SUNDAY THEOLOGY TALKS

The Rev. Dr. Luigi Gioia, *Theologian In Residence*

The Gospel of Mark: A Journey to Recognition

Mark vividly tells the story of disciples who follow Jesus without ever fully understanding him. Through movement, conflict, and irony, his Gospel portrays discipleship as a journey toward recognition, culminating at the cross and continuing in our lives.

1. A Reticent and Ironic Jesus (October 18)

Jesus remains strangely elusive throughout Mark's Gospel. His identity can be recognized only gradually, as his relationship with the disciples deepens and they learn to place their trust in him.

2. Blindness and Misunderstanding (October 25)

The inability of the disciples to understand Jesus is one of Mark's most powerful and unsettling themes, and yet his most reassuring.

3. Restless Discipleship (November 1)

Following Jesus in Mark means embracing uncertainty, leaving familiar ground behind, and discovering that faith is learned along the way.

4. A New Type of Community (November 8)

Jesus promotes a community shaped not by status or power but by the conviction that greatness is measured by the capacity to serve.

5. The Instant of Recognition (November 15)

The decisive moment of recognition occurs at the cross, and the Gospel's unfinished ending invites us to embark on the disciples' same journey.

GUEST SPEAKER

The Very Rev. Cynthia Briggs Kittredge,
Dean Emerita, Seminary of the Southwest

1. **Trees Walking: Imperfect Sight, Unfinished Faith in the Gospel of** Mark (December 13)

   The "two-try" healing of the blind person in Mark 8:22-26 offers paradoxical insights on the gospel for our human life on the road.

2. **How to Be Human: Mark's Good News (June** 13)

   While the gospel of Mark certainly does proclaim the identity of Jesus, the focus of the story may be as much about how to be human.

STRUCTURE AND OUTLINE OF THE GOSPEL OF MARK

1. Who Is This Man? (1:1–3:35)
   - 1.1. The beginning of the Good News (1:1–13)
   - 1.2. The proclamation of the Kingdom and the calling of the first disciples (1:14–20)
   - 1.3. A day in Capernaum: teaching, healing, and exorcisms (1:21–45)
   - 1.4. The first controversies: forgiveness, sinners, fasting, and Sabbath (2:1–3:6)
   - 1.5. The crowds, the Twelve, and the question of Jesus' identity (3:7–35)
2. Seeing Without Understanding (4:1–8:26)
   - 2.1. The parables of the Kingdom (4:1–34)
   - 2.2. The calming of the storm: “Who then is this?” (4:35–41)
   - 2.3. Power over evil, illness, and death (5:1–43)
   - 2.4. Rejection at Nazareth and the mission of the Twelve (6:1–30)
   - 2.5. The loaves, the sea, and the disciples' incomprehension (6:31–56)
   - 2.6. Purity, outsiders, and the boundaries of belonging (7:1–37)
   - 2.7. The second feeding and the warning against blindness (8:1–21)
   - 2.8. The gradual healing of a blind man (8:22–26)
3. Learning to Follow (8:27–10:52)
   - 3.1. Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi (8:27–30)
   - 3.2. The first passion prediction and the call to take up the cross (8:31–9:1)
   - 3.3. The Transfiguration (9:2–13)
   - 3.4. Faith, unbelief, and the healing of a boy (9:14–29)
   - 3.5. The second passion prediction: greatness and service (9:30–50)
   - 3.6. Marriage, children, and possessions (10:1–31)
   - 3.7. The third passion prediction: power and servanthood (10:32–45)
   - 3.8. Bartimaeus: seeing and following on the road (10:46–52)
4. The Kingdom and a New Human Community (11:1–13:37)
   - 4.1. The entry into Jerusalem (11:1–11)
   - 4.2. The fig tree and the cleansing of the Temple (11:12–25)
   - 4.3. The challenge to Jesus' authority (11:27–12:12)
   - 4.4. Caesar, resurrection, and the greatest commandment (12:13–34)
   - 4.5. The Messiah, the scribes, and the widow's offering (12:35–44)
   - 4.6. The destruction of the Temple and the coming crisis (13:1–23)
   - 4.7. The coming of the Son of Man and the call to vigilance (13:24–37)
5. The Cross: Recognition at Last (14:1–16:8)
   - 5.1. The anointing at Bethany and Judas' betrayal (14:1–11)
   - 5.2. The Last Supper (14:12–26)
   - 5.3. Gethsemane: prayer, abandonment, and arrest (14:27–52)
   - 5.4. Jesus before the council and Peter's denial (14:53–72)
   - 5.5. Jesus before Pilate (15:1–20)
   - 5.6. The crucifixion and death of Jesus: the centurion's recognition (15:21–41)
   - 5.7. The burial of Jesus (15:42–47)
   - 5.8. The empty tomb: fear, silence, and the unfinished ending (16:1–8)

3. RESTLESS DISCIPLESHIP

6. Constantly 'on the move'

> Mark 1:38 "Let us go on to the neighbouring towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also; for that is what I came out to do."
>
> Mark 6:45 "Immediately he made (ἀναγκάζω) his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side."
>
> Mark 10:32 "They were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead (προάγω), of them; they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid."

7. The Greek proágō (προάγω), "to go ahead," returns in the resurrection promises (14:28; 16:7).

> Mark 10:28 But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee."
>
> Mark 14: **7**But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.

8. The destination of this meandering journey is Jerusalem and exactly in the middle of it we have Peter's declaration

> Mark 8: **29**And he asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Christ." **30**And he strictly charged them to tell no one about him.

   8.1. Peter declares that Jesus is the *Messiah*, or *Christ*

   8.2. Jesus orders his disciples not to tell anyone – the so called 'Messianic secret'.

The Messiah

1. We are accustomed to refer to both Jesus and Christ as names, when the latter in fact is a title: "Jesus, the *anointed one*" – and Christians are so called because an essential aspect of what it means to become a Christian is to be 'anointed' as well.

   1.1. The Greek term *christos* is the translation of the Hebrew term *māšîaḥ*, which means "the anointed one".

   1.2. Thus *Messiah* and *Christ* have the same meaning.

2. In the Old Testament, the anointing was employed for the investiture of kings, prophets, and priests.

> 1 Samuel 10:1 "Then Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it on his [David's] head and kissed him and said, 'Has not the LORD anointed you to be prince over his people Israel?'"
>
> Leviticus 8:12 "Then Moses poured some of the anointing oil on Aaron's head and anointed him to consecrate him."
>
> In 1 Kings 19:16 "Also, you shall anoint Jehu the son of Nimshi as king over Israel. And Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah you shall anoint as prophet in your place."

3. So there is a sense in which kings, priests, and prophets were 'messiahs', and yet this term increasingly came to signify something or rather someone else – a mysterious character who would hold the three roles simultaneously.

4. The whole history of the people of Israel is a testimony to the failure and the unfaithfulness of kings to be faithful to the covenant with God. The various military setbacks where usually explained as the consequences of this unfaithfulness. Even the model kings David and Solomon in the end fell short of their vocation. The most dramatic of these setbacks was the deportation to Babylon for some sixty years in the 6th century BCE in which there were no 'messiahs', that is no kings nor priests or at least nor priestly activity.

5. We find therefore a situation in which rule, salvation, liberation, mediation with God cannot be expected from the institutional 'anointed ones', the institutional 'messiahs' – and

this explains the beginning of what is called “messianic hope”, that is the expectation that God

5.1. will raise a unique king, associated with the Davidic dynasty

5.2. who will be faithful to God and establish true justice

5.3. and restore the vocation of Israel to be the vector of God’s blessing to the nations of the world.

6. Even though the distinctive trait of this future ‘messiah’ is the association to David and hence the royal character, it also has the traits of a priest and of a prophet.

7. However, especially at the period of the Exile to Babylon, the identity and mission of this ‘messiah’ start assuming traits which point towards an unexpected way of exercising the royal, prophetic, and priestly roles:

7.1. In the book of Isaiah, there are several passages that refer to a mysterious figure known as the "**Servant of the Lord**" or "Servant of Yahweh."

7.2. The identity of the "Servant of the Lord" is not explicitly mentioned in the book of Isaiah. Instead, the text presents a collection of servant songs or passages (Isaiah 42:1-4, Isaiah 49:1-6, Isaiah 50:4-9, and Isaiah 52:13-53:12) that describe this Servant and his mission. Some of the characteristics of the Servant mentioned in these passages include:

i. Divine Election: The Servant is chosen and called by God for a specific purpose (Isaiah 42:1, Isaiah 49:1).

ii. Faithful and Gentle: The Servant is characterized by a gentle and non-violent nature, yet determined in his mission (Isaiah 42:2-3, Isaiah 50:4).

iii. Suffering: The Servant experiences suffering, rejection, and humiliation on behalf of others (Isaiah 50:6, Isaiah 53:3-4, Isaiah 53:7-9).

iv. Atoning role: In Isaiah 53:4-6, the Servant is depicted as bearing the sins of others, making atonement for their transgressions.

v. Exalted and Glorious Outcome: Despite the suffering, the Servant is ultimately exalted and glorified by God (Isaiah 52:13, Isaiah 53:10-12).

8. At the time of Jesus, there was a culmination of this Messianic expectation among the Jewish people, particularly due to the political and religious circumstances of the period (Roman occupation). The concept of the Messiah had evolved over centuries, and many Jews were eagerly awaiting the arrival of a promised deliverer who would fulfil various roles:

8.1. *Political Deliverance:* Many Jews hoped for a Messiah who would liberate them from Roman oppression and restore the kingdom of Israel to its former glory, similar to the days of King David. This expectation was fuelled by a longing for political independence and the desire to regain control of their homeland.

8.2. *Davidic Descent:* The belief in a Davidic Messiah remained strong, with the expectation that the coming Messiah would be a descendant of King David, as prophesied in the Old Testament (e.g., Isaiah 11:1-5, Jeremiah 23:5-6). This lineage was thought to be significant in fulfilling the Messianic role.

8.3. *Religious Renewal*: The Messianic expectation also included a hope for spiritual renewal and a return to genuine worship of God. Many believed that the Messiah would purify and reform religious practices, restoring true worship and adherence to the Law of Moses.

8.4. *Miraculous Signs:* Some Jews anticipated that the Messiah's coming would be accompanied by miraculous signs and wonders, validating his divine authority and identity.

9. Just as in the Old Testament, however, in the Gospels there is something like a spiritualization of the messianic expectation – especially through what has been called
    9.1. The 'messianic secret' and
    9.2. The announcement that the Messiah will fulfil the prophecies of the Servant of Yahweh of the book of Isaiah, that is suffer and die.

10. The messianic secret refers to a recurring theme found particularly in the Gospel of Mark, where Jesus instructs those who witness his miracles or recognize him as the Messiah to keep it a secret.
    10.1. The prevailing understanding of the Messiah during that time was often associated with political deliverance and a powerful earthly kingdom. Jesus wanted to avoid potential misinterpretations and misconceptions about his role as the Messiah.
    10.2. He sought to redefine the concept of messiahship, emphasizing his spiritual mission and the establishment of God's Kingdom in people's hearts.

11. Jesus intention of redefining the perception of the messiah is made clear in the fact that when he finally allows Peter to confess Jesus' messianic identity, he starts announcing that he will fulfil this role not though political triumph but through suffering and death, according to the prophecies of Isaiah:

> Mark 8.29-31 "Jesus asked. "Who do you say I am?". Peter answered, "You are the Christ." And Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about Him. Then He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and scribes, and that He must be killed and after three days rise again."

12. Moreover, because Jesus is God, the way in which he fulfils these roles has a plenitude which no human being can ever achieve:
    12.1. He does not just reign as a king authorised by God, but he is the *kingdom of God*
    12.2. He does not just speak or act as a prophet in the name of God, but *he is the Word of God*.
    12.3. He does not just fulfil the priestly function of mediating between human beings and God, but *he unites humanity and divinity in his person* once and for all.

Messianic 'secret'

13. Mark repeatedly presents Jesus as concealing his identity:
    13.1. Demons are silenced: Jesus forbids them to disclose who he is (1:25, 34; 3:12).
    13.2. Those healed are commanded to remain silent: The leper (1:44), Jairus's household (5:43), and the deaf man (7:36).
    13.3. The disciples are forbidden to reveal his messiahship: Immediately after Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi (8:29–30).
    13.4. Jesus teaches in parables: Mark 4:11–12 appears to distinguish between those who receive the mystery of the kingdom and those who remain outside.
    13.5. The disciples repeatedly fail to understand: Even after witnessing extraordinary miracles, they remain blind to Jesus' identity (6:52; 8:17–21).

14. Several scholarly theories on the 'messianic secret'.

15. The secret as a theological invention
    15.1. How could Christians explain why Jesus' messiahship had not been generally recognized during his ministry?
    15.2. They developed the idea that Jesus had deliberately concealed his identity.

16. Historical explanations: Jesus avoided political misunderstandings

16.1. The title Messiah carried potentially dangerous political and national expectations.

16.2. Jesus may therefore have avoided publicly claiming it because he did not want to be identified with a revolutionary or military liberator.

16.3. On this reading, secrecy is not a literary invention but a practical strategy.

17. Mark's theology of the cross

17.1. The secret serves to correct an inadequate understandings of Jesus that emphasized his miraculous power and glory at the expense of his suffering

17.2. The decisive moment is Mark 8:27–33:

i. Peter correctly identifies Jesus as the Messiah but immediately rejects Jesus' prediction of suffering. He possesses the right title but misunderstands its meaning.

ii. Jesus' identity cannot be understood independently of his passion.

18. The secret as a literary strategy

18.1. A remarkable feature of Mark:

i. The reader knows who Jesus is from the beginning, while almost everyone within the narrative struggles to recognize him.

ii. Mark 1:1 identifies Jesus as the Messiah and Son of God.

iii. The heavenly voice confirms his identity at his baptism (1:11).

iv. Demons recognize him. Yet his disciples remain confused.

18.2. This produces dramatic irony: the reader often understands more than the characters.

18.3. But the reader's initial knowledge is itself incomplete. We know that Jesus is the Messiah before we discover what kind of Messiah he is.

18.4. The secrecy therefore creates a process of recognition that unfolds progressively throughout the Gospel.

19. When is the secret finally revealed?

19.1. 8:29, Peter's confession: Jesus is identified as Messiah, but Peter does not understand the suffering this entails.

19.2. 9:9, The Transfiguration: Jesus explicitly instructs the disciples not to disclose what they have seen until the Son of Man has risen from the dead.

19.3. 14:61–62, Before the high priest: Jesus openly acknowledges his messianic identity in the context of his impending condemnation.

19.4. 15:39, The centurion at the cross: A Roman centurion declares: "Truly this man was God's Son!"

i. The identity announced at the beginning is recognized at the moment of Jesus' death.

ii. There is a particularly powerful narrative irony here: the disciples, who have accompanied Jesus throughout his ministry, fail to understand him, whereas a Gentile outsider appears to recognize something essential precisely when Jesus is most powerless.

20. The secret concerns not Jesus' identity but the meaning of that identity

20.1. The Messianic Secret is less about hiding who Jesus is than about preventing people from thinking that they already know what it means to call him Messiah.

20.2. This explains why Peter's confession in Mark 8 is so pivotal.

i. Peter is not mistaken in calling Jesus the Messiah.

ii. His mistake is to assume that he understands what this title means.

20.3. The same pattern recurs throughout the Gospel:

i. miracles do not necessarily produce faith,
ii. proximity does not guarantee understanding,
iii. and even correct religious language can conceal profound misunderstanding.

20.4. In this sense, the Messianic Secret is closely connected with Mark's recurring themes of blindness, recognition, and discipleship.

20.5. The real danger is not simply failing to recognize Jesus, but recognizing him too quickly.

20.6. Recognition of Christ is not a single moment of intellectual discovery but a transformation of perception, in which disciples gradually learn to relinquish their expectations and discover God where they least expect him.

Chapter 8

Jesus Feeds the Four Thousand

1In those days, when again a great crowd had gathered, and
they had nothing to eat, he called his disciples to him and said to
them, 2"I have compassion on the crowd, because they have
been with me now three days and have nothing to eat. 3And if I
send them away hungry to their homes, they will faint on the way.
And some of them have come from far away." 4And his disciples
answered him, "How can one feed these people with bread here
in this desolate place?" 5And he asked them, "How many loaves
do you have?" They said, "Seven." 6And he directed the crowd to
sit down on the ground. And he took the seven loaves, and having
given thanks, he broke them and gave them to his disciples to set
before the people; and they set them before the crowd. 7And they
had a few small fish. And having blessed them, he said that these
also should be set before them. 8And they ate and were satisfied.
And they took up the broken pieces left over, seven baskets full.
9And there were about four thousand people. And he sent them
away. 10And immediately he got into the boat with his disciples
and went to the district of Dalmanutha.

The Pharisees Demand a Sign

11The Pharisees came and began to argue with him, seeking
from him a sign from heaven to test him. 12And he sighed deeply
in his spirit and said, "Why does this generation seek a sign?
Truly, I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation." 13And
he left them, got into the boat again, and went to the other side.

The Leaven of the Pharisees and Herod

14Now they had forgotten to bring bread, and they had only
one loaf with them in the boat. 15And he cautioned them, saying,
"Watch out; beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven
of Herod." 16And they began discussing with one another the fact
that they had no bread. 17And Jesus, aware of this, said to them,
"Why are you discussing the fact that you have no bread? Do you
not yet perceive or understand? Are your hearts hardened?
18Having eyes do you not see, and having ears do you not hear?
And do you not remember? 19When I broke the five loaves for the
five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you
take up?" They said to him, "Twelve." 20"And the seven for the
four thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you
take up?" And they said to him, "Seven." 21And he said to them,
"Do you not yet understand?"

Jesus Heals a Blind Man at Bethsaida

22And they came to Bethsaida. And some people brought to
him a blind man and begged him to touch him. 23And he took the
blind man by the hand and led him out of the village, and when
he had spit on his eyes and laid his hands on him, he asked him,
“Do you see anything?” 24And he looked up and said, “I see
people, but they look like trees, walking.” 25Then Jesus laid his
hands on his eyes again; and he opened his eyes, his sight was
restored, and he saw everything clearly. 26And he sent him to his
home, saying, “Do not even enter the village.”

Peter Confesses Jesus as the Christ

27And Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of
Caesarea Philippi. And on the way he asked his disciples, “Who
do people say that I am?” 28And they told him, “John the Baptist;
and others say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets.” 29And he
asked them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered him,
“You are the Christ.” 30And he strictly charged them to tell no one
about him.

Jesus Foretells His Death and Resurrection

31And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must
suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief
priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise
again. 32And he said this plainly. And Peter took him aside and
began to rebuke him. 33But turning and seeing his disciples, he
rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind me, Satan! For you are not
setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.”

34And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to
them, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and
take up his cross and follow me. 35For whoever would save his
life[d] will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the
gospel’s will save it. 36For what does it profit a man to gain the
whole world and forfeit his soul? 37For what can a man give in
return for his soul? 38For whoever is ashamed of me and of my
words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son
of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father
with the holy angels.”

Chapter 9

1And he said to them, “Truly, I say to you, there are some
standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom
of God after it has come with power.”

The Transfiguration

2And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James and
John, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he
was transfigured before them, 3and his clothes became radiant,
intensely white, as no one on earth could bleach them. 4And there
appeared to them Elijah with Moses, and they were talking with
Jesus. 5And Peter said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good that we are

here. Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah." 6For he did not know what to say, for they were terrified. 7And a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, "This is my beloved Son; listen to him." 8And suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone with them but Jesus only.

9And as they were coming down the mountain, he charged them to tell no one what they had seen, until the Son of Man had risen from the dead. 10So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what this rising from the dead might mean. 11And they asked him, "Why do the scribes say that first Elijah must come?" 12And he said to them, "Elijah does come first to restore all things. And how is it written of the Son of Man that he should suffer many things and be treated with contempt? 13But I tell you that Elijah has come, and they did to him whatever they pleased, as it is written of him."

Jesus Heals a Boy with an Unclean Spirit

14And when they came to the disciples, they saw a great crowd around them, and scribes arguing with them. 15And immediately all the crowd, when they saw him, were greatly amazed and ran up to him and greeted him. 16And he asked them, "What are you arguing about with them?" 17And someone from the crowd answered him, "Teacher, I brought my son to you, for he has a spirit that makes him mute. 18And whenever it seizes him, it throws him down, and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid. So I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able." 19And he answered them, "O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him to me." 20And they brought the boy to him. And when the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. 21And Jesus asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood. 22And it has often cast him into fire and into water, to destroy him. But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us." 23And Jesus said to him, "'If you can'! All things are possible for one who believes." 24Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, "I believe; help my unbelief!" 25And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You mute and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him and never enter him again." 26And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse, so that most of them said, "He is dead." 27But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose. 28And when he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?" 29And he said to them, "This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer."

Jesus Again Foretells Death, Resurrection

30They went on from there and passed through Galilee. And he did not want anyone to know, 31for he was teaching his

disciples, saying to them, “The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him. And when he is killed, after three days he will rise.” 32But they did not understand the saying, and were afraid to ask him.

Who Is the Greatest?

33And they came to Capernaum. And when he was in the house he asked them, “What were you discussing on the way?” 34But they kept silent, for on the way they had argued with one another about who was the greatest. 35And he sat down and called the twelve. And he said to them, “If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all.” 36And he took a child and put him in the midst of them, and taking him in his arms, he said to them, 37“Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me, receives not me but him who sent me.”

Anyone Not Against Us Is for Us

38John said to him, “Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us.” 39But Jesus said, “Do not stop him, for no one who does a mighty work in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me. 40For the one who is not against us is for us. 41For truly, I say to you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ will by no means lose his reward.

Temptations to Sin

42“Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea. 43And if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than with two hands to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. 45And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame than with two feet to be thrown into hell. 47And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell, 48‘where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.’ 49For everyone will be salted with fire. 50Salt is good, but if the salt has lost its saltiness, how will you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.”

Chapter 10

Teaching About Divorce

1And he left there and went to the region of Judea and beyond the Jordan, and crowds gathered to him again. And again, as was his custom, he taught them.

2And Pharisees came up and in order to test him asked, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?” 3He answered them, “What

did Moses command you?” 4They said, “Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of divorce and to send her away.” 5And Jesus said to them, “Because of your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment. 6But from the beginning of creation, ‘God made them male and female.’ 7‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, 8and the two shall become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two but one flesh. 9What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.”

10And in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter. 11And he said to them, “Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her, 12and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.”

Let the Children Come to Me

13And they were bringing children to him that he might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them. 14But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, “Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. 15Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.” 16And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them.

The Rich Young Man

17And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” 18And Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. 19You know the commandments: ‘Do not murder, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother.’” 20And he said to him, “Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth.” 21And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, “You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.” 22Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

23And Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!” 24And the disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said to them again, “Children, how difficult it is to enter the kingdom of God! 25It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.” 26And they were exceedingly astonished, and said to him, “Then who can be saved?” 27Jesus looked at them and said, “With man it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God.” 28Peter began to say to him, “See, we have left everything and followed you.” 29Jesus said, “Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, 30who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with

persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life. 31But many who are first will be last, and the last first."

Jesus Foretells His Death a Third Time

32And they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them. And they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid. And taking the twelve again, he began to tell them what was to happen to him, 33saying, "See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death and deliver him over to the Gentiles. 34And they will mock him and spit on him, and flog him and kill him. And after three days he will rise."

The Request of James and John

35And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came up to him and said to him, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you." 36And he said to them, "What do you want me to do for you?" 37And they said to him, "Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory." 38Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?" 39And they said to him, "We are able." And Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink you will drink, and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized, 40but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared." 41And when the ten heard it, they began to be indignant at James and John. 42And Jesus called them to him and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. 43But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, 44and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. 45For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Jesus Heals Blind Bartimaeus

46And they came to Jericho. And as he was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a great crowd, Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the roadside. 47And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" 48And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" 49And Jesus stopped and said, "Call him." And they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take heart. Get up; he is calling you." 50And throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. 51And Jesus said to him, "What do you want me to do for you?" And the blind man said to him, "Rabbi, let me recover my sight." 52And Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your faith has made you well." And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him on the way.