HOMEWORK FOR LIFE

(Mark 8:14-21)

In the "classroom" of experience (8:1-13)

The Master Teacher gives his students three assignments:

- **"UNDERSTAND the meaning of my words"**

- **"GRASP the significance of your experiences"**

- **"TRUST me"**

- *Do **you** understand…grasp…trust?*

MJCOG—2.26.17 Ted Ewing, PhD

QUOTES OF NOTE

The Christian doctrine of revelation, far from making the human mind unnecessary, actually makes it indispensable and assigns to it its proper place. God has revealed himself in words to minds. His revelation is a rational revelation to rational creatures. Our duty is to receive his message, to submit to it, to seek to understand it and to relate it to the world in which we live. (John Stott, *Your Mind Matters*)

God generally deals with his non-human or non-personal creation as one guides a car: by a causal influence mediated through the general system of physical reality that he has ordained in his creation. But God's personal creatures, whether angelic or human, are also guided by communication of his intentions and thoughts. They are addressed by him. In Psalm 32:9 we are admonished, "Do not be like a horse or a mule, without understanding, whose temper must be curbed with bit and bridle." We are to be led by—guided by—reasonable, intelligible communication, not by blind impulse, force, or sensation alone. (Dallas Willard, *Hearing God*)

We have a tendency to confine study to classrooms and books, but here Jesus is urging his disciples to study their experience so that they might come to trust in God. If they had simply studied what they had seen—Jesus' feeding of the five thousand and of the four thousand—they would have known that God is the One who gives in abundance and truly the One—the only One—they can trust to supply all their needs. But they did not study and so they could not trust. (Richard Foster, *Spiritual Classics*)

We are producing technicians with a lot of facts, rather than thinkers. Thinkers have depth. And depth has richness to it. Those who set apart time for enriching discussions on issues, on the things of God, will rediscover the joy of truth. We need to bring long chats back into our schedules, allowing significant slots of time for truth-related discussions. Truth is one of the richest aspects of the Christian life and so should be one of the richest aspects of Christian fellowship. We are asking that friendship be characterized by the quest for a deeper understanding of truth. (Ajith Fernando, *Reclaiming Friendship*)

Experience is a hard teacher because she gives the test first and the lesson afterward. (American proverb)