



WEEK 3 STUDY GUIDE

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Monday, May 9, 2022

Read: Mark 8:27-38

Scripture Verse: *"Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, "Who do people say I am?" Mark 8:27*

Today's Thought:

Have you ever been somewhere in public, maybe a mall, a restaurant, or an airport, and seen someone in the crowd who looks familiar but can't put your finger on who it is? I had one of those moments several years ago in Atlanta. I was traveling home from the National Sporting Goods Association Show in April of 1998. Many athletes would attend the show every year because of their contracts with shoe and equipment companies, so it wasn't unusual for me to see prominent star athletes walking around the venues. I was blessed to meet many of the sports heroes I grew up watching on television, but I tried never to be obnoxious when I would see them. I was always respectful to them and their time as they gave it.

Well, that year, as I was heading home with some great stories and autographs, I had arrived at the Atlanta airport for my flight home. As all good passengers, I headed to the men's room on my way to the gate. I don't want to get to "TMI" (too much info), but there is etiquette when you are standing with other men at the urinals. As I was adhering to protocol and looking straight ahead and not talking, a very tall figure moved into the urinal beside me. Yes, I looked up and over, it was a young man who seemed very familiar, but I couldn't place his name. I just stood there frozen and waited for him to leave. Then I quickly washed my hands, grabbed my stuff, and started to follow him to see who it was. It didn't take long for others to notice this guy, and the murmurs began, "who is that guy?" so I listened. It then dawned on me that the NFL draft had just finished there in Atlanta, and I had just stood beside the no. 1 draft pick of 1998, Peyton Manning! Unfortunately, I lost him in the crowd and have no autograph to report.

Mark tells us that as Jesus and His disciples traveled the countryside doing ministry. As they were moving from town-to-town, I am sure there were murmurs in the crowds, asking, "who is this man?" The guys and gals had been traveling with Jesus for a while now, and they had probably heard many of the rumors and comments people were making

about Jesus and his reputation. Hearing comments about Jesus was most likely the typical scene once word spread about what He was doing for people. But on this day, as Jesus and the guys walked between villages, He asked them, "Who do people say I am?" The disciples all chime in, saying, people say that you are "John the Baptist," while others say you are "Elijah," and still others say you "are one of the prophets."

Why would Jesus want to know what people thought of Him? We aren't to worry about what men say about us, and I am sure Jesus wasn't concerned either. But we know that the disciples could be thick-headed at times, as many of us. I think Jesus just wanted the disciples to be able to discern what He was telling them in preparation for their ministry once He was gone. Although it is a small thing, it is good for us to know what people think about us, not to build us up or seek our glory, but to understand where we fall short and need to improve. Jesus asked them not for His information but for their observation and to inform each other. Remember, Mark's entire goal in writing his book is to authenticate Jesus as the Son of God. And as Jesus asked His disciples then, He asks us today, "who do you say that I am?" Think it through before answering because all of us must answer. We must answer wisely because our eternity is riding on it.

- Why did Jesus ask the disciples about what people were saying about Him?
- Who did the people think Jesus was?
- Why does it matter what we think about who Jesus is?
- Who do you say Jesus is?

Further Reading: Matthew 16:13-14; Luke 9:18-19

Tuesday, May 10, 2022

Read: Mark 8:27-38

Scripture Verse: *“But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?” Peter answered, “You are the Christ.” Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him.” Mark 8:29-30*

Today's Thought:

Now, it was time for Jesus and the disciples to take a step back from their work to pause and consider what all this ministry stuff means. We have read a great deal about the doctrines Jesus taught, the many miracles He performed in various places all over the countryside, and the astonished multitudes who witnessed them. Was all this only written down and published for our amusement, just something to chat about, or was there more? The answer is a resounding yes! Check out John 20:31, "But these are written down so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. If you believe this, you will have life because you belong to him."

Jesus has this conversation with His disciples and, in doing so, assists us in reflecting on His many miracles and the right way to understand them. There are three things we learn from the miracles Jesus performed.

1. His miracles prove He is the true Messiah, the Son of God, and the Savior of the world.
2. His miracles remove the offense of the cross and assure us that Christ was a Conqueror.
3. His miracles should cause us to follow Him, regardless of our cost.

For the disciples, the question “who do you say I am” now fell to them. How would they answer? Would they still believe after seeing so many defections and continued opposition? Jesus was genuinely putting them to the test. Mark tells us the people held Jesus in high esteem but not quite to the level of their Messiah due to the teaching of the Pharisees. But Peter jumps right to the point of calling Jesus the Christ. They believed. After all, he and the others left everything they had behind to follow Him, and they weren't about to let a little trouble and opposition stop them now.

Today, we must answer this question, "who is Jesus?" To be faithful followers of Jesus Christ, the Messiah, we must believe He is the Christ, Son of the living God, and live our lives accordingly. When we become convinced of who Jesus is, we can bear with Him in his sufferings. And to live with those sufferings is what it means to pick up and carry his cross daily. Jesus was beginning to put his disciples on notice of this fact. He let them know of all the suffering He would have to undergo. Instead of being crowned, he must be killed, crucified, and risen to a heavenly life after three days and would no longer be with them physically. Would they be up to the task? How about you?

- Why does Jesus say to his disciples "who do you say I am?"
- Why are the reasons for the miracles important?
- How do Jesus' miracles tie into answering Jesus' question?
- Why is it important for us to be convinced that Jesus is who He said He is?
- Why does Jesus tell the disciples not to tell anyone about him?

Further Reading: Matthew 16:15-20

Wednesday, May 11, 2022

Read: Mark 8:27-38

Scripture Verse: *“Jesus then began to teach his disciples. He taught them that the Son of Man must suffer many things. He taught them that the elders would not accept him. The chief priests and the teachers of the law would not accept him either. He must be killed and after three days rise again.” Mark 8:31*

Today's Thought:

Our confession concerning Jesus is a matter of life or death. What we believe and say about Jesus Christ is critical to our witness. Jesus' earlier question to the disciples concerning who He is was essential for them to understand the "bigger picture," it is also vital for us. In today's text, I underlined the words "must suffer." Now that the disciples had confessed their faith in Jesus, they were ready to hear them. The words "must suffer" had been held back from them until this point. His message would stun the disciples, but Jesus wanted to tell them that He was going to Jerusalem to die on a cross. They were confused by Jesus' announcement because they knew that the Old Testament Scriptures promised them a Messiah who defeated their enemies and set up His kingdom for Israel.

Even though Jesus spoke plainly and with boldness to them, they still didn't understand, to which Peter objected, drawing a rebuke from Jesus. Like many of us, Peter, who loved Jesus dearly, allowed that love to cloud his spiritual discernment, causing him to respond humanly rather than heavenly. At that moment, Peter saw Jesus as a martyr rather than a Savior bringing glory to God, destruction to Satan, and salvation for man. And this can become a sticking point on our spiritual journey because we relate more to life in this lower world than to the upper world and the life yet to come. Warren Wiersbe teaches, "Let this be a warning that when we argue with God's Word, we open the door to Satan's lies." When we mind the things of man over the things of God, his glory, and kingdom, we sin and find ourselves in danger of not living wisely. We must understand the relationship between suffering and glory and be willing to lose our life to gain it.

- Why do you think Jesus held back the words “must suffer” until now?
- Why does our confession of faith come before the meaning of “suffer?”
- Do you think the disciples would have been able to understand what it means to suffer before their confession?
- Why does Peter get rebuked for wanting to protect Jesus from death?
- How did their understanding of the OT Scriptures cause them confusion?

Further Reading: John 6:66-71

Thursday, May 12, 2022

Read: Mark 8:27-38

Scripture Verse: *"Jesus turned and looked at his disciples. He scolded Peter. "Get behind me, Satan!" he said. "You are not thinking about the things of God. Instead, you are thinking about human things." Mark 8:33*

Today's Thought:

The Ten Most-Wanted Men

1. The man who puts God's business above any other business.
2. The man who brings his children to church rather than sends them.
3. The man who is willing to be the right example to every boy he meets.
4. The man who thinks more of his Bible Study group than he does his Sunday Sleep.
5. The man who measures his giving by what he has left rather than by the amount he gives.
6. The man who goes to church for Christ's sake rather than for himself or someone else.
7. The man who has passion to help rather than to be helped.
8. The man who can see his own faults before he sees the faults of others.
9. The man who stands firm in his convictions, based on the Word of God, i.e. a "backbone" Christian.
10. The man who is more concerned about winning souls for Christ than he is about winning honor."

—*Western Messenger*

In Matthew 16:17, we read these words of Jesus, "Blessed are you, Simon, son of Jonah! No mere man showed this to you. My Father in heaven showed it to you." Of course, Jesus said that right after Simon had acknowledged Jesus as the Son of God. Here in Mark, we have Peter one minute, led by God, confessing Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God, and in the next is already thinking like an unbelieving pagan sharing

the thoughts of Satan. One minute a rock, the next a stumbling block. As with us sometimes, Peter is speaking, protesting God's will due to ignorance but in a deep love for Jesus. When we love Christ but shun God's method or plan, that's when we become stumbling blocks for His mission.

Before we feel too sorry for Peter, Jesus was looking at the others too when the rebuke began because they agreed with Peter's assessment of the situation. Like most of us, we place our eyes on the glory of God while avoiding the talk of his suffering. When we take on the life of Christ by making Him our Savior, we must expect that there will be suffering attached. Jesus suffered and said that those who pick up his cross and follow Him should expect the same. It helps us understand the relationship between the cross and the crown; if we follow Satan's (world) philosophy, which teaches glory without suffering, instead of following God's (heavenly) philosophy, which says suffering transforms us into glory, we misunderstand. The philosophy you accept will determine how you live your life and serve. Let's choose wisely.

- What lesson was Jesus teaching the disciples? Peter?
- What caused Peter to change his mind so quickly? Why?
- Can you think of any situation in life where glory comes before or without trial or suffering?
- What reasons do people often give for not acknowledging Christ as Lord?
- Whose philosophy will you choose?

Further Reading: 1 Peter 1:10-12

Friday, May 13, 2022

Read: Mark 8:27-38

Scripture Verse: *“Jesus called the crowd to him along with his disciples. He said, “If anyone wants to come after me, he must say no to himself. He must pick up his cross and follow me. If he wants to save his life, he will lose it. But if he loses his life for me and for the good news, he will save it.” Mark 8:34-35*

Today's Thought:

Today, as we look at people throughout society and worldwide, we see many who have found considerable success in their life pursuits. Unfortunately, we tend to look at the rich and famous as the only successful people in the world, but it isn't true. I believe that anyone can accomplish anything when they put their mind to it, regardless of their background. I know there may be a little luck involved or a break here or there that helps someone get where they want to go. But for the most part, I would bet that those who reach the highest level of success in whatever profession they choose have had to work hard and were willing to pay the price to get there. Many say they are willing to pay the price, but few do it, and I think it's the same with our spiritual journey for authentic discipleship.

In Mark 8:34, Jesus brought the disciples together along with the local crowd and taught them that there's a price to be paid for authentic discipleship. He knew that most of the "crowd" was only following to see more miracles and that most of them were not willing to pay the price it would cost to be faithful disciples. I think this is what we see in many of our churches today. Many come and express an interest in Jesus, but when you start laying out what it means to follow Him, they aren't willing to pay the cost. In our text, Jesus lays out three conditions for authentic discipleship.

1. We must be willing to surrender ourselves totally to Christ.
2. We must be ready to identify with Him in His suffering and death; and
3. We must follow obediently wherever He leads us.

Jesus taught them that if you live your life for only yourselves, you will lose your life. Only when we are willing to lose our lives for His sake and

the Gospel will we find ourselves and have abundant life. Jesus wasn't talking about self-denial here; He demanded we deny self. When we deny self, we literally surrender ourselves to Christ and proclaim we will obey His will for our lives. The world cannot understand this and will ridicule us for it. I am willing to give up the "stuff" of this world to receive the rewards of heaven. That's the difference between a human perspective and a heavenly one. When we live for Christ, we strive to be more like Him, which changes our entire viewpoint. I don't know about you, but I am willing to pay the price to follow Christ and resist the world. Are you?

- Why are most people unwilling to achieve their life's goals?
- What's the difference between self-denial and denying self?
- What are the three conditions for authentic discipleship?
- What are you willing to do to make progress as a disciple?

Further Reading: Luke 9:23-26

NOTES



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