

Lent Day 4  
Saturday February 13, 2016

**Reading:** Mark 4:13-20

### **Reflection**

I remember being a kid in grade school hating math. There was nothing worse than the teacher finishing up their lesson and then assigning seat work, then watching the other kids gleefully dive in, obviously getting it. I would sit feeling the sting of tears beginning (pushing that down) and the rage would flood into me as I wanted to tear the paper apart and curse the kids, the teacher and anyone else in my path. I didn't get it.

The disciples in the gospels also consistently 'don't get it' and this is a prime example. I don't feel like I need to defend Jesus at all. While he may sound harsh and impatient to our modern ear, there is also a context which we often miss when reading Jesus - he is speaking with Israel, a people who have been on this journey with God of thousands of years. But here is a group who do not get it. I think that's okay.

While Jesus has set the standard, he is still patient. He hasn't said to them, "Oh, forget it. I'll look for some more competent disciples to work with." He keeps them close patiently teaching them and showing them how to lead and do kingdom ministry. That's good news for you and for me isn't it? We tend to miss things and fail don't we?

Rowan Williams, the former Arch Bishop of Canterbury, in a lecture on C.S. Lewis' *The Chronicles of Narnia* reminds us that Aslan, the Christ figure, always meets us where we are. There is a wonderful scene in Prince Caspian when the four children have been brought back into Narnia and Lucy thinks she has seen Aslan but the other children don't believe her. But, then, slowly they begin to see him as Lucy (always the first to see) throws herself on him. It is a story of a 'human almost miss', but more importantly it is a story of our patient God determined to connect.

I think the Christian life should be slow. In Bible College and Seminary (and out) I have seen many who become Christians and immediately want to go into ministry. When they would come into the bookstore over the summer looking for Biblical Greek texts I knew what was going on. I was this type myself and fortunately God slowed me down. I love this line from Acts 4:13, "When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus." After three years of learning and practicing they were ready to step into ministry.

Lent is a period of 40 days, not including Sundays. It is meant to be a long journey. The invitation is to spend the time with Jesus learning from him. Don't rush and don't worry about not getting everything right away. He is patient, loving and preparing you for life and ministry. So relax into it.

### **Prayer**

Lord, it is you who transforms us. We want to instantly know, understand and live in line with you. Slow us down. Deepen us over time. Fill us with your wisdom by your Spirit, so people might know that we have been with you. Amen.