

Let's Pray – Right Up Front

In our **last message** – Peter **GOT** the **Revelation** from **God** -
that **Jesus** Is the **Messiah**, the **Savior**

& it **was** an **incredible Moment** for **ALL** the **Disciples**
& they **thought**, **NOW** they've **got it** - they **understand**

But – as **soon** as **Peter spoke** this **Revelation Truth** –
That **Jesus IS Truly** The **Savior** (Messiah)

As **soon** as **those Words** - **came out** of **Peter's mouth**

Jesus began explaining to the Disciples
that **He** would **actually have** to **Suffer Terribly**

& **that he** was **going** to be **KILLED** - -
But **after 3 Days** – **he** would **RISE** from **the Dead**

TO which – **Peter** responded by **Reprimanding Jesus**
TO which – **Jesus** responded by **Reprimanding Peter**

In Mark 8:33 – Jesus says to Peter (NLT)

33 . . . “Get away from me, Satan!” he said. “You are seeing things merely from a human point of view, not from God’s.”

(Last Msg) Jesus **lumped Peter** together, with **SATAN**

because **Peter** was **seeing things** from
a **HUMAN Point of View** - **NOT God's Point of View**

Which **Should SHOCK US** – When **we understand**
THAT is what **Got Peter** called **SATAN**

& **then (for today)** – in the very **next sentence** we **read**

Mark 8:34 (NLT)

34 Then, calling the crowd to join his disciples, [Jesus] said, “If any of you wants to be my follower (be a Christ-Follower), you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me.

As I’ve said - This is the **Turning Point**
in the **Gospel** of **Mark**

& so **Last Week**

Jesus made it perfectly **Clear** – **WHO he is**

Today

Jesus wants to **make** it **perfectly CLEAR**

What it means to **Be a Christ-Follower**

& **So** – **Jesus** is going to **give**

The Disciples - The Crowd - & US

A 3-Point Outline

of **what IT LOOKS LIKE** –

when we become

a **True Follower of Jesus Christ**

AND – **this** is a **Critically Important Text** today

Because THIS is **ALSO** **what** it **looks like**

to be a **Christ-Follower**

in the **CANCEL CULTURE** – we **live in today**

The **Original Disciples** – were the **FIRST Christ-Followers**
who **Lived** - & **Died** →

in a **Cancel Culture** that was **even MORE**

Set Against Christ – than **ours** is **today** - at **least so far**

So – At the **End** of **V.34** - **This** is **what Jesus** says

We **MUST DO** – in **order** to **be His Follower**

Again Mark 8:34 (NLT)

34 . . . “If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way . . .

#1) you MUST give up your own way (deny self)

Your translation may say **“let him”** instead of **“MUST”**

But **listen** to the **‘Translators Comment’** from the **N.E.T.**

The translation [MUST] better expresses the force of the Greek third person imperative than the traditional “let him” which could be understood as merely permissive.

In order to Follow Jesus
we MUST Give Up our own way

& again – if your version says “DENY Himself”

that GRK word (for Deny) means:
Give Up our own way

Another definition is
“REJECT any connection with SELF”

This is NOT JUST “Deny Self” AS IN - giving up some sin

This is “Giving up our own way of life”

It's Giving up our “RIGHT” to ourselves
It's Giving up our “RIGHT” to run our own lives

It's giving up our RIGHT to Decide
WHAT we are going to DO
or WHERE we are going to GO
or HOW our life is going to LOOK

This is SERIOUS

This is about US Surrendering
Our OWN WAY
Our OWN DESIRES

& INSTEAD - Taking Up
the Way and Desires – of the LORD Jesus

1 Corinthians 6:19–20 (NLT)

19 . . . You do not belong to yourself, 20 for God bought you with a high price . . .

**When you Surrender your Life to Jesus Christ
As your SAVIOR & LORD**

You **no longer OWN Yourself**

You've **given up** your **right** – to **RUN your own life**

& **instead** – you've **committed to submit**

To the **Leadership** & **Lordship** – of **Jesus Christ**

This is the **FIRST Thing** Jesus **says** you **MUST DO** –
In order to **Become** a **Christ-follower**

you must give up your own way

Then - #2) – You MUST take up your cross

Again, Mark 8:34 (NLT)

34 . . . [Jesus said], “If any of you wants to be my follower, you must . . . take up your cross . . .

What does THIS Mean?

Well – it is **NOT** – ***“This difficulty is my cross to bear . . .”***

To the **FIRST Disciples**

the **Cross Meant** only **ONE THING**

It was The most Humiliating & Horrific - Form of Death
The Romans could come up with

& Jesus had just explained to the Disciples
that HE was going to take up HIS Cross

& they hated the idea so much
that Peter Reprimanded Jesus for it

But now – it gets even HARDER
For the Disciples – AND for US

Now Jesus says – AND . . . if you want to be My Follower
then YOU Must take up YOUR Cross

Those who DIED on the Cross
Always carried their OWN Cross

To be “Carrying Your Own Cross”
Meant you were a Dead-Man-Walking

The Disciples would’ve known Exactly What this Meant

They did NOT Confuse the Cross
with a Piece of JEWELRY

They KNEW FULL-WELL – What it meant
for someone to Take up their own Cross

It meant Humiliation, Suffering, & Death

Now – unless our country goes all the way
to Communism - or Something worse (*which it could*)

Us - “Taking Up our Cross” – will probably NOT MEAN
Physical Death on a Physical Cross

But – what we MUST Experience
When we Commit to become a Christ-Follower

Is the Humiliation, Suffering, & Death
Of our Self-Centered Life - & our Pride

& <u>I am convinced</u> (<i>personally</i>) it <u>would</u> be <u>easier to die</u> – <u>Physically</u>
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The Humiliation, Suffering, & Death
Of our Self-Centered Life - & our Pride

Is often FAR More UGLY
Than our Physical Death Would be

So #1) - We MUST give up our own way – (*Deny Self*)

& #2) - We MUST be Willing to Embrace
The UGLY Death
Of our Self-Centered Life - & our Pride

& then - #3 comes easy

#3) You MUST Actually Follow Jesus

again Mark 8:34 (NLT)

34 . . . “If any of you wants to be my follower, you must . . . (actually) *follow me*.

So . . . this **does NOT mean**

JUST - Repeat a prayer after me

**Repeating a prayer to Receive Christ into your life – is GREAT
& you should ALL do it**

But – **the Bible** is perfectly **clear**

that **initial Commitment** to **Receive** Christ
is **an INITIAL Commitment**

It's **not** the **END GOAL** of **Following Jesus**
It's **JUST** the **INITIAL Commitment**

& **so** – **after** you **Pray the prayer** – **Jesus** says –
you **MUST actually begin** to **Follow Him**

The **Initial Commitment** – is the **1st Step**

& **then** you **take** - the **2nd step**
& **then** the **3rd Step**
& **then** the **ONE Millionth Step**

& you just **Keep Following Jesus**
(Here I am Lord – I'm still Following)

I Can Simply PUT – what it means
to **Actually Follow Jesus**

But **you're gonna HATE IT**

& **Many people** who **call** themselves **Christians**
absolutely REFUSE to **do this**

& you **may decide** right here
that it's **just TOO MUCH**

& you **may turn away**

& **GO BACK** - **to** the **Wide Road**
that **leads** to **Destruction**

But – **I have** to **tell** you – **Are you Ready ?**

To **actually Follow Jesus** means . . . **You OBEY Him**

It **means** you **Genuinely make decisions** in your **life**
According to God's Word

ABOVE - & IN PLACE of – Your Own OPINION!

There it is - - Jesus **didn't** - **sugar-coat it**
& he **didn't** - **pull any punches**

This is what We MUST Do – In **order** to
Truly Follow Jesus → →

- #1) - We must give up our own way, (reject self)**
- #2) – We must take up our cross (self must die)**
- #3) – We must actually follow Jesus (obey His Word)**

But listen – After Jesus tells us –
What it MEANS to Follow Him

He tells us WHY – We should DO IT

Starting in V.35 - Jesus provides
Some Incredible MOTIVATION

For WHY we should CHOOSE to be a Christ-Follower

Mark 8:35 (NLT)

35 If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake and for the sake of the Good News, you will save it.

There are only TWO Attitudes - you can take
toward this Temporal, Earthly Life

#1) You can try to hang on to THIS LIFE

Grab all you Can – Go for the Gusto –
Acquire & Attain & Become

& then – You will LOSE Your Life

**Jesus is talking to this very person
in a parable in Luke Ch 12**

& while this man was getting all he could - from THIS life

Luke 12:20–21 (NLT)

20 “But God said to him, ‘You fool! You will die this very night. Then who will get everything you worked for?’

21 “Yes, a person is a fool to store up earthly wealth but not have a rich relationship with God.”

THAT is hanging on to your life – only to LOSE IT

Or - you can have – the 2nd attitude

You can give up your life for Jesus’ sake and for the sake of the Good News, & you will save it.

Giving up your life – means:

Truly Surrendering your life to Jesus as your Lord

**& IF – you will Surrender your life - for Jesus’ sake
and for the sake of the Gospel - you will save it**

Jesus says - Give up your SELF-Life –

For His sake - & for the Kingdom of God

& you will GAIN - ABUNDANT Life now

& ETERNAL LIFE - When This Life Ends

Which Is the Point - that V.36-37 Drives Home

Mark 8:36 (NLT)

36 And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul?

37 Is anything worth more than your soul?

THIS is the REAL Motivation - to be a Christ-Follower

Because whatever you view as

“Gaining the Whole World” - in THIS life

It **Could ALL END** – In a **FLASH**

before the sun comes up tomorrow

& then - ***Is anything in this life worth more than your soul?***

& **Finally** – if **Jesus** hasn't **been**
Straight Enough YET

He **finishes** with a **CLEAR Warning**

Mark 8:38 (NLT)

38 If anyone is ashamed of me and my message in these adulterous and sinful days, the Son of Man will be ashamed of that person when he returns in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”

To **Be Ashamed** of **Jesus** – means: ***you don't want People to KNOW that you are Associated with him***

**Maybe someone convinced you to Pray the prayer of faith
in Repentance – for your Salvation**

But – **you were hoping to slip out
& go right back to your life**

**without anyone knowing
you actually made a Commitment to Jesus**

I've seen a LOT of people do this

***I don't like the idea of going to Hell –
so I'll say the prayer with the Preacher***

***But I don't really want my friends
to think I've gotten all religious***

You know what I mean . . .

<i>Yeah, I know what you mean <u>you're ashamed</u> of <u>being associated</u> with <u>Jesus Christ</u></i>
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& so – again - **v.37 says
*Is anything worth more than your soul?***

Because you might actually be saying

There is something worth more than your soul

Well - It's the guys at work -

Their opinion of me is Really Important, you know

Well - It's the WOO Girls I go out with on Friday night

Their opinion of me is SOOO important

But it's ok – I prayed the prayer

So I'm good, right?

All I know is – THIS is what Jesus says

(& it is NOT the only warning like this – in Scripture)

again - Mark 8:38 (NLT)

38 If anyone is ashamed of me and my message (not wanting to be associated with) in these adulterous and sinful days, the Son of Man will be ashamed of that person (not wanting to be associated with) when he returns in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

Seems pretty clear, right?

**Jesus has New Life, Abundant Life, Eternal Life
to Give Freely to His Followers**

& this New Life - DOES COME by Faith alone

**Being a Christ-Follower is Not a Work
that EARNS You Salvation**

**Being a Christ-Follower - is a RESPONSE
to Knowing that you are Saved**

& so - At the Critical Turning Point

In the **Ministry** of **Jesus** - - **He makes THIS Clear**

If you would COMMIT to be a Christ Follower

Here is **what** you **MUST DO**

#1) - You must give up your own way, (reject self)

#2) - You must take up your cross (crucify self)

#3) – You must actually follow Jesus (obey His Word)

& if you WILL – **The reward** will **BE**

ABUNDANT LIFE Now - & **ETERNAL LIFE** in **Heaven**

Living in the **Glory of the Lord**

Embrace the offer of **Jesus** –

to **Lose** this **Vapor of a life** - **For His Sake**

in order to GAIN

ABUNDANT LIFE Now - & **ETERNAL LIFE** in Heaven

Let's Pray