St Paul's Lutheran Church (Latimer, IA)
Trinity 7 – July 19, 2026
Mark 8:1-9 – Christ at the Center
Rev Peter Wagner

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ! Amen.

In the Bible, nothing is by accident. Nothing is just for entertainment. Of course, all of the Bible stories are interesting and inspiring, especially because they're true, ancient history. But the Bible is so much more. In Scripture, everything fits together. Every word, every line, it's all there for a purpose. All of it points to Jesus Christ, and his atoning death for our redemption.

Therefore, whenever you read the Bible, no matter what part, you should always be asking yourself this one question: How does this reveal Christ?

When you read the Bible through the lens of Christ, looking for Christ, then you are reading it the way the Holy Spirit intended. But if you read it apart from Christ, then your eyes are still darkened, and the veil of unbelief remains.

Yes, the key to understanding Scripture is Jesus Christ himself. As our Lord said to the Jews in John chapter 5, "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me." The Jews were right to study the Scriptures and search through them for the secret to eternal life. But they missed the point. There he was, the answer to their search, the author of life himself, standing right in front of them. All the Scriptures point to him. "To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name." (Acts 10:43)

So read your Bible. Read at least a chapter every day. Better yet, read it out loud with your family, or listen to an audio recording, because faith comes by hearing. And as you read, or listen, pray that the Holy Spirit would open your eyes, to find Christ everywhere. Hunger and thirst for him, for he has the words of eternal life.

All this is simply keeping the third commandment. Remember the Sabbath Day by keeping it holy doesn't just mean come sit in a pew on Sunday mornings. It means you should gladly hear preaching and God's word at every opportunity, and gladly hear and learn it.

But now, here's the question: If everything in Scripture reveals Christ, then how do our texts appointed for today reveal Christ? How do they bring us to the knowledge of salvation in his name? How does every line point to him?

Consider the Old Testament reading. Genesis 2, the creation of Adam. "Then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature."

At first glance, this doesn't seem to be about Christ. It's about us, how we came to be. But Adam is a picture of Christ. Christ is Adam, as Adam should have been.

Adam was created in the image of God. Body and soul, a rational being, without sin, very good. He was created to worship and obey God, and enjoy a relationship with him. But Adam fell, and his sin led to more sin. To idolatry, passions, and lust. It led to exchanging the truth of God for a lie, to worshipping the creature rather than the creator, and exchanging natural human desires for unnatural ones, men lusting after one another in their bodies, and women doing the same. It even led to the lie that people might be created wrongly, a man trapped in a woman's body, or a woman trapped in a man's.

So Adam's sin led to lawlessness and more lawlessness, farther and farther from the God who fashioned us from clay. But it was all to show us how much we need a savior. Through it all, the creator did not renounce his creation. God sought us out. He came, in person, to restore us. The second Adam, Christ, the creator himself, became man to redeem mankind.

Yes, Christ is Adam, as Adam should have been. When Adam took of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, when his wife gave it to him, he should have spoken up. He should have reminded her about God's commandment and protected her from the serpent's lies. But like a deadbeat husband, Adam neglected his duty. He stood by, with his mouth shut. He failed to read God's word and talk about it with his family. He let Eve take the lead and take over. So Adam was guilty, guilty of her fall, and guilty because he too ate of the fruit.

Yet Adam was a type of the one who was to come, a type of Christ. Death through Adam, life through Christ. Where Adam failed, Christ did not. Adam stood idly by while his bride was tempted and fell. He failed to protect her. But Christ does not. When his beloved bride, the church, is tempted, he stands up. He preaches the

truth. He defends her from the evil one.

Jesus Christ stepped up to Satan, and he took the brunt of all the temptation, and he conquered. In his great love, he gave up his life on the cross, to give his bride the free gift of salvation.

So praise him, our second Adam, who triumphed where the first Adam failed. As sin once reigned in death, now by the death of Jesus Christ our Lord, grace now reigns through righteousness leading to eternal life. "For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive."

You see now, that even all the way back in Genesis 2, the second chapter of the Bible, already in the moment God breathed life into Adam's nostrils, already the coming of the new man is in view, the second Adam, Jesus Christ. Everything in the Bible is centered on Christ.

Now, what about the garden of Eden? How does that reveal Christ?

The name Eden means delight. In Eden, God delighted in his creation. There Adam and Eve found rest and shelter, fed and nourished under God's care. And in the same way, in the church, Christ Jesus defends and shelters us. He puts his delight in her, he restores and nourishes her. Like the gold and onyx and bdellium of Havilah, he adorns her with gold and gems, like a beautiful bride for her husband.

But there's more. Eden was the source of four rivers, which flowed out to the four corners of the earth, watering the whole world. In the same way, Jesus Christ is the source of living water. Through baptism in his name, all the nations of the world are refreshed in his water of life.

In Christ, Eden is restored. For in Eden, God fed his people. He spoke with them face to face, and walked with them in the cool of the day. And now, here in the church, Jesus speaks with you face to face, to forgive and restore you, and walk with you, and comfort you every day.

So when you come into the church, the communion of saints, then you are entering the presence of Christ himself, true God and true man. Here God himself feeds you with the good fruit of the tree of life, the fruit of the tree of the cross, his own flesh.

We usually think of the cross as a tree of death, where Jesus died. But truly, it is the tree of life, and its fruit is the crucified body of Christ himself. Eating its fruit undoes the curse of death. It brings you forgiveness and eternal life.

Dear Christians, Christ is always at the center.

So come, gather here today, in this congregation, this new garden of Eden, this place where your new, second Adam, comes to you, to miraculously feed you. Just as he came to the crowd of four thousand in the gospel reading, filled with compassion, to feed them.

Come, receive the bread he gives you through his pastors in the church today, just as he gave thanks for the seven loaves, and broke them and gave them to his disciples to set before the people.

Come, listen to his words, just as the crowds remained with him and clung to his every word, for three whole days. Feast on his word and sacrament, the abundant bread he provides, the fruit of his cross, the tree of life, because he rose triumphant on the third day, victorious over all the curse of sin and death. Rejoice and be fully satisfied in him alone, the fulfillment of all the Scriptures. Amen.

Now may the peace of God which passes all understanding guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus – and in him alone – unto life everlasting. Amen.