must reconsider your priorities. Will you live out of fear, or for greed and consumption, or will you do as I have by living for others, by facing injustice with courage, by standing up for what is right, particularly when it concerns the poor and the most vulnerable?"

As we continue to reflect, seek renewal, and prepare during our Lenten journey, let us remember the words of Jesus, the blueprint he offers for discipleship. The road ahead will not be easy, but through the cross it will lead to *new life* and that, my friends, is God's will – Peter's protest notwithstanding.

Amen.



1 I want Je - sus to walk with me;  
 2 In my tri - als, Lord, walk with me; walk with  
 3 When I'm in trou - ble, Lord, walk with me;

me; I want Je - sus to walk with me;  
 in my tri - als, Lord, walk with me; walk with  
 when I'm in trou - ble, Lord, walk with me;

me; all a - long my pil - grim jour - ney,  
 when my heart is al - most break - ing,  
 when my head is bowed in sor - row,

Lord, I want Je - sus to walk with me.  
 Lord, I want Je - sus to walk with me. walk with me.  
 Lord, I want Je - sus to walk with me.

## Prayers of the Church

**A:** Relying on the promises of God, we pray boldly for the church, the world, and all in need.

*A brief silence.*

**A:** Your gift of grace is for all people. Give confident faith to all the baptized, that they may follow you wholeheartedly. Give new believers joy in your promises; give hope and courage to those who suffer for their faith.  
Lord, in your mercy,

**G:** **hear our prayer.**

**A:** All the ends of the earth worship you. From galaxies to microorganisms, preserve your creation. Teach humanity to wonder at your works and to join you in tending to creation's well-being. Lord, in your mercy,

**G:** **hear our prayer.**

**A:** You rule over the nations. Raise up advocates for peace and justice within and between nations. Give life where hope seems dead; call into existence new realities we cannot even imagine. Lord, in your mercy,

**G:** **hear our prayer.**

**A:** In Jesus you joined humanity in suffering and death. Reveal to all the depth of your love shown on the cross. Accompany all who suffer in body, mind, and spirit. Restore all who are sick or grieving. Bring vindication for victims of injustice, exploitation, and oppression. Lord, in your mercy,

**G:** **hear our prayer.**

**A:** You made Abraham and Sarah the ancestors of a multitude of nations. Bless grandparents, parents, and foster parents, and the children who look to them for care and guidance. Console those who deal with infertility, parents who have entrusted their children to adoption, and children longing to be adopted. Equip ministries and services to families.  
Lord, in your mercy,

**G:** **hear our prayer.**

**A:** For whom and what else do the people of God pray?

*A silence is given so that your prayers may be offered.*

**A:** Lord, in your mercy,

**G:** **hear our prayer.**

**A:** We await the day of Christ's coming in glory. Lead us by the example of all the saints whom you have called to take up their cross and follow you, that together we may find our lives in you. Lord, in your mercy,

**G:** **hear our prayer.**

**A:** We entrust ourselves and all our prayers to you, O faithful God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**G:** **Amen.**

### **Lord's Prayer**

**P:** Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

**G:** **Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come, your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.**

**Give us today our daily bread  
and forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.**

**Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,  
now and forever.**

**Amen.**

### **Announcements**

**P:** We thank you for joining us for this service. If you would like to hear other services or access the newest edition of *the Quill*, our newsletter, we invite you to go to our website at [queenannelutheran.org](http://queenannelutheran.org).

**P**: Receive now the blessing:

### **Benediction**

**A**: Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

**P**: Almighty God, the Father, † the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
bless and preserve you.

**G**: **Amen.**

### **Dismissal**

**P**: Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

**G**: **Thanks be to God.**

### **Postlude**

*Chorale Prelude on O MENSCH, BEWEIN DEIN SÜNDE GROß*  
Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)

### **About today's music**

During Lent it's a helpful custom to have more contemplative music to set Sunday worship services apart from the rest of the year as we prepare for our annual celebration of the first Easter Sunday. Today's postlude, for example, is a musical meditation on the cross's salvific importance for each fallen human being. J.S. Bach's starting point is a chorale melody that would have been well-known in his day. From this source, he beautifully embroiders his own notes and melodies around the tune (the result is often referred to as an "ornamented chorale prelude"). At the end of the piece, when words of the hymn's first stanza recall Christ's time upon the cross, Bach slows the tempo dramatically and adds surprising harmonies. In this way, Bach uses music to aurally paint the picture of Christ's love for us as demonstrated on the cross. For today's recording, a unique and lyrical stop on the Wech organ is heard — the *voce humana*, which mimics the warmth and subtle vibrato of gentle singing.

— Cantor Kyle

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