



THE COMPASS

RED HILL LUTHERAN CHURCH

The Compass:
Encounter-Examine-Explore-Embrace God's Word
On
Your Discipleship Path

Sermon Series: "Living Hope."
(Easter, 2026)
"Living With Unshakable Hope." Text(s): John 16; Various Texts.

☐ Day #1—Monday, May 18th. Read: John 16.17-23. –Encounter: God's Word and your life—What do you Hear and/or See?

The events in John 16 are included in Jesus' "upper room discourse," beginning in chapter 13 and concluding in chapter 17. The teachings take place on Maundy Thursday evening, just before Jesus' arrest and crucifixion. As we have studied these past few weeks, the crises, challenges, and trials in our lives, often come upon us without warning and we are confronted with many questions and critical decisions such as, "Where do I go from here?" and "Where is God in this circumstance, event, doubt, and deep need? In this passage, both Jesus and His disciples are in the midst of the most critical moment in their lives—the coming moment of Jesus' death.

Jesus has told them that He is "going to Him who sent me" (v.5) and that "in a little while you will see me no more, then after a little while you will see me" (v.16). Jesus knows that the disciples are filled with grief and confusion (v.6). It seems like the disciples were confused about the timing of these events described by Jesus. The questions they kept asking in vs.17-18 indicate that considerable dialogue took place among the disciples without their arriving at an answer. They could not reconcile Jesus' statements because He said: (a) In a short time they would not see Him, (b) they would see Him, and (c) He was going to the Father. Only His death, resurrection, post-resurrection ministry, and Ascension, would make this all clear. However, like us, we only have the ability to see and know what is before us now. The disciples understood later—after the resurrection. Similarly, we will understand and receive answers to the questions we have about our lives and the problems we face later, in God's timing. One day, we will see and know what were the ultimate, divine reasons for our circumstances and challenges.

As a master teacher, Jesus understood the confusion among His disciples. At this point, He did not clarify His teaching; He knew it would all come into focus in the coming days and with the aid of the Spirit's teaching ministry (*John 16.12-13*). In v.20, Jesus' "I tell you the truth" introduces a solemn prediction that their coming grief would be followed by joy. His death would be a painful and disorienting experience, a "season" that I am sure they thought they would never get through. (To illustrate this truth, Jesus used the example of childbirth in v.21). However, the very event, the death of the Messiah, which would cause great emotional pain and mourning, would ultimately bring them joy and hope! Jesus says our grief will turn to joy. His resurrection and the Spirit's work of transformation, would enable the disciples (and us) to know that He had to die so that they (we) could have forgiveness of sins. Later, the church would even rejoice in His death (*1 Corinthians 1.23; 2.2*).

Consider/Reflect: What is the relationship between pain, struggle, and joy? Do you consider yourself a "joy-full" person? Why/why not? What would need to change for you to experience Jesus' joy?

□ **Day #2—Tuesday, May 19th. Read: John 16.23-32. —Examine: The Text and its Message.**

The upcoming events would bring about changed relationships; since Jesus would not be with them physically (“in that day” [v.23] means after His Ascension; then they would not be able to ask Him questions directly). However, the Holy Spirit would help them (*vs. 13-15*).

Again, Jesus says, “I tell you the truth” introducing an important statement. The disciples would be His ambassadors and therefore had the right to ask the Father for whatever they needed to accomplish His will. The words “in My name” are not a magic formula which enables the one praying to get his or her will done; instead those words tied the requests to the work of the Son in doing God’s will (Other instances of “in My name” are in *John 14.13-14; 15.16; 16.24, 26*). Up to this point, the disciples had not yet offered their prayers “in the name of Jesus.” Now they are to do this since Jesus’ death and the Spirit’s coming would enable them to enter into the divine plan of worldwide salvation through the ministry of the Church. Answered prayer brings complete joy (*John 15.11; 16.22*) because God is at work among and through His people.

Though the disciples were honest and sincere in their affirmations of faith (see *vs. 29-30*), Jesus knew their limitations far better than they did (*John 2.24-25*). The disciples did believe, or at least they seemed to understand what Jesus was really saying to them (*v.29*). However, as their later behavior will indicate (*v.32*), their faith and understanding was not complete faith or even a strong faith. This would come after the death and resurrection of Jesus and the advent of the Spirit. In *v.32* Jesus tells the disciples “You will be scattered...” a fulfillment of Zechariah’s words which spoke of the Shepherd (the Messiah) being “struck down” by decree of the Lord Almighty, which resulted in the scattering of the sheep (*Zechariah 13.7*).

In spite of the disciples’ deserting Him (*Matthew 26.56*), Jesus knew that the Father had not forsaken Him; “Yet I am not alone, for My Father is with Me” (See also *John 8.29; Psalm 23.4; and 73.25-26*). The same is true for us. Jesus has promised never to leave us alone (*Matthew 28.20; Hebrews 13.5*). While Jesus knew the Father would be with Him even though the disciples would scatter, in a few hours, on the cross, Jesus would experience God’s absence: “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” (*Matthew 27.46; Psalm 22.1*). Yet, even that experience of abandonment was for our benefit. When Jesus was made sin for us, He was separated from the Father so that in Him, we will never be separated from our Heavenly Father! He was alone that we might never be alone. He was forsaken that we might never be forsaken!

Consider/Reflect: How has your pain (your struggles, challenges, disappointments, and setbacks), helped you to grow spiritually? Do you remember a particular situation where your struggles drew you closer to Jesus and deepened your relationship with Him?

□ **Day #3—Wednesday, May 20th. Read: John 16.33. —Explore: The background to this text(s).**

John 16.33 is the summary and climax of the Upper Room discourse. Jesus’ instructions about “these things” (chapters 13-16) were intended to give the disciples strength, hope, and peace. Believers have a dual existence: we are *in Christ and in this world*. As we are in union with Jesus, we have peace, but the world, the dominant, secular culture, exhibits a hostile rejection of Biblical truth. The world’s systems, structures, and values, along with its demonic influence, what John’s Gospel refers to as “the world,” are the enemies of God and His people. When Jesus walked this earth, “the world” opposed Jesus’ message and ministry (*John 1.5; 7.7; 10*). Nevertheless, Jesus won the victory over the world; He has overcome the world! As the “strong man” who came and ruined Satan’s kingdom (*Matthew 12.25-29*), Jesus is the Victor. Jesus wanted the disciples (you) to remember this fact and to rejoice in His victory.

Jesus’ admonition to “take heart!” literally means, “Be courageous.” (In the NT the Greek word, “*tharseo*,” means to “be bold,” “cheer up.”) Interestingly, this word was only spoken by Jesus (*Matthew 9.2, 22; 14.27; Mark 6.50; 10.49; John 16.33; Acts 23.11*). Because Jesus is the victor over the powers, the powers of sin, death, and evil, those who are in union with Him (you and me) are victors as well! (*Romans 8.37*). Even though the pain and problems that we encounter in this world are strong, frightening, and hard, the final word(s) in all of them are uttered by Jesus: “I have overcome the world!”

Why did Jesus give this truth? So that His disciples (and you and me), might have peace in a world of tribulation. George Morrison defined peace as “the possession of adequate resources.” Relational peace depends on appropriate and healthy relationships. Spiritual peace depends on adequate spiritual resources and healthy spiritual relationships (*vs.27-28*). In Jesus Christ, we have all the resources that we need. The “in Me” words of Jesus are key instructions here. In ourselves, we have nothing; but “in Christ” we have all that we need. Jesus is our living hope!

Consider/Reflect: Both Jesus and the world offer a form of peace (*John 14.37; 16.33*), joy (*15.11; 16.22-24*), and love (*13.34-35; 15.9-19*). One way leads to true love and life, and the other to frustration and disappointment. Scripture says it this way: “Choose this day whom you will serve.... as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.” (Joshua 24.14-15)

□ **Day #4--Thursday, May 21st. Read: Mark 10.46-48; Luke 9.62; John 6.37; Proverbs 29.25.— Explore: The background to this text(s).**

There are times when we feel like we are sitting on the side of the road while the world passes us by. We may feel discouraged, disillusioned, and ready to quit. However, Jesus is ready to offer us a fresh start if we put our trust in him. In today’s texts, we will explore how Jesus took a blind man, Bartimaeus, from being a blind beggar sitting on the side of the road, to a person who was following Jesus on the road. Jesus wants to do the same for us. Whatever is keeping us sitting on the side of the road, Jesus can transform if we put the problem in his hands and trust in Him. How can we do this? Today we will focus on two decisions pursuant to following Jesus; tomorrow, two more; and Saturday one final consideration when following Jesus.

- Seize the moment. According to Mark 10.46-47, what did Bartimaeus do when he heard Jesus going by? Why is it important to act when the Lord is near? In Luke 9.62, what does Jesus say about looking back? How does this speak to the idea of seizing the moment?
- Tame your fear. Reread Mark 10:48. What does this verse say Bartimaeus did when he was told to be quiet? Think about some situations where we can become fearful, especially when it involves the fear of others’ opinions.

Whose disapproval do you fear the most? These fears can often be little “god’s” in our lives. According to John 6.37, what does God say He won’t do if someone comes to him? Why do we tend to believe the lie that God is not interested in us? What truth can we replace this lie with?

Consider/Reflect: Read Proverbs 29.25. What does this verse say fear does? How can you be protected from it?

□ **Day #5— Friday, May 22nd. Read: Mark 10.49-52; Various Texts.—Explore: The background to this text(s).**

Is there something in your life that is keeping you “sitting on the side of the road” and not surrendering to Jesus? Today, we continue our study from yesterday, looking at key decisions we can make when it comes to following Jesus.

- Announce your faith. In Mark 10.51, what was the response of Bartimaeus to Jesus’ question, “What do you want me to do for you?” Why do you think Jesus asked Bartimaeus this question? According to Galatians 3.27, how does God “clothe” believers?
- Receive God’s grace. According to Jesus in Mark 10.52a, what made the blind man see?

In Ephesians 2.8-10, how are believers saved? How do these verses describe God’s grace? For what purpose does God pour out his grace on us?

Consider/Reflect: Every Christian needs to take a “next step” in their walk with Jesus. For some this may be Baptism, for others it may be to take a needed class or Bible study in order to learn and grow. For many it may be to serve and minister to others. God will give us the power to take the next step! All of us can begin today. Today, ask Jesus to help you take the next step of faith in your journey. Share with a Christian friend that you trust what your next “discipleship step” might be.

□ **Day #6-Saturday, May 23rd. Read: Mark 10.52; James 2.14; 1 Corinthians 1.30 .—Embrace: God and His guiding you through His Word.**

Jesus is ready to offer us a new life when we put our trust in him. As Jesus transformed Bartimaeus from being a blind beggar sitting on the side of the road to a person following Jesus on the road, Jesus wants to do the same for you! We began Thursday exploring some key decisions when it comes to following Jesus, and continued with two more decisions yesterday. Today, one final consideration:

- Share your faith in words and deeds. What happened according to Mark 10.52b? Read James 2.14. What does this verse say about a faith that does nothing?

The issue of “works” and “faith” are often confused in protestant Christianity. As one scholar put it: “The Bible does not pit faith against works, rather, the Bible warns us about whose works we should have faith in.” As good Lutherans, we know and believe that our works do not save us. However, our works do reflect our grateful response to being saved!

Jesus accomplished all we need for salvation and our justification. Our works follow from our justification. We do acts of faith and love out of gratitude for our new lives in Christ Jesus. Read 1 Corinthians 1.30. What does this verse say about the source of all that is given to us? Why is it important that our “works” be viewed not as something we do, but something God does in and through us?

Though Jesus is intent on going to the cross, He pauses to have mercy on Bartimaeus, who can do nothing to solve his problem except cry out to the Lord, “Have mercy!” Like Bartimaeus, learn to call on the Lord and trust in His power to deliver you. Jesus will hear and respond compassionately. [Pray]: “Lord, Your mercy will not leave me; Ever will Your truth abide. Then in You I will confide. Amen.”¹

Consider/Reflect: Procrastination and fear often keep us from doing what is necessary to take the next step towards a new life in Christ. What is holding you back from doing what you know you need to do? If you are procrastinating or fearful, ask God to give you the courage to move forward.

The Lutheran Study Bible (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2009).

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