

Mark 8:27-38

So we are here at really the midway point of our study of the Gospel of Mark and I have to just say that as the disciples were spending time with Jesus, watching His life, seeing how He loved others, watching the miracles and so much more it was all to bring them to this point in their lives that will unfold before us today.

I think its appropriate to just remind us of some of the things the disciples had witnessed as we begin today and so I'm going to just briefly list several of the situations that we have seen so far in this book of the Bible.

It all began with the coming of a man who was the fulfillment of prophecy that said he would be a messenger that would go and prepare the way of the LORD and this messenger was John the Baptist...He preached a message of repentance to the masses and the multitudes were baptized as a sign that they were turning from their ways away from God and preparing their hearts for the coming of the Messiah.

Jesus then came on to the scene and He preached saying "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand." He then called some disciples to follow Him and as He taught at the synagogue we were told that He taught like no other before Him as He spoke with authority.

We then saw a demon possessed individual attempt to rile up the crowd and distract from the ministry of Jesus and the Lord simply rebuked the demon and commanded it to come out.

The crowds were seen coming to Jesus on multiple occasions in our studies and the Lord healed many from the paralytic, to the deaf, to those who could not see, to the lepers.

We even saw the Lord clash with the religious elite on multiple occasions quickly putting their false man-made teachings to shame as He showed them that they had annulled the law of God that they might honor the customs of man.

The Lord stood up to the Pharisees especially as they came against Him for healing on the Sabbath and for allowing His disciples to eat grain on the Sabbath.

The Lord taught the multitudes using parables and then the Lord sent the disciples with a command to cross to the other side of the Sea of Galilee...The disciples were met with an incredible storm and they feared for their lives and if you remember Jesus was asleep as this took place and they woke the Lord and said “Don’t you care that we are going to die?” And the Lord stood up and rebuked the wind and the waves and all was calm.

As soon as they got to the other side the disciples witnessed the Lord delivering a man who was possessed with multiple demons, a man that could not be tamed, that had been driven away from society and found his home in the caves being naked...And the Lord delivered that man and we were told that he was found to be in his right mind being fully clothed.

Then the Gospel of Mark recorded that there were two women that were healed that came from very different places in life. There was a little 12-year-old daughter that was very sick and the Lord actually

ended up raising her from the dead...the other woman had been sick for 12 years with a flow of blood and if you remember she went and touched Jesus on the hem of His clothes and she was healed.

The Lord also miraculously fed both 5,000 people at once and then 4,000 at once with just a few loaves and a small amount of fish. The disciples watched as Jesus provided more than enough from the little they had.

Don't forget that that Jesus was also seen seeking His Father in prayer while the disciples were out trying to cross over the water and the Lord then went to them walking on the water...and this is when Peter made that great step of faith asking the Lord to allow him to walk on water as well and Peter did so (for a time that is until he focused on the waves and the wind and found himself sinking)...Of course Jesus rescued him but what an incredible experience for Peter to have in his own life.

We even saw the Lord minister to the Gentiles as we travelled through the Gospel of Mark and to define a Gentile you could simply say anyone that was not born a Jew...so that means most of us here...and the Lord ministered to a woman who was not Jewish that had a daughter who was possessed by a demon and the Lord set the little girl free.

Now this is not a comprehensive list that I have just gone through and if you put the Gospels together and explore the other accounts we have of the life of Jesus you will find that a lot more happened than what I have just listed...We are even told in the gospel of John at the very end of that book of the Bible the following in John 21:25 which says ²⁵ **And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if**

they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen.

The point I'm making in recounting all of this is that the disciples had a front row seat of the glory and the greatness of Jesus. The Pharisees had firmly rejected Jesus even saying that His power and the miracles He could perform were done by the power of Satan...but the disciples had a mind of their own, they had witnessed all the Lord had done.

I like what John says in his epistle in 1 John 1:1-3 which says That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life— ²the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us— ³that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

And so now that the disciples had experienced and seen so much the Lord is going to ask them some questions and their response to this question will reveal what they have truly understood as they have watched their Master minister to the world.

Let's look at verse 27 of our text which says the following ²⁷Now Jesus and His disciples went out to the towns of Caesarea Philippi; and on the road He asked His disciples, saying to them, "Who do men say that I am?"

Let's set the scene first here as we jump into this as we are told the disciples and Jesus were on the way to Caesarea Philippi. Now this was a city that was under Roman control during the days of Jesus and was actually the capital city of Philip who was one of four Roman rulers that oversaw the area. It was located about 25 miles to the north of the Sea of Galilee at the base of Mount Hermon.

This city was actually a place that there was a very deep underground spring that came out of the mouth of a cave which fed the Jordan River and there were numerous temples in the city.

The city also had a second name that it went by which was Panias or Banias which was given after the god whose name was Pan. The city itself was dominated by sexual immorality and pagan worship. They even had a temple that was for the worship of the emperor and this is also near the site that the golden calf of Dan was worshipped.

So not a real friendly place towards the God of the Bible.

So you can imagine the disciples and Jesus are leaving the area of the Sea of Galilee and they are travelling some 25 miles to the north which was a solid 10 hours of walking if you took no breaks...So this was not a small journey that they took.

Now if you have ever taken a walk with your family then you know that some interesting conversations can take place as you travel together. There is just something about walking that creates an atmosphere of conversation and I would just encourage you tonight to get out and take a walk with your loved ones, get out of the house and enjoy doing something outdoors that might even be out of the ordinary and just watch how your relationships blossom from that.

So you can imagine these guys are just trudging along and then the Lord suddenly asks them a very deep question as He says “Who do men say that I am?”

So essentially the Lord wants to know what the word on the street is about who He is and what He has done.

Let's see how they respond if you look at verse 28 which says ²⁸ **So they answered, “John the Baptist; but some say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets.”**

It would seem that when it came to others and what they thought about who Jesus was that there was an awful lot of confusion. Some said that Jesus was John the Baptist...why would they think that I'm not sure for Jesus and John were actually seen together at the same time...So they were totally different people.

We did see Herod was quite paranoid that Jesus was John the Baptist and if you remember that was all because Herod had a guilty conscience and when you are guilty in your mind you'll come up with all kinds of weird ideas about how life is.

When people said that Jesus was Elijah that made a little more sense for the Word of God states very clearly that one day before the terrible day of the Lord that Elijah will come back...Listen to what Malachi 4:5 says **Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.**

So the expectation was that some day Elijah would return and that's one of the reasons I believe Elijah will be one of the two witnesses in the book of Revelation in chapter 11.

Today in our world there are lots of ideas about who Jesus is and there is much confusion just as we see here in this verse before us...Some deny He ever lived at all and certainly that is just an individual that hasn't studied out the evidence for there is a huge amount of evidence that points to Jesus being an actual person who lived on the earth.

Some say that Jesus was a great teacher, others mention that Jesus was a man that had many disciples or that He was a highly respected man, some point out that indeed He was a miracle worker and others like the religious leaders said He was a self-proclaimed Messiah who was a false Messiah.

The Muslim faith says that Jesus was a prophet, one that is to be studied and listened to but certainly no one beyond that...they even go so far as to say he was a holy man, one that was enlightened and a messenger.

Hinduism says of Jesus that He was an empowered incarnation of God known as an Avatar...one of many Avatar's they believe in.

Jehovah's Witnesses say that Jesus existed in heaven as the archangel Michael and Mormons say that Jesus was one of many sons of God and he had a brother named Lucifer.

Today the world is quite confused about who Jesus is...I think the confusion is often because if you confess Jesus is God in the flesh, if you confess He is the Savior of the world then that means you are accountable to Him and so many simply want to live life the way they desire to rather than to listen to the Lord and submit to Him.

When we go out to evangelize in the community one of the questions that is often asked is “To you, who is Jesus?” and I think the response that people have to that question reveals a lot about who they are as a person.

So the Lord asks who do others say that I am and the disciples are responding and then look at verse 29 which says ²⁹**He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?”**

Peter answered and said to Him, “You are the Christ.”

Well now the rubber meets the road doesn't it? As the Lord turns and asks the disciples as they are walking “who do you think that I am?” I kind of have this picture in my mind that the moment Jesus asked this that the walking they were doing probably stopped...I wonder what Jesus was thinking? I mean He knows in His mind and heart that these are the men that the Father has deemed will bring the gospel to the world and if they can't grab hold of the truth and communicate it then the world is in for a tough time.

You have to love Peter don't you? I mean for all the failures we see in his life we also see some glorious moments with him. Peter was a man that I believe fiercely loved Jesus, he even began to fight for the life of Jesus in the garden at one point cutting off one of the soldiers ears.

And He was the one to respond in this situation as He said “You are the Christ” And that would have been music to the ears of Jesus. The word Christ is not the name of the Lord...instead the word Christ is a title which means anointed one or the Messiah.

And so Peter is openly declaring that they believe He is the One that was sent from God to rescue the Jewish people. Now we'll find out before too long that they had their ideas mixed up and their thoughts about the Messiah were wrong and that's actually why Jesus says what He does in verse 30 which says ³⁰**Then He strictly warned them that they should tell no one about Him.**

So the disciples have come to this glorious conclusion that Jesus is the One sent from God in fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies that spoke of one who would one day come. They had seen with their own eyes the wonderful works of Jesus and had only become more and more convinced that He was indeed the anointed one of God.

Over in the Gospel of Matthew if you look at this same account we get some additional information as Jesus responds to what Peter said in Matthew 16:17 we see this ¹⁷**Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven.**

I can imagine great joy bursting forth in the heart of Jesus as He heard that His students, His disciples, the ones closest to Him had understood who He was.

You know I have to just point out that as you go through life there is one question that is more important than every other question in the world and your response to that question really determines what will happen to you when it comes to eternity...**That question is "Who is Jesus?"**

Have you answered that question for yourself? Have you thought about who Jesus is and what He has done? I have to tell you that if the

conclusion you come to is that Jesus was a good teacher or someone to listen to and learn from **that simply said is not enough**. If you look at Jesus and you say well He was a prophet or someone that was a messenger **I have to tell you that this is not enough to gain access** to an eternity in heaven.

The only answer that you can ever give that will make an eternal difference in your life is if you can confidently say as Peter did that **Jesus is the Christ**, that He is the Messiah, that He is the Savior of humanity, that He is the One that gave His life on the cross for your sins, that He is God in the flesh...**and if you can say those things and you can say confidently that you have received Jesus in your** heart then I am here today to tell you that you are saved from your sins and you will find yourself with an eternity in heaven.

You know there are many that say there are many ways to enter into heaven, or that all roads lead to God but I want to read to you what Jesus said in Matthew 7:13-14 which says this ¹³ **“Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. ¹⁴ Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.**

Jesus made the road even less narrow when He said this in John 14:6 which says ⁶ **Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.**

There is only one correct answer to who is Jesus and its revealed to us in scripture. Jesus is the One and the only way to find an eternity in heaven with the Father. I sure hope today as we are looking at this

that you can say with all confidence that Jesus is your Savior, that He is the Christ, the anointed one, the Messiah.

If you remember a few minutes ago I mentioned that while the disciples understood who Jesus was that they didn't fully grasp the mission of the Lord and that's why Jesus said what he did in verse 30 telling them not to tell anyone about Him...and to build on that let's look at verse 31 which says ³¹ **And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.** I'll just briefly say that what Jesus says here is not what the disciples had in mind and we'll see that in just a few minutes but notice that the Lord began to speak about His mission...The mission of the Messiah was always to first die and then come secondly as a conquering king at a later future date a date we are still waiting for.

Jesus certainly did suffer at the hands of men as He was rejected by the leaders of the Jewish people...and this was prophesied in the Old Testament and for homework you might just write down Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53 for starters but in these scriptures the death of the Messiah for the sins of humanity is plainly laid out.

It's amazing that Jesus knew what would happen to Him ahead of time. I think it's one thing to die a martyr's death not really knowing what would take place but to be Jesus and to know the details of your own death and to know that they would be horrific and that He would suffer much must have been a heavy weight to carry...and I think this is evidenced by the prayers of Jesus in the garden as we are told that He was in such agony that his sweat was coming out as drops of blood.

I'm thankful and I'm sure Jesus was as well that His death would not be the end as He also taught them that He would rise again from the dead on the third day.

You might underline what Jesus said of Himself when He spoke of Himself being the Son of Man for that is a Messianic term that reaches back to the book of Daniel...If you listen to Daniel 7:13-14 it gives us the foundation for this when it says **“I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him. ¹⁴ Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, Which shall not pass away, And His kingdom the one Which shall not be destroyed.”**

This is a term that was used of Jesus some 80 times in the Gospel accounts.

So the disciples are listening to Jesus as He speaks these things and I have a hunch that the Lord was using scripture to speak to them and teach them and as Jesus is saying this it is really going against the grain of what the Jewish people thought the Messiah would do.

The Jews believed their Messiah would come as a great conqueror, as someone that remove the Romans from ruling them, someone that would bring about peace and prosperity and that's actually a little scary for even today the Jews look for a Messiah to come with these abilities...and this is exactly what the antichrist will be able to accomplish when he comes...the Jewish people will buy into the lies of the antichrist they will trust in his accomplishments in this world

and miss out entirely that he will one day turn against them...The Jews missed their loving Messiah who died for them and they missed that One day the Lord Jesus will return and conquer the world.

Now watch what happens with Peter...You might say to him the phrase “open mouth, insert foot” after he says this but look at verses 32-33 which say ³²**He spoke this word openly. Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him.** ³³**But when He had turned around and looked at His disciples, He rebuked Peter, saying, “Get behind Me, Satan! For you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.”**

I don't know about you but I feel bad for Peter sometimes. This is a man with great zeal and yet he just lacked the wisdom that was needed...Later he would find that wisdom and empowerment from the Holy Spirit but sometimes when we walk by faith we can find ourselves experiencing what Peter did here.

So Peter notice it says takes the Lord to the side, to a private place kind of like a parent would their child when they need to discipline them and it says that he rebuked the Lord...and that word for rebuke just so you understand is the same word Jesus used to REBUKE the demons and cause them to come out of people...So this was kind of like a harsh and authoritative rebuke that Peter would have given to Jesus.

Have you ever rebuked the Lord in your life? Have you ever told the Lord that He simply isn't right? Have you ever argued with God? Or felt like you knew better than He did? That was Peter in this case.

And just notice that Jesus after being rebuked privately turned to Peter and publicly rebuked him saying he was speaking on behalf of Satan and had the desires of men and not of God. Now Jesus wasn't saying Peter was possessed but He was pointing out that the devil himself would love it if Jesus chose not to suffer the death of the cross.

You know sometimes the enemy can use those who are closest to us to speak words of doubt into our hearts, they can try and dissuade us from what the Lord would have for us in life...be very careful that you hold to the things of God's kingdom and you reject the thoughts of man.

Satan himself even tried to get Jesus not to go to the cross if you listen to Luke 4:5-8 which says this ⁵Then the devil, taking Him up on a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. ⁶And the devil said to Him, "All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for *this* has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. ⁷Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours."

⁸And Jesus answered and said to him, "Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.' "

Satan said to Jesus you don't need the cross, you just bow before me and I'll give you the kingdoms of the world...thank God Jesus didn't take the easy way out for had He you and I would be lost in our sin with no hope of reconciling with the Father whatsoever.

I want to just briefly ask you and then we have to move on here but where is your heart and your mind? Are you focused on this world, on the desires of man? Or do you have a heart for His kingdom? The kingdom of God doesn't operate like you and I might think it should for it often goes against the wisdom of man...In fact Jesus as we move forward here will teach the disciples about what it means to follow Him and what it takes.

Look at verse 34 which says ³⁴**When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me."** We might say this is the cure for someone that has a heart for the kingdom of man and not the kingdom of God. The Lord here gives three steps to those that want to follow after Him.

First you must deny yourself. That's kind of a hard thing to do isn't it? I mean our flesh desires desperately that we would feed it, that we would live for it, that we would honor it above all things. Jesus though says you must learn to put self at the bottom...this means you need to have a heart to serve others...it means that the ME ME ME attitude of this world must go to the side.

And then the Lord said that they needed to take up their cross...and I think this can look different for each one of us. I don't think Jesus means you need to head to the physical cross and allow yourself to be crucified but in a spiritual sense you and I must be willing to take up whatever the Lord might have for us in life. That might mean moving to Kansas out of the blue, that might mean you are to lay down your desires as far as your career goes, that might mean you need to be willing to become a missionary to another land...And it might even

mean that the desires you have to be in ministry get put on the shelf to fulfill what the Lord places before you.

There needs to be a constant submission on our part to whatever the Lord might want for us as we go through life. Jesus gets to drive our lives and dictate who we are...Jesus gets to be king instead of self.

And then third the Lord said that they were to follow Him. Hey that's the best advice I have ever heard I think to just follow Jesus. To follow someone means you study their life, you admire them, you put them first, that nothing else really matters. I can think of no one greater than Jesus to follow as we go through life.

Jesus then went on to say what we have in verse 35 which says

³⁵ For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it.

It's a funny thing that Jesus says here...and it certainly goes against what we would think we should do as He simply says that if you want to save your life you need to lose it...and not just lose it for anything but lose it for His sake and notice that as you do this you will save your life.

I can tell you that in my life I have lived for different things and none of them has satisfied me like living for Jesus. When I came to know Him all the other stuff in life was just like Paul said in Philippians 3:7-8 when he said **⁷ But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. ⁸ Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ**

In Galatians 2:20 Paul said ²⁰ I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. That's a pretty amazing place to be in life. To be in that place where you have given up your will and your ways and your thoughts and submitted them to the kingdom of God and the authority of Jesus.

Verses 36-38 say ³⁶ For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? ³⁷ Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? ³⁸ For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."

I think we should ask ourselves this very question that Jesus asked...What good does it do if I inherit all the riches and prestige of this world and yet I lose my own soul? If you think about it the average human life span here in the United States is 78.4 years...and you can live all those years with an awful lot of abundance and you can accomplish an awful lot but if you do all that forfeiting your soul it's all for nothing.

I think we so often forget that when we finish our lives here on the earth that we will enter into a new realm of time which is eternity...and we have choices to make as we go through life don't we? We can live for the world or we can live for the kingdom of God.

People find themselves living for all sorts of things whether they be good wholesome things like family and houses and land or they be sinful activities that have come in and dominated them like drugs and

alcohol and pornography...So many people will regularly choose the things of this world over the eternity they can have with Jesus.

So many people are regularly forfeiting their souls in exchange for temporal, worldly, passing riches.

I sure hope that isn't us...I hope that every one of us in here this evening can confidently say that Jesus is the king of our lives, and that His kingdom matters to us more than anything else. We all have to make choices as we go through life.

Have you confessed as Peter did that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God? Have you submitted yourself to His kingdom and His ways? Or do you sadly live for yourself.

You know Christians can choose to live for themselves...you can fight against God and His will for you but I have to tell you that you won't find satisfaction in your life...you will find yourself frustrated, you will find yourself unfulfilled.

But when you submit to the Lord's work, when you choose to deny yourself and take up your cross and follow Him you are in for an adventure as He works in you and uses you to minister to others.

Tonight if you are here and you believe Jesus is calling you to lay down your life for Him and you know you are fighting the Lord I can't encourage you enough to just stop fighting and submit to His will for you.

One final word...You can't lay down your life without the power of the Holy Spirit at work in you and through you. You need to be filled with His Spirit in order to put Him first in your life and so if you need His power to help you I just implore you to go ahead and ask the Spirit of

God to work in you and to fill you to overflowing that you might live for Him.

Let me pray for us and we'll worship the Lord.

Mark 8:27-38 “Who Is Jesus”

Cross references

Introduction

John 21:25

1 John 1:1-3

Verse 28

Malachi 4:5

Verse 30

Matthew 16:17

Matthew 7:13-14

John 14:6

Verse 31

Daniel 7:13-14

Verses 32-33

Luke 4:5-8

Verse 35

Philippians 3:7-8

Galatians 2:20

