

**“THE BEGINNING OF THE END”**

(Text: Mark 8:31-38)

**Mark 8:27-30** has been considered by many the Mt. Everest of the entire gospel of Mark.

- As we saw last week, everything prior leads up to it and everything after flows from it.
- It's the occasion when the disciples finally get it.

• Jesus asks, **“Who do the people say that I am?”**

- They basically give Him three answers: **John the Baptist, Elijah, One of the Prophets.** (Jeremiah)

• Then, He asks them the question of all questions: “But who do YOU say that I am?”

- That's the question every one of us has to answer.
  - A question every person who has ever lived and ever will live will have to answer:  
**“WHO DO YOU THINK JESUS IS?”** (“What is Jesus to you?”)

• Your eternal destiny depends on how you answer.

- A **WRONG** answer will send you headfirst into an eternity in **HELL**.
- The **RIGHT** answer will send you safely into the hallowed halls of **HEAVEN**.

**PETER**, who had become the spokesman of the group, responded: “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (**Matthew 16:16**).

- Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven” (**Matthew 16:17**).

• Jesus went on to say that on that **ROCK**, Peter's confession of Who He was, He would “build my church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it” (**Matthew 16:18**).

**IT IS THE APEX, THE ABSOLUTE HIGH POINT IN THE GOSPEL OF MARK.**

• Having taught the disciples **WHO** He was, Jesus was now going to teach them **WHAT** He came to this world to do.

- Our text this morning is the first time He clearly alluded to His death.

• From this point on, Mark will focus on their journey to Jerusalem and the emphasis will be on the approaching death, burial and resurrection of **JESUS**.

**What does this have to do with us?**

- In our text this morning, Jesus will not only speak about His suffering and impending death.
  - He will also speak of ours.
  - So you'll want to listen closely.

**READ: MARK 8:31-38**

**John 5:19** is an important verse we should keep in mind as we study this passage this morning:

“So Jesus said to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise.’”

- Jesus never did anything on His own. He always did what God wanted Him to do.
  - What a terrific example for every one of us.  
**John 4:34**(NIV/1984), “My food is to do the will of Him Who sent me, and to finish His work. ”

The first thing we notice in this passage is:

**(1) AN INTRODUCTION (Mark 8:31-33)**

- Mark says, “Here’s how it all began. Jesus began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things ...”
- What a way to begin! They’ve gone from the highest of highs to the lowest of lows.
- “The Son of Man **MUST**.”
  - Don’t miss that word. It’s a word of **NECESSITY**.
- Jesus used that same word when Nicodemus came to Him under the cover of darkness.
  - Nicodemus was a member of the San Hedrin, the elite group of men who led Judaism.
    - He was a leader of the elders, the chief priests, the scribes, the Pharisees and Sadducees.
- Jesus told Nicodemus, “You **MUST** be born again” (**John 3:7**)
  - In **John 3:14**, He said, “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up.”

**Why the word MUST?** Because it was a matter of necessity.

- Jesus wasn’t referring to the fact He would be a victim of circumstances or that He had no choice.
- He was talking about the Sovereign plan of God. The eternal will of the Heavenly Father.
- He had to die on the cross for man’s sins.
  - It was the **ONLY** way to satisfy the divine dilemma.
    - God is a just God and **MUST** punish sin.
    - But God is also a God of mercy and He doesn’t want to punish us.
  - God solved man’s predicament by sending His One and Only Son to die for us.

There are four things Jesus told the disciples that **MUST** happen:

**#1 He MUST suffer many things (vs. 31b)**

**#2 He MUST be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes (vs. 31c)**

**#3 He MUST be killed (vs. 31d)**

**#4 He MUST rise again (vs. 31e)**

**(a) The NECESSITY of it (vs. 31)**

- There was no other way. The solution to the divine dilemma was the **CROSS**.
  - God is a Holy God and can’t overlook sin.
  - But He is also a loving God, Who forgives sinners.

• So, when Jesus began to talk to His disciples about the cross, He spoke in terms of it being something that **MUST** happen.

**(b) The MISERY of it (vs. 31b)**

- “The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed ...”
- This wasn’t going to be easy. Who knows how much Jesus really had to suffer?

- The word for “killed” isn’t a word used for a NORMAL death.
  - It doesn’t mean Jesus would come to earth and live to be an old man.
  - It doesn’t mean He would have the privilege of dying of natural causes.
    - It’s a word meaning a violent death. He would be slaughtered.
      - Crucifixion was the most violent form of punishment ever devised.

**ILL.** Most pictures of the crucifixion aren’t accurate.

- The Bible says He had been through so much that He was unrecognizable.
- **Isaiah 52:14**, “His appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of the children of mankind.”

But it wouldn’t end that way. Notice:

**(c) The VICTORY of it (vs. 31)**

- “And after three days rise again.”
- Jesus said He was going to be killed and He would rise again.
- Even though He repeatedly told them He would have victory over death, they missed it.

In fact, Jesus had no sooner spoken those words than we see:

**(2) AN INTERRUPTION (Mark 8:32b-33)**

- Peter took Jesus aside from the other disciples and essentially said, “This isn’t going to happen!”
- **Matthew 16:22**, “Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you.”
- At first, it looks like Peter is doing something good here. He’s protecting the Lord.
  - That’s not what was happening.

**Dr. Jerry Vines:** “One minute Peter was getting inspiration from HEAVEN and the next minute he was getting inspiration from HELL. That can happen to you and me too. One minute we can be just as spiritual as we can possibly be – on fire for God – and the next minute we can be listening to the voice of the devil.”

- Jesus turned from Simon Peter back to His disciples and said, “Get behind me, Satan! For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.”
  - Jesus recognized another voice in the voice of Simon Peter.
    - It was the same voice He’d heard out in the wilderness when He had fasted for 40 days and 40 nights.
    - It was the same voice that tried to get Him to ditch God’s plan and enjoy the power and prestige and perks of this world.
  - Satan didn’t say it back then and he didn’t say it now, but what he was really trying to say was: “Avoid the cross! You don’t need to go to the cross!”
- One minute Peter was a **rock**. The next minute he was a **stumbling block**.
    - He didn’t understand the will of God or the relationship between suffering and glory.
    - He’d finally get it and would even encourage it in the epistle that bears his name.

**1 Peter 1:6-8**, “In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith – more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire – may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

- What must these disciples have been thinking?
  - “If there’s suffering and death in His future, what’s going to happen to us?”

**ILL. It’s both ironic and tragic that so many false teachers teach and preach a completely different gospel than Jesus did.** (It’s phonier than a four-dollar bill.)

- The message that we don’t ever have to be sick or suffer or face sorrow in our lives.
  - The message that we can have whatever we want, whenever we want it.
  - The message that since we’re God’s children we deserve to live like kings.
- Again, listen to the words of **Peter**: “Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ’s sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed” **(1 Peter 4:12-13)**.

**JESUS SAID:** “If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you” **(John 15:8)**.  
“In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world” **(John 16:33)**.

So, we have:

**(1) AN INTRODUCTION**

**(2) AN INTERRUPTION**

**(3) AN INVITATION (Mark 8:34-38)**

- **Vs. 34**, “And calling the crowd to him with his disciples ...”
- This verse indicates, that even though Jesus and his disciples had met in private, the crowds weren’t far away.
- He calls the people around and proceeds to teach them what He’d just told His disciples.
  - There’s a cost to following Him. There’s a price to pay for genuine discipleship.
- Jesus knew most of the people in the crowd were following Him for **the miracles** and **the meals**.

**Which is still true today:** Many people follow the Lord or get involved in a church as long as they can see a personal benefit to it. (“What’s in it for me?”)

- But as soon as there’s a **COST** involved or a **CALL** for sacrifice, they can’t find the door quick enough.
- This is an OPEN invitation. “If anyone would come ...” The invitation is still open this morning.
    - **“ANYONE.”** That’s you. That’s me.

- It’s an OPEN invitation. It’s an AWESOME invitation. **“Great! So what is it?”**

“If anyone would come after me,” Jesus says, “it’s going to involve three things: **Self-denial, Suffering and Submission.**”

**(a) Self-denial (vs. 34c)** “Let him deny himself ...”

- It means to “disown, to refuse to associate with or companion with someone.”
  - It means I no longer want to be with the person I used to be.
    - This isn’t just denying your self some ice cream or a candy bar or a movie.
  - This is an absolute surrender of your will to the will of Christ.
- In **Philippians 3:4-8**, Paul talked about all the things he had, all of his accomplishments, every reason he had to put confidence in the flesh.
    - “Circumcised on the eighth day ... of the people of Israel ... of the tribe of Benjamin.”

- “A Hebrew of Hebrews ... as to the law, a Pharisee ... as to zeal, a persecutor of the church.”
  - “As to righteousness under the law, blameless ...”

**Philippians 3:7-11**, “But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ ... That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and may share His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death, that by any means possible, I may attain the resurrection from the dead.”

**(a) Self-denial**

**(b) Suffering (vs. 34d)** “and take up his cross.”

- Keep in mind Jesus hasn’t told them He was going to be crucified yet.
  - He’s told them He’s going to suffer and die.
  - But He hasn’t mentioned that He was going to be crucified.
- When He mentions a cross, they would immediately think of crucifixion.
  - It was a very cruel but common form of punishment back then.
- So Jesus was saying, “I’m headed toward death and to be honest with you, so are you.”
- To say, “YES!” to JESUS meant to say, “NO!” to SELF and to say, “NO!” to SAFETY. We’re willing to suffer for Him, because we know salvation and eternity in Heaven are worth far more.

**(c) Submission (vs. 34e)** “Follow me.”

- The word literally means “to imitate.” (How simple is that?)
- You say you’re a follower of Christ – then be like Him.
- **1 John 2:6**, “Whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.”
- Our lives are marked by obedience. Our lives are marked by abiding, remaining in Him.
- Our lives are marked by us walking like Him, talking like Him and being like Him.
- That’s the **PRINCIPLE**. But there’s also a **PARADOX (vs. 35)**.
  - “For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel’s will save it.”
  - It may look like you’re losing out, but you’re really not. You’re winning.

**Verses 36-37**. He explains that even if you could somehow gain the whole world (everything the world had to offer) and you forfeit your soul for all eternity – there’s nothing worth that.

- **Vs. 37**, “What would you give in exchange for an eternity in Hell? What’s worth that?”

**Verse 38**. “If you’re ashamed to follow Me now, you won’t be following Me later.”

**Have you ever been ashamed of Jesus or the fact you chose to follow Him?**

- The world will do everything they can to make you feel ashamed or embarrassed for following Jesus.
- There are consequences for our choices. So, be careful **HOW** you choose and **WHO** you choose.

**Verse 36**, “For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?”

**Matthew 10:32**, “So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven.”

- We’re going to give you a chance to do that right now.