

In Between

February 16-21, 2026

Monday February 16, 2026

Scripture - Mark 8: 11-13 The Pharisees came up and started a discussion with him; they demanded of him a sign from heaven, to put him to the test. And with a profound sigh he said, 'Why does this generation demand a sign? In truth I tell you, no sign shall be given to this generation.' And, leaving them again, he re-embarked and went away to the other side.

Observation: We continue the march through the gospel of Mark with an ever increasing challenge by the elites and power brokers of Jesus' day.

Narrative: Those in authority, whether in work, friendships, or family, can tend to put heavy "demands" upon us; we often feel like we are being tested. As with Jesus, we take a "profound sigh." Sometimes not much more can be said or proven; the body of evidence of how a life has been lived will need to be proof enough as a "sign."

Question: When have you become exasperated with someone who doubts your sincerity or actions? How did you handle it?

Tuesday February 17, 2026 Scripture - Mark 8:14-18 The disciples had forgotten to bring bread, except for one loaf they had with them in the boat. "Be careful," Jesus warned them. "Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and that of Herod." They discussed this with one another and said, "It is because we have no bread." Aware of their discussion, Jesus asked them: "Why are you talking about having no bread? Do you still not see or understand? Are your hearts hardened? Do you have eyes but fail to see, and ears but fail to hear?"

Observation: Jesus would then mention the two multiplications of loaves and fishes.

Narrative: In Jesus > in sharing, in love and compassion, there will always be enough. The Pharisees were all about the rigid purity system; all that divides and belittles people who are not "perfect/pure/clean."

Question: When have you been upset with someone for their lack of understanding after repeated reminders & discussion. How did it go for you and that someone?

Wednesday February 18, 2026 (Ash Wednesday - beginning of Lent)

Scripture - Matthew 6:3-6 But when you give to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving will be in secret; and your Father who sees *what is done* in secret will reward you. "When you pray, you are not to be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees *what is done* in secret will reward you.

Observation: A commentary/critique of prayer, fasting (handled later), and almsgiving for prestige/show/self compared to Jesus' call for sincerity, love, & compassion.

Narrative (neat trivia): I focus here on the difference of that time between left and right handedness >> when Jews of that time traded in a circle/market, they would do so with their left (bad/evil/unclean) hand ("doing dirty business") >> it is projected that the poor would come up and beg, and if inclined, the business person would give to them with their right (pure/holy/clean) hand >> thus the saying makes cultural sense in verse 3.

Question: When have you overcome your selfish (bad) nature/tendency in order to perform/give of yourself openly/altruistically (good)? How did or does it make you feel?

Thursday February 19, 2026

Scripture – Luke 9:22 He said, 'The Son of man is destined to suffer grievously, to be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes and to be put to death, and to be raised up on the third day.'

Observation: Jesus would implore them to take up their cross, and to lose their life for a greater cause.

Narrative: Daughters and sons of humanity who work for love, compassion, justice, and forgiveness commonly have their efforts "put to death" through rejection from the powers of the time. But the legacy of such virtues may not come in the present, but in the future when "raised up" on another day by another generation.

Question: What will your legacy be well into the future when the things of the present age fade away? Or what would you like it to be, and what steps (actual, prayer, discernment, etc.) are you taking in that direction?

Friday February 20, 2026

Scripture – Matthew 9:14-15 Then John's disciples came to him and said, 'Why is it that we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not?' Jesus replied, 'Surely the bridegroom's attendants cannot mourn as long as the bridegroom is still with them? But the time will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast.'

Observation: Not unlike Jesus, John the Baptist had dedicated disciples who would try for a time to keep alive the Baptist's teaching and message, even after John was executed.

Narrative: To fast is a sacrifice of a known reality (eg. food & hunger) that points to a reality unseen (eg Jesus, unconditional love, forgiveness). As Catholics we would call them sacramental moments that are practiced to remind us of something larger than ourselves.

Question: If you fast, what or of whom does it point to in your life?

Saturday February 21, 2026 Scripture – Luke 5:29-32 In his honor Levi held a great reception in his house, and with them at table was a large gathering of tax collectors and others. The Pharisees and their scribes complained to his disciples and said, 'Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?' Jesus said to them in reply, 'It is not those that are well who need the doctor, but the sick. I have come to call not the upright but sinners to repentance.'

Observation: Jesus had just called Levi (Matthew) to be a disciple. Levi must have been in the upper ranks of tax collectors, perhaps even a chief tax collector, since he was able to put on a great reception in his house. But tax collectors, by the purity system and thereby the Pharisees were seen as lowlife, unclean, impure, sinners.

Narrative: Jesus had the talent and the passion to interact with the full spectrum of humanity; tax collectors and Pharisees in these verses. From the elite to the despised, Jesus had a message and something to offer; a more egalitarian view of society.

Question: Will your legacy seem to be appealing to a small or more broad spectrum of humanity/relatives/friends?