



# 20B LENT 2B - BIBLE STUDY

## Rocky relationships

### Abstract

But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. "Get behind me, Satan!" he said. "You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns."

Mark 8:33

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### Rocky relationships

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2021 | LENT | SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT | YEAR B

Old Testament    Genesis 17:1–7, 15–16  
 Psalm            Psalm 22:23–31  
 New Testament    Romans 4:13–25  
 Gospel            Mark 8:31–38 or Mark 9:2–9

Jesus is telling his disciples a difficult truth about what will happen to him in his death and resurrection, but Peter finds it hard to take, and argues with Jesus. Jesus sets out that God's ways are different from human nature: we must forget about our earthly desires and follow Jesus.

Sometimes it can be hard to accept a difficult truth. We might wonder if there have been times when we have had to receive a difficult truth. How did we react? How might we have responded if we had been in Peter's shoes?

**This week we explore** daring to be open without fear of rejection.

### Opening prayer

Holy God, we come from our busy lives.  
 We often forget that you walk with us.  
 As we gather now, help us to be more aware of who you are.  
 Give us the courage to admit when we don't understand,  
 so that we might grow more like you in all we do.  
 Amen.

### Reading

*Mark 8:31–38*

<sup>31</sup> 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. <sup>32</sup> He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.

<sup>33</sup> But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. "Get behind me, Satan!" he said. "You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns."

<sup>34</sup> Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. <sup>35</sup> For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. <sup>36</sup> What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? <sup>37</sup> Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? <sup>38</sup> If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels."

For the word of the Lord  
**Thanks be to God**

## Bible notes

We have heard that Abraham and Sarah are universal figures, giving rise to the multitude of nations. Here Jesus as 'the Son of Man' is the prototype of a humanity that is God's delight (Psalm 8.4), the one whose faithfulness and love will triumph over the forces of oppression and destruction (Daniel 7.13ff.). The Scriptures characterise Satan as the source of this opposition to God's purposes, and as resentful of God's delight in humanity's holiness (see Job 1-2). We heard in last week's reading that as soon as God had said to Jesus, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased', Satan tested him in the wilderness (1.11-13). Now Jesus recognises Satan at work again as Peter tries to deflect him from his faithfulness to God in his service of others. Jesus refuses to succumb to this temptation to disobey God by focusing on human ambition rather than divine providence. This seems to reverse the story of Adam and Eve's succumbing to the serpent's temptation to disobey God (Genesis 3.1-7). That disobedience led to recriminations that fractured relationships, but Jesus' obedience establishes a new community as he invites others to follow his generous way of self-giving to others, letting go of selfish ambition 'for the sake of the good news' of God's glorious purpose for humanity. Despite the necessary rebuke, six days later Peter is included in Jesus' transfiguration, helping him to see that the way of the cross is indeed the path to glory.

How do you cope with disagreement? For lots of reasons, each of us reacts differently when people disagree with us or one another. Perhaps you know people, especially leaders, who you'd be frightened to disagree with because they might reject you! Jesus seems to have created an atmosphere among his friends where they weren't afraid. Peter is quite confident in his contradiction of Jesus. And Jesus is comfortable to disagree with Peter – very strongly. But is Peter kicked out of the group? Is Peter rejected? Far from it – in fact, just a few verses further in chapter 9, we read that Jesus chooses Peter with James and John for a special experience. If we are to grow as people of faith, we need to be able to create an environment where we feel safe enough to disagree but know we will not be rejected. Can we do that?

## Questions for reflection

How easy would you find it to speak up in a situation like this?

- What topics would you be prepared to speak up about, even with fear of rejection?
- How do you react when there is conflict or disagreement?



## Faith in Action

At the end of each day this week, look at your diary/phone/card, stop and reflect: How have I let others be themselves? How have I learned more of what God wants me to be?

## A prayer to end

Everything I am Lord, and everything I do.  
 Help me to be always more like you.  
 Teach me to be yours, Lord, show me when I'm wrong.  
 Help me to be always more like you.  
 You accepted all, Lord, help everyone to find the way.  
 Help me to be always more like you.

**Amen.**