

Mark 8:31-38: The Real Deal About Discipleship

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[0 : 00] Again, the scripture reading is from the Gospel of Mark, chapter 8, verses 31 through 38. That is on page 820 of your pew Bible. Please stand for the reading of God's word.

And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again.

And he said this plainly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and seeing his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, Get behind me, Satan, for you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.

And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the Gospels will save it.

For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? For what can a man give in return for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

[1 : 30] This is the word of the Lord. Thank you, God. Thank you, Brock, and good afternoon to you.

What a joy it is to be in God's house with God's people today. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we give you praise for the joy that we have in you and for the honor that we have of serving you.

Thank you for the people of God gathered around your word as we even head to the table on this afternoon. Pray, Lord, that our heads and hearts would be prepared as we go back into the world.

We would do so better in form, strengthen in the Gospel, and through partaking of your table today. We commend ourselves to you, and we bless and we honor your name.

Amen. I want to be a follower of Christ. I want to be one of his disciples.

[2 : 47] I want to walk in the newness of life. So, let me be a follower of Christ. What do I have to do?

What do I have to say? How do I need to walk each and every day? Oh, tell me, what does it cost for me to carry the cross?

Just let me be a follower of Christ. Is that your sentiment on this afternoon? words of a song, simple song, follower of Christ.

And undoubtedly, I would think, at least I would hope, that that would be the sentiments of everyone here today.

But, if the truth is told, I think some of us remain a bit foggy as it concerns understanding what it means to really follow Jesus.

[4 : 06] Understanding who the real Jesus is, and what real discipleship is actually all about. Today's text is our second in the Lenten series.

And I believe that this text can help you, regardless of where you are, on your faith journey. You may be a veteran, have many years of walking in Christ under your belt.

You may be a rookie in the faith, as it were. You may, at this point, be on the outside of Christ. But I believe that this word in this text on this afternoon has a word with your name on it, so to speak.

In the text, in its context, our Lord's first century followers were grappling with his identity in spite of what they had seen and in spite of what they had heard, they remained in the fog.

Structurally, Mark's gospel highlighted the occasion of the disciples' lack of sight, the lack of perception, with stories of physical blindness.

[5 : 42] Matter of fact, if you look at chapter 8 in verse 22, that's one of the bookends where Jesus gives a story, or Mark gives us a story or an account of Jesus opening blinded eyes.

Look at chapter 8 and verse 22. You see the header there in the ESV? Jesus heals a blind man at Bethesda.

And they came to Bethesda, and some people brought to him a blind man and begged him to touch him. If you look on the other end, look over at chapter 10, and beginning at verse 46, we see on the other end another account of Jesus opening the eyes of the blind.

It is blind Bartimaeus. He's in Jericho. Jesus has been on his path to Jerusalem. And notice how Mark places this particular story.

again, the header, Jesus heals blind Bartimaeus. And they came to Jericho, and as he was leaving Jericho with his disciples, and a great crowd, Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the roadside.

[7 : 10] There you have it. On the front end. On the back end, Jesus healing the blind. But there were those around Jesus, though they had physical sight, they lacked the real perception that they needed as they related to following Jesus.

During the same stretch, our Lord labored to get his disciples to come to grips with who he was and his mission in the world.

still, they didn't get it. What about you? How is your perception, your understanding of who Jesus really is?

Up to this point in his gospel, Mark has shown that the words and the works of Jesus are in fact the words and the works of God.

Huh? Had not the Father in chapter one, we saw it on last week, spoken from heaven with these words, you are my beloved son, with you I am well pleased.

[8 : 30] Sick people were healed. Hungry people were fed as you track Jesus' steps from Mark chapter one on up to where we are. These are the things that had happened.

The dead had been raised. Now, isn't this the kind of Jesus that people flocked to then? And people even flock to that kind of Jesus today.

When this kind of Jesus is proclaimed, scores still are attracted to him. But then we get the rest of the story.

we get what we have in the text that is before us. In Mark chapter eight verses 27 through 29, Peter had confessed that Jesus was the Christ, the Messiah.

This anointed one, a God appointed ruler, a descendant of David who would act on God's behalf to defeat God's enemies and to restore the fortunes of God's people.

[9 : 38] Messiah, the Christ, the anointed one. What a glorious revelation it was. In Matthew's account in chapter 16, Jesus affirmed Peter with the following words.

And Jesus answered him, Blessed are you Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.

Way to go Peter. You're right. Jesus indeed is Messiah. And this information, this revelation, was a revelation that came to you from heaven itself, from the Father.

But yet what we have on the heels of Peter's great confession is before us. And it is the first of three predictions that Jesus gave regarding his death at the hands of Jewish leaders.

And then his subsequent resurrection. This prediction that we see before us is made two other times. Look quickly over Mark chapter 9 verses 30 and through 32.

[10 : 51] Three times Jesus gives us this, 30. They went on from there and passed through Galilee, and he did not want anyone to know.

Notice verse 31. He was teaching his disciples, saying to them, the Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him, and when he is killed, after three days, he will rise.

Look quickly over at chapter 10 and verses 32 through 34. This is the third time that Jesus speaks about his coming death and resurrection.

Notice, and they were on the road going up Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them, and they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid. And taking the twelve, he began to tell them what was going to happen to him, saying, see, we're going up Jerusalem, the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priest and the scribes.

They will condemn him to death and deliver him over to the Gentiles. There, just like in today's text, you have Jesus' prediction of his death and resurrection, but then that's followed by the disciples' failure to grasp what Jesus is saying, and then Jesus teaches them about what it means to be his follower, what it means to be a disciple of Christ.

[12 : 29] Notice in 31 of our text today, Jesus' prediction. Just like we saw in the chapters going forward, here we have it in chapter 8 verse 31.

He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes. These are the three groups that made up the high court of Israel, the Sanhedrin, and be killed.

And after three days, rise again. Notice how Jesus referred to himself in this text. Using the designation Son of Man.

Fourteen times in the book of Mark, you see this particular designation. It's rather enigmatic because it's a designation that he referred to to himself, but only up to this point in the book, he has referred to himself using this designation only two times.

From chapter eight on, he uses this to refer to himself twelve additional times. Notice in verse 31, that speaks of the suffering of the Son of Man.

[13 : 45] But look at verse 38, that speaks of the glory of the Son of Man. Man. And these two usages here together help us to see the range of the usage of this particular designation for Jesus.

Now some see the term as really being an idiomatic expression, simply meaning I, Jesus referring to himself, but using, instead of saying I, he uses the term Son of Man.

While this may be true, there seems to be additional weight that is behind that particular designation Son of Man.

This title revealed something about Christ on the one hand, but it also concealed something about him. It certainly connected Jesus with his humble mission on earth, but also it connected him with a Daniel 7 figure that connected him with his majesty in glory.

Earthly ministry. Mark chapter 10, verse 45. Son of Man is, again, came not to be ministered into, but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many, but also it spoke of his glory, as you see very clearly in Mark chapter 14, verse 62.

[15 : 13] He began to teach them clearly about himself. Unpacking truth as it related to his destiny, as it related to his particular mission.

What did the future then hold for the Christ? Look at the text. He would suffer many things.

He was going to be rejected. Huh? He would be killed but also he would rise again. The destiny of the Christ laid out.

But no, look at verse 32. Huh? He said this plainly. Now, Jesus, we know if you look at the gospels, there were a lot of parables that he used.

This was not one of those incidents. He spoke plainly. Huh? As far as what was going to happen. As a matter of fact, it was all too clear.

[16 : 17] It did not need explanation. What kind of Messiah were the people expecting in that day?

Huh? Now, given the historical and national situation at that time, their expectation was for a political leader, a national deliverer, who would put an end to the tyranny, the oppression that had been Israel's lot for ages.

Leadership muscle, leadership might and power, they were looking for that kind of leader. Huh? God's anointing would lead the way, the restoration of his people.

Peter refused to take in Jesus' words. That's not going to be, that couldn't be, it doesn't fit, it doesn't fit our understanding of who he is.

The path that Jesus predicted in Peter's mind was not to be. Here was the one who had brought life and life, and his life was going to be soon snuffed away, taken away, never be.

[17 : 34] In Peter's mind, something was wrong with the picture. But look at verse 33. You see the correction that's there? But turning and seeing his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, notice these words, get behind me, Satan, for you're not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.

What a stunning kind of rebuke truth for Jesus, number one, his main man. It doesn't make any difference.

If you are speaking truth, that's one thing. If you are, if you've gone, if you've slitting off the highway, that's another thing. Jesus here wasted no time countering Peter's rebuke with his own.

Peter, the rock, had unwittingly become a stumbling stone with his words. And just as Jesus had recognized the source of Peter's inspired words from above, here he recognized the sinister source behind Peter's words here.

It was Satan, huh? And as we looked at on last week, we saw Satan's temptation in the wilderness beginning at Jesus and the beginning of his ministry and what Satan presented it to him, there was a non-suffering option to popularity and glory.

[19 : 10] And here, Peter was doing the same thing. He discouraged a God-ordained path and encouraged the same no-cross option.

That's what he was presenting to our Lord. The cross was clearly in sight for Jesus. Peter and the other disciples, blinded by their expectations, didn't quite grasp what was going on.

But here's the deal. It was for Jesus and so for his disciples. The no-cross option was not an option for Jesus and it must not be for the followers of Jesus.

as you and I think about who our Lord actually is and the path that was laid before him and he has called us to follow him. What are the implications of that for us as those who follow him?

See Jesus' instructions that he gives in the verses that follow? In light of what Jesus predicted about his own mission, his own path, he proceeded to lay out the very implications for those who follow him and that include the likes of you and me today.

[20 : 35] And what we see here before us are some very plain truths that you and I need to embrace as those who are following Jesus or would-be followers of Jesus.

What are the plain truths? Here's the first one. The pattern for Christian discipleship is the life of Jesus itself. That's the pattern.

Look at verse 34. When he called to him the crowd with his disciples he said to them if anyone would come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

What do disciples and would-be disciples need to know about following Jesus? The question that we would ask here is what are the demands for following Jesus?

To be on Jesus' team? To in fact to indeed be one of his disciples? Notice negatively say no to self. The cult of self must be abandoned.

[21 : 43] The demands of Jesus must become primary in your life and my life. how easy it is for self in your life and mine to be pedestal, to be enthroned and we find ourselves daily bowing down to our whims and fancies and even our conceptions about life and even the Christian life.

The cult self friends must be abandoned. allegiance to Jesus that's negatively speaking but positively allegiance to Jesus must guide our lives even to the point of suffering loss because of him releasing whatever it might be in order to embrace him and his call and his purposes in our lives.

that kind of language for all practical purposes is too foreign to us.

Oh, but that is what our faith forbearers they have embraced that following in Jesus train and that of his disciples and you and I are here today because someone has heeded that call and may there be those who because of our stand for Christ in this day because of our heeding clearly heeding the call to discipleship may there be generations that follow you and me and the path that you and I follow because someone embraced these particular words.

Wholehearted allegiance to Jesus must be our priority pattern for Christian discipleship is nothing less than the life and yes even the death of Jesus our Lord.

[23 : 52] Notice the second truth about Christian discipleship from the text. The pattern is Jesus life but the price tag for Christian discipleship it's huge folks it's high.

Another way of saying that it's costly it's not easy. The picture here is that of a path that could lead to the most extreme disavowal of self.

Our Lord has led the way. This amounts to a willingness even to lay down one's life to forsake personal interest for his kingdom interest.

I love the way that Luke puts it in chapter nine about those who would follow Jesus and Jesus speaks about letting the dead bury their dead and all of those kinds of things and he puts his hand to the plow and turns back is not worthy of the kingdom priorities following Jesus based on what we see in this text price tag is high it's costly it's not easy look at verse 35 whosoever would save his life will lose it but whosoever loses his life for my sake and notice don't you love this and for the gospel here the teaching is that of self preservation results and loss but self surrender for Jesus and the ministry of the gospel will result in true self preservation it's quite paradoxical isn't it it's counterintuitive one would expect the opposite but no the picture here is one who makes withdrawals from one account and invest in that of another picture the two accounts one self and one savior and what

Jesus says here is that emptying your account is not losing but in reality it's gaining huh that's what he says principle as we see in verse 36 has already been stated in verse 34 Jesus strengthens what he says by asking two rhetorical questions in these verses 35 36 and 37 the idea is that even if one gains the entire world and forfeits his life that is his true life such a person has lost big time huh being full or sated as it were on the stuff of this world of this life one can find himself starving!

[27:16] and verse 36 nothing it doesn't profit anything no true profit in gaining the entire world and forfeiting one's true life ask the rich man Luke chapter 16 every day was a good day for him he had the best that money could buy he was living large but then the thing changed from earth to glory and the one who was rich on earth was impoverished in glory in eternity the poor on earth was wealthy in eternity look at Jesus words in verse 38 what sobering words whoever is ashamed of me and my words and this adulterous unfaithful and unholy sinful generation of him will the son of man there's the word again be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his father with his holy angels what a word of caution for you and me what we have here is a fitting word of caution for those who would follow

Jesus exactly what does it amount to several things are worth noting verse 31 speaks of the suffering of the son of man verse 38 again speaks of his glory Jesus speaks of a future day of glory that will include this same son of man the son of man that would be humiliated before men and earth would be exalted before the father and his angels in glory notice the two venues an earthly venue then present and a future venue glory heaven two audiences an unholy world huh and then the heavenly father and his holy angels caution of Jesus is this if you are embarrassed because of Jesus and his teaching in this unholy world huh if you are embarrassed huh

God in this God forsaking world expect to be embarrassed before by Jesus in the world to come wow are you embarrassed are you ashamed of the gospel are you ashamed of your faith that you are a follower of Jesus those who have issues with him but do you own him oh you can get away with confessing that you believe in God oh but oh it takes a different turn when you profess faith in Jesus Christ when you claim him as Lord God and Savior huh are you embarrassed by him are you ashamed to speak up for him or to speak a word for him if you are ashamed of the suffering Jesus the exalted Jesus will be ashamed of you you and I are here because our

Lord's followers eventually understood these words and like believers before us huh believe that there was no and not a no cross option huh what about you as you think about your path in life do you take the path of least resistance as it relates to your faith or do you own it hook line and sinker do you do you own it do you embrace it is it really genuinely and truly yours our leader Jesus chose a path of suffering and death and he calls us to join him on the journey and choosing this path of death Jesus actually chose the path of life for himself and for all of those who follow him following our leader leads to life even if it means the unpopular path for our feet in this life huh and we are reminded even in this Lenten season huh we travel the path to remember

Jesus death and resurrection and it may not be easy but it's worth it and will be worth it here we are reminded the Christian life of surrender is more in this text it's more than 40 days of austerity people huh surrender for the follower of Christ is an everyday reality not just a certain section on the Christian calendar surrender it's an everyday reality surrender for the follower of Jesus huh those who recognize who he is and then we follow him accordingly everyday huh so you want to follow Jesus huh what can you expect text before us lays it out clearly plainly just like

[32 : 57] Jesus spoke plainly and without parable to Peter huh here he speaks plainly without parable to you and me daily we must recognize him as the one who came in humility suffer death in the place of guilty people like you and me this death that is spoken of in verse 31 that was for you and me there we have the gospel Jesus death and resurrection huh and those who want to follow Jesus must embrace that particular truth because it is embedded in who he is huh his death that satisfied God's judgment for your sins and mine his death and then his resurrection which was the proof of the effectiveness of his death huh in one person friends we have the old testament messiah the very dimensions of the son of man and son of

God our savior huh and if you're going to follow Jesus friend the no cross option is not an option for you huh and here we come today at the end of the service to a ceremony that reminds us of Jesus death and his resurrection huh on behalf of those who embrace him this is a regular reminder of the high cost that it took for Jesus to deliver what the father from eternity had prepared for his own and may it be a reminder as you take the bread in your hand think about the cost as you take the drink in your hand and the cup think about the cost the high cost that must be on our minds not just during

Lenten season but all through the year oh praise God that we can come and so I invite you today to come to the table come to the table and through partaking if you in fact are in Christ come and demonstrate your union with him the one who was crushed and bruised wounded for our transgression bruised for our iniquities the chastisement of our peace was upon him and with his stripes friends you and I are healed demonstrate your union with the crucified and risen Jesus and may you be strengthened today may you be strengthened to be one of his disciples want to be a disciple this is it the text lays it out for us aren't you glad that you want to hear us and I don't know what your week holds for you

I don't know what classroom kind of infractions that you may face I don't know what you will encounter on your job I don't know what you might run into oh but be reminded that Jesus came Jesus died and he rose for you and guess what he asked you and me to follow him may we be faithful to follow let me pray and then we're going to have further words Lord we love you thank you for this glimpse this call to discipleship call to you the Lord of glory entered into time space history became like us battered bruised and murdered for us took upon yourself the stroke that was to us we give thanks today

Lord as we come to the table we've been reminded through this text but may we be reminded through these symbols today the high cost of our salvation Lord and that you have invited us to follow you Lord in essence that's the statement that we make when we come forward that we in fact are followers of you that we're in union with you so help us to live out the reality of the statement that we're about to make by coming forward bless you we honor you and give you the praise of you you