

The Messiah's Mission

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[0 : 0 0] This book, Mark's Gospel, is not a biography. This is not a biography of Jesus. This is a gospel. It's a completely different genre. And the goal of the gospel authors, Mark, Matthew, Luke, and John, was not merely to write insightful stories about a historical figure, namely Jesus of Nazareth, but their goal was to persuade the reader. It's to convince you that Jesus is indeed the Son of God and that the salvation that we need only comes through Him. Let me say that again. They're trying to convince you. They're not trying to entertain us by stories. It's not just about telling us what Jesus did or what His life was like. The whole purpose behind these books is to get you to believe what it is that they're saying, believe it in a real way, in a substantial way, that Jesus is the Son of God, that He is deity Himself, and that salvation only comes through Him. And Mark made that clear in this very first verse of the book. It's his purpose statement, the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the gospel being good news, Jesus being the man from Nazareth, Christ being his messianic title, and then he follows that up with Son of God. All of that encompasses his purpose, to convince you that Jesus is the Son of God and that He is the Messiah that has brought salvation.

Now, to understand that means that you have to first understand that you are actually in need of saving. That's what salvation is, right? We use that word a lot, and I'm not convinced that everyone always understands. What do we mean by being saved? What do we mean by salvation?

Well, it means that we are in need of being saved from something. We are in danger, in fact, eternal danger. Why? Because of our sin. And the result of that sin is death. And what is it that Mark's trying to convince us of? That Jesus is the only one who can rescue you from that sin, who can bring life to your spiritual death. He's the only one. You can't do it. Religion can't do it.

Our church can't do it. Your baptism can't do it. Your conformity to any system or morality cannot do it. Only Christ can do it. And he's persuading the readers by telling us, this is how Jesus proved that in his life. And he's connecting Jesus's life to the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies that said, this is what the Messiah would do. And then as we look back on the entirety of scripture, we can look at Mark's gospel and the other gospels, and then we can go to Romans as you're reading right now during your week. And you can see how all of this starts to piece together. No, he's exactly right.

Jesus is the only way that we can possibly be saved from this sin and death. And so Mark begins to write this, and it's an important book. It's a helpful book, and it's really divided into two sections.

[3 : 1 4] The beginning of the book up until where we finished last week in verse 30 of chapter 8 has a focus on Jesus's identity. This is who Jesus is as the Son of God and the Messiah. And then moving forward, beginning in the verse that we just read in verse 31 to the end of the book, the focus is on Jesus's purpose. And so this section of scripture is pivotal to Mark's transition. He's transitioning from Christ's identity to Christ's purpose, and it's a pivotal section of the book. And of course, Mark was just following Jesus's pattern here because Jesus did the exact thing with his disciples.

For this, up to this point, his focus has been on getting the disciples to see who he is. And it was only after they made this confession that he is the Christ in our previous passage that he then opened up to them plainly about what he had come to do. And that's important for us to understand because you cannot rightly understand what Jesus did apart from believing in who Jesus was.

You can't understand his purpose unless you have come to a point where you're willing to believe in who he was. Now, as we zero in on chapter 8, the narrative is pointing out the progressive nature of the disciples' understanding. And you'll remember from last week in verses 22 to 26, Jesus healed a blind man that really served as an illustration to the spiritual blindness of the disciples. Remember, it was unique the way that Jesus went about this. There was a blind man brought to him. Jesus was tender and compassionate with him as he always was, but he healed him in two stages.

It wasn't because he just messed up the first time and he had to kind of fix it and make it complete. There was an intention to what Jesus was doing. He touched his eyes first and the man could see, but he couldn't see clearly. Jesus touched his eyes again, and now he had 20-20 vision. He could see as perfectly as anyone could ever see. That's describing and illustrating what's happening with the disciples.

Jesus has opened their eyes. They can see, but they can't see clearly yet. They can see enough that they've confessed him to be the Christ, but they're struggling grasping exactly what his purpose was, and they're going to continue to struggle that until after his resurrection. But this is the point in time when he actually begins to emphasize and plainly tell them exactly what he has come to do.

[5 : 57] They understood enough to confess him as Messiah, but they still didn't understand his mission. And because they misunderstood his mission, they also misunderstood what it meant for them to be his devoted followers. Do you understand that? That's the division in these two sections that I just read. Because they misunderstood his mission and his purpose, at this point in their walk with Christ, they misunderstood what it meant for them to be true, faithful, devoted followers of Christ.

And let me illustrate it this way. Remember another time. In fact, many times Jesus said this, but in Matthew 10, Jesus said this to the disciples. He said, a disciple is not above his teacher, nor is a servant above his master. It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher and the servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household? Okay. Jesus said that many times, actually, in the gospels. Sometimes it was in regard to teaching the disciples to be servant-hearted as he was servant-hearted. Sometimes it was in regard, as it was here, in understanding that they will face the same things that he faced. They will deal with suffering and persecution as he deals with suffering and persecution. And it's just logical sense, right? The disciple is not greater than his teacher. But at this point, the disciples have thought that in their commitment to following Jesus, their discipleship would lead them to a physical kingdom in which they would reign with Christ.

That's their mindset. They think Jesus' mission at this point is to come and establish a kingdom, to set all things right, to establish Israel again, to rule in perfection in Jerusalem.

They think that's his mission. Therefore, they think their role as his followers is to join him in that mission, to come alongside of him, to rule and to reign in the kingdom. But then we get here and Jesus says, no, my mission is actually different than that. The Jews, as was typical, and the disciples exemplify this, they did not connect God's suffering servant from Isaiah 53 to the messianic prophecies of the coming kingdom. But now Jesus was teaching that his purpose in this coming was to suffer, which means that all his followers must also be prepared to suffer on account of him. That's why this passage is so striking, isn't it? When you read it together. You know, we can look at the first half that we're dealing with today and we can just, we can maybe kind of give Peter a hard time here and just kind of see it as something that doesn't really matter to us. But there's no way of escaping the second section because Jesus says, if anyone desires to come after me, deny yourself.

Take up your cross, literally carry your own noose around prepared that someone will take your life with the noose. That's essentially what he's saying. Take up your cross and follow me on the way of suffering if need be. And if you desire to save your life from that, in the end, you will prove not to be a true follower of me and you will lose your life for eternity. That's a hard statement. That's hard.

[9 : 34] Sometimes we get our misunderstanding here and we think, well, Jesus's purpose was good to come and just make my life better. And his purpose was to come and just to give me blessing. And there are churches, even in our area that today will do nothing but motivate their congregations to think that if they just pray hard enough and that they just follow hard enough, that God's purpose is to make them happy. And that's not his primary purpose for your life. His purpose for your life may be like the faithful believer in Afghanistan who today stands in the face of certain persecution and martyrdom only because they faithfully follow Christ. You're saying that God is not as faithful to them as he is to us?

No. Of course he is. It's just sometimes we misunderstand God's purpose, which means we misunderstand what it means to actually be his follower. And when we really begin to understand what it means to be his follower, as Jesus says here in this passage, many people decide I'm not signing up for that. That's not what I came to Christ for. I came to Christ for blessing and for happiness and for peace. I didn't come for the other stuff. And they hit the road. And so Jesus says, this is actually a litmus test here. It's not that you have to do these things in order to be saved, but this is the test as to whether or not you truly are following me. And we're going to get there next week. But it is important, at least this week, to understand that a misunderstanding of Messiahship produces a misunderstanding of discipleship. And Jesus is addressing those misunderstandings here.

The first one that we're dealing with today is really in relation to his mission, what Jesus must do. And then next week, Lord willing, we'll come to verses 34 to 38 and focus then on what we must do, or at least be prepared to do as his followers. So let's look first at the messianic mission. Okay.

If you're keeping notes, I'd really just have two things for you to write down at least main points here. The first one is this. We see his mission stated, his mission stated. Look with me at verse 31. And he began to teach them that the son of man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priest and the scribes and be killed. And after three days rise again. And he said this plainly, well, the manner of Jesus's teaching is notably different moving forward in Mark's gospel.

If you remember up to this point, much of his lessons have been in the form of parables and riddles. We're told in verse 32 that he was now speaking plainly. This word literally means it means frankness, boldness, boldness publicly. He's laying it all out now. And moving forward in Mark's gospel, now that the disciples have made this great confession, we're going to see Jesus's manner of teaching really takes a radical shift here. He's no longer going to be teaching in parables.

[12 : 34] He's going to be laying things out plainly for them to understand. And the clarity with which the blind man saw in verse 25 is now the clarity with which Jesus began to speak of his mission, at least to the disciples here. There's no riddle to interpret. He frankly is telling his disciples what was to come.

And here's what's funny about it. They found the plain teaching of Jesus much more difficult to grasp than the parables and the mysteries and the riddles that Jesus had taught beforehand. And it's not because they were hard to understand, but because a Messiah that would suffer was to them unthinkable.

They weren't prepared to hear that. That's not what they expected. Now, how Jesus refers to himself in this verse is important. He calls himself the son of man. And in fact, he calls himself that many times in the gospels, more than 80 times, Jesus refers to himself as the son of man in the four gospels. And it wasn't a reference to his humanity. That's not what he means by that. This was actually a title. It was a messianic title that comes from Daniel chapter seven. So everyone that heard Jesus refer to himself as the son of man understood what he was saying. The Jews did. They understood he was saying, I am the one that Daniel saw in that vision. Here's the vision. Daniel seven, verse 13.

I saw in the night visions and behold, with the clouds of heaven, there came one like a son of man. And he came to the ancient of days. That's God and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom and all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away. And his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

Now you can understand why the disciples would be excited that they have found the son of man, that they're following the son of man. They had just confessed that they believed that's who he was, but their thoughts were set on Daniel seven. They thought what Jesus had come to do in that coming.

[14 : 53] And in that moment was to establish this kingdom that all peoples and nations and languages would serve him, that his dominion would be everlasting in that moment, that it would never pass away.

That's what they've got in their minds. This is what Jesus has come to do. And he's chosen us to be a part of it. And there's excitement with that. They didn't understand it all. They didn't care. They just wanted to be a part of it. They think that's where they're heading on this, on this path. And then Jesus drops a bomb on them. And he employs this term here, son of man, in this case, to connect the Messiah, the Daniel seven, son of man, to the one that would suffer for our sins in Isaiah 53. Here's what Isaiah says, Isaiah 53 verse 10. Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him. He has put him to grief. When his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring. He shall prolong his days. The will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. Out of the anguish of his soul, he shall see and be satisfied. By his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. Jesus isn't denying his future reign here, but he was teaching the men that his first mission was to die and to rise from the dead.

And so let's quickly examine what he meant by this suffering. Write this down. First note, the necessity of his suffering, the necessity of his suffering. Look again at verse 31.

And he began to teach them that the son of man, what? Must suffer many things. Now this isn't inserted by English translations here to help us understand what we think Jesus was saying. No, he specifically used a word for necessity. It is of necessity that the son of man, the Daniel 7 Messiah, it is necessary that he first suffer many things. He didn't say that his suffering was a possibility.

He said that it was actually a necessity. As we read a moment ago in Isaiah's prophecy, it was the sovereign will of God that Jesus would suffer for our sins. Without that suffering, without that crucifixion as we know it to be in atonement, wouldn't have been made for our sin.

[17 : 34] We'd all be damned to eternal hell. Every one of us. It was necessary. And Paul wrote to the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians chapter 1, he said that all of those Old Testament promises, all of those Old Testament prophecies find their yes in Jesus. They find their fulfillment in Jesus.

All of those prophecies, all of those symbols, the sacrificial system, the whole deal with deliverance from Egypt, all of those things. Paul says, if you look back on the scripture now, you see that all of those things, they find their fulfillment in Christ.

Christ. If Christ didn't suffer, if he didn't go to the cross, he wouldn't have been the Christ because it's necessary that the Christ suffer. Jesus is telling his disciples that according to the scripture, I'm not just telling you, according to the scripture, Jesus says, it is necessary that the son of man, the Daniel 7 Messiah must first suffer. Well, then let's look at the means of his suffering. We see the necessity of it. Look at the means of it. He continues on that he must be rejected and he must be killed. Now, what Mark has recorded for us here is a synopsis, a summary of what Jesus was teaching. There would have been a much more full explanation to these disciples in that moment.

And the reason we know that is because the word began. He said he began to teach means this was an ongoing conversation. And this was the process. This was the summary of what he was saying. And look at all the detail that Jesus was giving these men. It's all here in the text. Look first.

What is translated as rejected here? He must be rejected. The word literally means it was used in that time as a, as a means of rejecting upon trial. He's saying, I'm going to, I'm going to go.

[19 : 31] And they're actually going to examine me and find me worthy of death. It wouldn't be the result of a rash action. It would be deliberate and calculated. Those responsible would condemn him after being presented with all of the evidence necessary to acknowledge his truth. And even after seeing all of the, the necessary evidence of his truth, that he is who he says he is, they will still reject him.

He's just laying it out plainly for the disciples. This is what's going to happen. And then he goes on and he says, who would be involved? Elders, high priest, scribes. He says, all three groups made up the Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin was the Jewish court that Jesus stood before on the night of his arrest.

Jesus is laying it out for the disciples. This is what's going to happen. They're going to examine me and reject me anyways. And it's not going to be pagans and zealots that do it. It's going to be those who represent moral integrity and religious fervor. And then he said, I'm going to be executed.

It's not just that I'm going to die. I will be killed. He says, I will be executed by these people. Well, he's laying it out. James Edwards said it this way. I thought this was helpful. It's not humanity at its worst that will crucify the son of God, but humanity at its absolute best.

The death of Jesus will not be the result of a momentary lapse or aberration of human nature, but rather the result of careful deliberations from respected religious leaders who will justify their actions by the highest standards of law and morality, even believing them to render service to God. Jesus is holding nothing back here for the disciples. He says, not only am I going to suffer, not only is it necessary, but here's how it's going to happen. If it wasn't shocking enough that he was going to suffer, it certainly would have been shocking that it was actually the Jews that were going to do it to him. And then notice with me, the end of his suffering. Well, what happens after that? Jesus keeps laying it out. After three days, I will rise again. He was straightforward about his resurrection, just as he was about his crucifixion. And this too was tied to the Old Testament.

[22 : 02] We read in Isaiah 53, you can go back and read it, read the whole chapter maybe later this afternoon, but we read it. It indicates that after this suffering, he will see his offspring. He will not remain dead. His days will be prolonged. Isaiah says he will rule. He will lead them. It's, it's a reference to resurrection. Jesus has already told his disciples that this generation will not receive any sign except the sign of Jonah. Well, what was that all about? Death and resurrection. Just as Jonah was three days dead in the belly of the fish and recurgitated out. So Jesus would spend three days in the grave and after three days be resurrected to life. And he was just as straightforward about that. That should have never been a surprise to the disciples, but it was when it came time. It was without the resurrection.

Jesus is suffering would have been meaningless. We just read it in Romans four, the very last verse that we read righteousness will be counted to us who believe in him, who raised from the dead, Jesus, our Lord. And here's what he says. Jesus did who was delivered up for our trespasses. He suffered for our sins and was raised for our justification. Our standing in the sight of God relies just as much on Jesus's resurrection as it relies on his crucifixion. You can't separate those two things. This resurrection was necessary. And Jesus is laying it out for all of his disciples to see and to understand. This was the true mission of the Messiah. And now that the disciples had made their confession, they needed to believe this and accept it. Now, maybe you've never really considered or understood the necessity of Jesus's suffering and death. Many people think today in our cultural Christianity here in the United

States. Many people think that Jesus's purpose was to show compassion and to heal the hurting and to provide a good example for us of love and acceptance and kindness. And Jesus indeed did those things, but those things were not his primary purpose. He told us his purpose. Matthew 20, the son of man came to give his life a ransom for many. That's his purpose. His purpose is not about giving you an example.

His purpose is about saving you from your sin. The entire purpose of God's son coming to earth was so that he could die for sinners. In his death, he bore the wrath of God against sin. It's not just about pain.

It's not just about execution. It's about bearing the wrath of God against your sin. And he did it willingly. That's what's amazing about it. He didn't do it out of compulsion. It wasn't as if God the Father was forcing him into this. No, he himself said in John chapter 10, for this reason, the Father loves me because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down. I have authority to take it up. This charge I have received from my Father. Yes, it's the Father's will that I do this, but I want to do this.

[25 : 33] Willingly, he laid down his life and suffered and rose again for your justification. He did it on purpose. That was why he came. Not to make your life happy, to give you eternal life.

God's justice demands that every sin be penalized, that it receive a just penalty. And we sometimes think that when God forgives our sins, that what he's actually doing is turning kind of a blind eye and ignoring the fact that we sin, that that's the kind of forgiveness. But God can't do that. You understand that. Every sin must be judged. For those who believe in Christ, Christ was judged for you. That's the thing. It's not that God ignores your sin. He puts your sin on Christ. That's why he came. And he offers forgiveness and life to everyone who will repent and believe. It tells us plainly. Romans 10, everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.

For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. Now, this is such wonderful news. The disciples must have surely been filled with joy.

Excited that when Jesus finally revealed these things and just lays it out, I'm going to the cross and I'm going to die, but then I'm going to raise again for your sins. They would have just rejoiced that he had come for that. But that's not at all what they did. Look with me. We not only see his mission stated, we see his mission rejected. And it was rejected by those closest to him. 32.

Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. Turning and seeing his disciples, he rebuked Peter. He said, get behind me, Satan. For you're not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man. That's quite shocking.

[27 : 46] It seems that Peter has found his place of leadership at this point. It's been solidified amongst the group. He pulls Jesus to the side. Matthew says that a part of what Peter said was this, far be it from you, Lord, this shall never happen to you. Essentially, he's saying, as long as I have anything to do with it, that won't happen. That won't happen.

Now, what kind of audacity does it take to, in one moment, confess that Jesus is the Messiah and your Lord, as Peter had just done, and the very next moment, rebuke him for saying something that you don't like very much?

That's kind of unbelievable, isn't it? How could that exist in the same person? That Peter so boldly, in this moment, on behalf of the disciples, we assume, says, you are the Christ. Everybody else has all these other opinions. I know you're the Christ.

His faith was strong. And then Jesus says, okay, now that you got that, let me tell you what I actually came to do. And then the same person pulls him to the side as if he's Jesus' Lord, Lord, and said, far be it from you. I'm not going to let that happen. And he rebukes the one that he had just said was his Lord. What kind of audacity does it take to do that?

It's the same audacity that we demonstrate often. We come to a church service on a Sunday morning, and we worship him as our Lord, and as our Savior, and as our Creator, and as our God. And then on another day, we shake our fist at him because we come to something in the scriptures that doesn't, we don't find agreeable, or we shake our fist at him because he puts us in a position of hardship or of trial. We do the same thing Peter did.

[29 : 42] You're my Lord as long as you do it the way that I want you to do it. As long as the things that you say fit with what I want you to say, I'll let you be my Lord. As long as you don't make me go through all of this difficult things, I came to you so I wouldn't have to go through all of those difficult things. And as long as you keep me from those things, I'll follow you. We have the same audacity as Peter.

We confess him as Lord, but we live as if we are his God instead. He has the power, but he wields it on the basis of our will. That's the way we act. And we'll come to a church service on a Sunday, and we'll pray to him, and we'll sing these songs to him, and then we shake our fist at him. I can't believe you would send me through this. I can't believe you wouldn't provide for me in this way. And I'm so happy for the passages that tell me about your forgiveness, but don't try to tell me how to live. Don't try to tell me what you want me to do differently. Don't tell me about sacrifice. We have the same audacity as Peter. Let's not give him a too hard of a time yet. And this is going to continue to be a struggle for the disciples.

Jesus is laying it all out for them, but they're going to struggle with this all the way until post-resurrection. Over and over, Jesus goes through this in detail with them, over and over in the Gospels.

And then on the night of his arrest, what does Peter do when they come to arrest him? He does what he said in Matthew. He fulfilled his statement, didn't he? He said, far be it from you.

As long as I've got anything to do with this, it will never happen to you. And then they come to arrest Jesus, and what does he do? He pulls out his sword, and he tries to kill a man. He tries to kill a man. Even at the moment, he refused to accept what Jesus was saying was his purpose. And they would continue to do that until after the resurrection. I don't think this was a heart of rebellion on Peter's part. I don't think that it was unbelief even. I think it was misunderstanding. But he put himself in the place of opposition against Jesus and his mission.

[31 : 46] He was sincere. I believe he loved the Lord. He wanted to follow the Lord. But he wanted to do it on his terms. Though sincere, he was sincerely wrong, which is still wrong. Look at verse 33 again. Here's what Jesus did. 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. This is another striking statement, isn't it? Reveals the seriousness of Peter's unwillingness to accept Jesus's mission in this moment.

Let's bring some clarity to what Jesus is saying. He's not insinuating that Peter is an unbeliever. He's not insinuating here that Satan had possessed Peter or that Peter was otherwise under Satan's control. That's not what Jesus was saying. His point was that in attempting to stand in the way of the cross, Peter had made himself an adversary of God's will. That's what the point was in saying, get away from me, Satan. It wasn't that he believed Peter was Satan. Just before this, when Peter says, you are the Christ, what is it that Jesus said? He said, blessed are you, Simon, son of Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my father, which is in heaven, has revealed this to you. Over and over, he was assuring Peter and the other disciples of their faith. He was assuring them of that. So he's not all of a sudden changing his mind and saying that

Peter isn't actually being, his heart isn't actually being opened by God, but he's actually being controlled by Satan. That's not what he means. What he means is that in standing in the way of Christ's suffering, Peter had positioned himself as an adversary to God. And the scene draws our minds back to Jesus's temptation in the wilderness. Remember in Matthew chapter four, after his baptism, Jesus is led of the spirit for 40 days and 40 nights in the wilderness. And as he fasts there, he's tempted by Satan. And there were all kinds of temptations, but Matthew summarizes three of them for us. Every temptation, though different, really boiled down to the same thing. He was trying to get Jesus to go against the will of the father with turning the rocks into bread, with throwing himself off of the temple pinnacle to be rescued by angels. And then most obviously by taking him on the mountain and saying, if you will just bow to me, I'll give you all of this. And you won't have to suffer, suffer even one day. You won't have to go to the cross, Jesus. If you will just bow to me, and I'll give you power, the power you want, the rule that you are saying that, that you will have,

I'll give it to you without the cross. The purpose of those temptations was to get Jesus to circumvent the will of the father. And of course, Jesus resisted all of those temptations. And at the conclusion of it, it's interesting. What does he say to Satan? Be gone. Get away from me, Satan.

[35 : 10] Same exact Greek word that he uses here with Peter. Go away from me, Satan. Get away from me. Get behind me. What's he saying? You are standing in the way of God's will. And therefore you have put yourself in the place of an adversary, which is who Satan is. Peter, you're closer to following after Satan than you are to following after me in this moment. Why? Because he denied the will of the father. And what was the source of this rejection and denial? Jesus tells him, you're not setting your mind on the things of God, but instead you're setting your mind on what? The things of man.

We struggle with this every day of our lives. We see the will of God on paper. We see it in the word. If you read your Bible, you see it. You can't help but see it. You hear it in the preached word.

The spirit opens your heart to it as a believer. We know that. We know the will of God. But there are times when we position ourselves as if we are enemies of God's will because we are more concerned about what we want than what God wants. Isn't that Peter's problem?

He wants a Messiah that will come and reign. He doesn't want the suffering. He doesn't want the cross. He wants the kingdom. And he says, if I have anything to do with it, we're going to get the kingdom, not the cross. And Jesus says, well, fine, then you're as good as Satan. You might as well get away from me. Get behind me now. You're not thinking about God. You're thinking about yourself, Peter. Thinking about yourself. How this must have pierced his heart.

In his heart, he wants to be a follower of Jesus. He wants to be faithful. But Jesus has just accused his actions of being more like the devils. And again, he's not condemning him as an unbeliever.

[37 : 19] He's correcting him as a true follower. This was an essential lesson for these men that you cannot reject Christ's purpose and lordship and yet be a true disciple. They couldn't quite see it yet.

But Jesus was working in perfect accord with the will of God. And in this correction, Jesus was calling them to trust that that was true. Believe me, if you're going to follow me, trust me and actually follow me, not what you want me to be.

Before we're too arrogant to think that we would have been different than Peter, I've struggled with that for the last two or three weeks. Terry and I talked about this, I think this week in an email.

With coming to the disciples in chapter eight and not being so frustrated, right? Am I the only person that feels that way? Like they spent three years with Jesus. They were with him.

They saw these miracles. They heard the teaching firsthand. And if we're not careful, we'll think, if I would have been one of those 12, I would have been better than that.

[38 : 40] I would have been better than that. We're tempted to think that. But before we're that arrogant, remember that our circumstances are quite different than these disciples. We aren't bothered by a suffering Messiah because culturally we have no concept of a Messiah to begin with, right?

They had been given these promises and these covenants. We don't have that. Jesus was opening their eyes to the fact that what they'd been told their entire lives was wrong.

Of course they would struggle with that at first. You would too. Maybe you have. Maybe you have. I've heard some of your testimonies. I've heard Marty talking about coming out of Roman Catholicism.

How much of a struggle must that be to live your lives under the banner of Christianity, but believing a lie for all those years, and then somebody comes and just tells you that you're wrong, somebody you trust, somebody you're following, and they say all of that is wrong, and you're just supposed to accept it?

Of course you would struggle. Struggle the same way that they did. But neither is faith merely an intellectual exercise. Sometimes we think, well, we would have just, we would have, we're a little bit smarter than these men.

[39 : 54] They're just fishermen, right? We'd have done a little better than that. No. No, we wouldn't. Remember, we have this advantage. We can look back on the entirety of Scripture, and we can connect all these dots with help with other people that are much smarter than us, and we can connect all these dots, and it can come to life in our minds intellectually speaking.

Well, these men were living this in real time. It's not easy. Not easy. Faith is not merely an intellectual exercise.

You can connect all the dots about Jesus. You can connect every dot about Jesus intellectually, but that doesn't mean you have a saving faith. Even the devil believes and trembles, James says.

It's not about intellectually connecting all the dots. That wasn't the issue for the disciples. It's not your issue either. It's faith. And only God can awaken a heart.

Only God can open the eyes of blind hearts to believe his truth. And if you're in Christ today, it's not because you're smarter than others.

[41 : 00] It's not because you connect the dots better than other people connect the dots. It's the result of God's amazing grace at work in your heart. You have nothing wherewith you could boast.

It's all of God's grace. It's none of us. It's none of us. And if you think it's anything of you, then you probably don't have it. You probably don't have it.

The heart of their problem was an unwillingness to take God at his word. They were glad to accept the scriptures teaching of a reigning king. But they ignored the scripture about the suffering servant.

And as I said, we're often guilty of doing the same thing. We'll gladly receive the things about God's blessing and about God's love.

But then we'll conveniently ignore the things about suffering, about repentance. It was Augustine that said, if you believe what you like in the gospels and reject what you don't like, it's not the gospel you believe, but yourself.

[42 : 10] There's a little bit of that issue going on with the disciples here. There's probably a little bit of that issue going on with us too. If you aren't careful, you'll end up ignoring or rejecting the parts of the Bible that are necessary for the faith that leads to salvation.

And when we set ourselves against God's word, we set ourselves against God. And just as Peter, Jesus said to Peter, we're closer in those moments to following Satan than we are to following Christ.

And so the question as we approach this is first, are you willing to follow a suffering Messiah? Is Jesus worth it to you?

Even if it means you'll suffer as he suffered. And then if you say yes to that question, will you take God at his word?

Every part of his word, not just the things that are easy or convenient, but even the things that are hard. Maybe even the things that go against your nature.

[43 : 25] You don't want it to be that way, but this is what God says. Are you willing to take him at his word? And if you're willing to take him at his word, are you willing to stand firm upon that word?

That's the decision these disciples are going to have to make moving forward. It's a decision each of us are going to have to make as well. Well, thank you. Thank you.