

Keep Following The King

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 15 April 2018

Preacher: John Lau

[0 : 0 0] As we get to know God from His Word, the Bible, we often find that He repeats His words to emphasize His message. If we do not know Him that well, you can look out for this feature when you read His Word.

This is one of the great treasures to be found in the Bible. For example, in the Old Testament, when He commanded and encouraged Joshua to take the Israelites into the promised land, in Joshua 1, verse 6, 7, and 9, God said to Joshua three times, Be strong and courageous.

Be strong and very courageous. And be strong and courageous. In the Gospel according to Mark, when Jesus predicted about His death, He also repeated His prediction.

In Mark 8, 9, and 10, we call it three times that Jesus predicts about His death. Each time, there are some similarities and some differences.

If you were here last week, we looked at first prediction from chapter 8, verse 31. Today, we will look at the second prediction that Jesus gave about His death from chapter 9.

[1 : 2 3] So if you can turn your Bible to Mark chapter 9 and keep it there, we'll pretty much be looking at that whole passage today. Same as last time, Jesus used the title of Son of Man to address Himself.

And He predicted that He will be killed and raised after three days. So let's go to Mark chapter 9.

We're starting from verse 31 from the second half of 31. So He said to them, The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of man. They will kill Him, and after three days, He will rise.

Son of Man is a title that Jesus used about Himself, based largely on Daniel 7. If you were here last week, you have heard the significance of this title.

And if for any reason you weren't here last Sunday, please go to our church website and click on the resources link so that you can catch up on what you have missed.

[2 : 2 8] Different to last prediction, Jesus said that the Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of man. To be delivered can mean hand over or betrayed into.

Jesus' acceptance of the title of Christ, the Messiah, and use the title of Son of Man, means He has all the authority in heaven and on earth.

All nations and peoples of every nation, every language will worship Him. He is a king that makes everything right.

And how could someone with that kind of caliber be delivered, hand over or betrayed into the hands of man? Men are merely mortals that are dependent, sometimes shameful, powerless and inferior.

Men often are very unmerciful and revengeful, corrupt and selfish. Men at their very best will only be up to no good.

[3 : 34] How could the Son of Man be delivered into the hands of man? Even though men are capable to do wonderful things, they build great monuments like the Great Wall of China, or the Pyramid of Egypt.

But how many people or men have died to make that possible? They set up laws to try to uphold righteousness, but the amount of wrongful and unjust judgment far outweighs the intent.

And nowadays, we often heard of news that global corporations exploiting workers in less developed countries to increase their profit.

Coastal at home, we hear employees being exploited by bosses. People being told at the end of their unpaid trial period that they are not servile for a job, so they won't get paid, and they wait for nothing for a whole month.

How could someone with such a caliber of a Son of Man be delivered, handed over or betrayed into the hands of men? This was made possible because our Lord Jesus Christ willingly took our place to pay the price of our sin and rebellion.

[4 : 58] Jesus, our Saviour, died on the cross, a submissive death towards God, and rose from the dead after three days to break the bondage of sin, to free us to love, and He repaid the debt that we cannot repay.

This message of the cross caused anger in some people, like when Peter heard it back in chapter 8, because it did not match what his expectation of what it means to follow Jesus.

This message of the cross can also cause confusion in others, like the disciples here that we're reading from chapter 9, verse 32 said, they did not understand what Jesus meant, but were afraid to ask Jesus about it.

Jesus knew it takes time to come to understanding about the gospel, so He predicts about His death not once, not twice, but three times.

Jesus is always patient with us to let us come to our understanding. So do not let your fear or any other emotion stop you from asking Him for an explanation.

[6 : 19] If you somehow believe that you have got the answer, you think that you knew who Jesus is and what He comes to do, how well do you really know?

Do you know it well enough to explain to others, so that they can be part of God's kingdom and enjoy what you are enjoying? Or is that knowledge cause you to wonder about other things that defeat the purpose of why Jesus patiently waited for you to understand it in the first place?

This second prediction was told on the way to Capernaum. The disciples were confused about the meaning and afraid to ask about it. Instead of facing up to their fear, they got into a debate and argument about who was the greatest among them.

How quickly our heart can wonder and forget or forgot what Jesus told us. Knowing fully what is going on, Jesus offered them a chance to own up to what they have done.

But instead, in verse 44, we see that they kept quiet. So as we read on in verse 35, sitting down, Jesus called the twelve and said, Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last and the servant of all.

[7 : 51] Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last and the servant of all. Jesus again is addressing the attitude of the disciples, comparing what is the acceptable standard of the world and how different they are to how Jesus lived his life and the example that he has shown to us.

A lot of us, especially those from Eastern culture like myself, often think that to win in life, we need to have a very good start at the takeoff line.

Just like beating the starting gun and taking everything like a short race. Some parents from Eastern culture do not have such a privileged good start when they start off with their life.

So they spend all their energy, all their focus to accumulate wealth for their children to have a better place when they start, to prepare for them their first pot of gold.

Others will build their identity on the success of their children, constantly comparing with other families, what have their children achieved, what kind of career are they in, how many children their children have.

[9 : 17] Even the brand of their family cars can sometimes be a comparison. If you drive from a Mercedes-Benz, you're a much better person than driving someone later. Toyota advances that have been 10 years old, the one that I got.

We size ourselves up with others because no one wants to be an underdog. We may not think we can be any good at any sports, but we want our football cup, our sports cup, to be a champion of the year.

We want to be first in whatever sense we can get there. With that in mind, when Jesus said that anyone who wants to be first must be very last, and a servant of all, sounds so ridiculous and illogical.

Think of this. If a coach tells their team to make sure they come last, and help other teams to get the most score, he will definitely be the first one to go to face the match-fixing tribunal.

And out of the competition completely. It might make sense sometimes parents may ask their children to look out for those that are bullied or isolated, to help those other kids to be their friend, help them with their schoolwork or something.

[10 : 41] In reality, I think that's very rare as well. Anyway, but by doing that, the kid falls behind in their grades. They become last in the year. I'm pretty sure those parents will tell the kid to stop the association.

The disciples must be showing their reaction on the face to this point. So Jesus goes further. In verse 36, Jesus said this. Jesus took a little child, saying, saying while embracing, hugging the child, whoever comes, whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me, but the one who sent me.

Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me, but the one who sent me.

What is your attitude towards children in general, or anyone of a lower social status than you? How do you normally treat those in the service industry, like the bus driver or taxi driver, or even those waiters in the restaurant?

What about those people that clean the tray in the food court, or people that clean the toilet in the shopping center? Do you feel grateful that they have provided you with a service by cleaning your table, so you can have your lunch quickly and get back to your work?

[12 : 21] Do you sincerely express your gratitude for what they have done for you? Or do you feel like, I'm a paid customer. I deserve to be served.

I should not have to be waiting for more than 15 minutes, especially if I have made a reservation for my table. They should clean it up quickly and let me sit down and eat.

And if the service is any less than my expectation, I will go on to those who feel bored, and write all about it, so that people don't go again anymore.

Do you have the attitude of saying, well, if they don't know how to serve me, they shouldn't be in business. Jesus said, whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me, but the one who sent me.

All humans on earth are created in the image of God and under God's care. God cares for everyone of his creation, especially those that are harassed and helpless.

[13 : 31] It does not matter where they're from or what they have done in their life.

We are to welcome and receive them because in doing so, we are welcoming and receiving the one who sent Jesus, which is God the Father himself. Do you embrace and accept other people that are of a lower status than you?

Or are you only associated with those people that you think will benefit you, those people that you can get something in return? How do you treat other people?

It will not just affect your relationship with them. It will affect your relationship with God and even eventually their relationship with God as they see your good representation or your bad representation that you present.

Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me, but the one who sent me. Do you decide whether you welcome or accept someone?

[14 : 54] How do you decide whether you welcome or accept someone or not? Mark told us that the apostle John made his decision based on whether that person is one of them.

Let's look at verse 38. Teacher, said John, we saw someone driving out demons in your name, and we told him to stop because he was not one of us.

As we follow along Jesus and his disciples from Mark, from chapter 1, we saw that John is among the very first group of disciples that are being called, along with James, Andrew, and Peter.

Then Jesus named another eight, which are known as the twelve, back from chapter 3. After that, we were told Jesus fed about 5,000 people in one occasion, and then another 4,000 in another occasion.

Large crowds were following Jesus wherever he goes. Mark in chapter 6 also tells us that Jesus sent out the twelve in pairs to preach the good news and his authority over the impure spirit.

[16 : 07] When John said, this person who is driving out demons in Jesus' name was not one of us, he might be referring to this person is not one of the twelve.

But nonetheless, this person is successfully driving out demons in Jesus' name. So let's listen to how Jesus replied to John.

Let's keep on reading from verse 39. Do not stop him, Jesus said, for no one who does the miracle in my name can in the next moment say anything bad about me.

For whoever is not against us is for us. Truly I tell you, anyone who gives you a cup of water in my name because you belong to the Messiah will certainly not lose their reward.

Jesus had given his precious life for each one of us so that we no longer live for ourselves but for the gospel.

[17 : 11] If we truly understand the meaning of the cross, it will help us to rejoice when we see the kingdom of God advancing and Jesus' name being lifted up because a miracle being achieved in the name of God.

The greatest miracle is when someone comes to know what Jesus has done for them and decides to accept Jesus as their King and Lord. When people willingly, willing to do whatever Jesus tells them to do or go wherever Jesus tells them to go, the greatest miracle is when the preference of their life no longer based on their own comfort or convenience.

The greatest miracle is when someone becomes a true follower of Jesus. A true follower of Jesus is someone who made their life decision based on whatever is the most beneficial for the work of the gospel.

Every little thing you do, no matter how significant you think they are, can and will bring honor to Almighty God.

Jesus said, Jesus in verse 41 tell us again that He is the Messiah. He reminds us that He is the King that does not sit on the throne but went to the cross to give up His life.

[18 : 38] And through that He gives us life. Every little thing you do, no matter how significant you think they are, can and will bring honor to our King.

A sincere smile or thank you to those who serve you. Treating both your superior and your inferior at work with respect. Showing appreciation to your spouse and children that supported your career move.

For the honor and glory of God, every little thing you do, no matter how significant you think they are, matters. Especially things that you do to people you consider as not one of us.

People that believe in Jesus and trying to live their life according to His word are precious to God. That is why Jesus said in verse 42, If anyone causes one of these little ones, those who believe in me, to stumble, it will be better for them if a large male stone be hung around their neck and they were thrown into the sea.

How do we cause those who believe in Jesus to stumble? Let's look back at verse 39 to 41. By stopping someone By stopping someone serving God, we can cause them to stumble.

[20 : 18] By stopping someone from serving God because you think they are not as good as you, we can cause them to stumble. By saying bad things about Jesus or someone else, we can cause them to stumble.

By pushing for ideas that is against the majority of the brothers and sisters in church that have accepted, we can cause people to stumble. By not acknowledging the work of the Messiah and willingly serve each other, we can also cause people to stumble.

Jesus said, If anyone causes those who believe in him, especially those who seem in the body of the believer, to stumble, it will be better for them to be thrown into the sea with large male stone around their neck.

He then used a repetition again to bring out a very important point. Let's look at verse 43 to 48. If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off.

It's better for you to enter live men than with two hands to go into hell where the fire never goes out. And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off.

[21 : 37] It's better for you to enter live cripple than to have two feet and be thrown into hell. And if your eyes cause you to stumble, pluck it out. It's better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell where the worms that eat them do not die and the fire is not cringe.

Everyone will be salted with fire. Your hand, your foot, your eye, all part of the same body. Some Bible commentators say that your hand symbolize what you do.

The foot symbolize where we go and the eyes what we see. If what you do, where you go, and what you see cause you to stumble, it's better to clean up your life and cut off those harmful practices than to be ended in hell.

Thinking back to last week, linking back to the first prediction, it's better to deny yourself and take up your cross than to be thrown into hell where the fire never goes out.

The worms that eat the body do not die and the fire is not cringe. Fire and hell are so closely related in this passage. So what does it mean in verse 49 that everyone will be salted with fire?

[23 : 03] It means that even though we have been saved by Jesus and we have eternal life as our future hope, we need to remember that we have been brought through from death to life.

Verse 50, keep on saying, salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can you make it salty again? No one can.

We can't. We can't be good by ourselves. It was made possible only by the precious life of Jesus, willingly sacrificed on the cross. It is Jesus who make it possible for us to enter life and enter the kingdom.

He loses his goodness on the cross because he bears our sin, and God made him good again by raising him from the dead.

What is impossible for man is made possible in God. Everything is possible for one or the one who believes in him. So have salt among yourself and be at peace with each other.

[24 : 18] If something is repeated in the Bible, make sure you take note. Jesus died and raised again to make it possible for us to be good and for us to share this good news with others.

Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last and servant of all. Every little thing you do, no matter how significant you think they are, can and will bring honor and glory to our gracious King, the Messiah, Jesus Christ, our Lord.