

MARK — Jesus Predicts His Death #1

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How we go through transitions can make us more like Jesus, or more broken, distorted and malformed. Though they are unpleasant and painful, transitions can make us more truly human in the image of God.

Mark 8:31-9:1

He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.

But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. “Get behind me, Satan!” he said. “You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.”

Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their

soul? If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels."

And he said to them, "Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see that the kingdom of God has come with power."

The New International Version (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Mk 8:31–9:1.

A New Idea?

Jesus begins by teaching something that appears to be new to the disciples. He begins here to teach that the Son of Man (who he identifies as) will suffer and die.

This identification with the Son of Man is quoting Daniel's scroll, chapter 7, where an appointed Divine Human One will ascend next to the throne of God and rule humanity. This claim is so clear to the religious leaders that they accuse him of blasphemy and try to have him killed.

However, a twist that Jesus teaches is that it is now necessary for the Son of Man to suffer and die. He is identifying the Son of Man as the suffering servant from Isa 52 and 53.

The idea that Jesus is identifying with is here:

After he has suffered,
he will see the light of life and be satisfied;
by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many,
and he will bear their iniquities.

Therefore I will give him a portion among the great,
and he will divide the spoils with the strong,
because he poured out his life unto death,
and was numbered with the transgressors.
For he bore the sin of many,
and made intercession for the transgressors

The New International Version (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Is 53:11–12.

But Peter is now silencing Jesus from saying this, rebuking him because the suffering servant and the Son of Man should not be the same person. The Messianic King should be one who will kill Rome and overthrow the corruption in the temple, not be killed by them.

But Jesus rebuked him. While on the surface it looks like Jesus is calling Peter the Satan, he is actually accusing the bearer of those ideas behind Peter.

This idea can be traced back to Jesus' testing in the wilderness, where the Satan offered Jesus a shortcut to rule over humanity without having to suffer and die.



You're always living in the paradigm of death, burial, and resurrection. If you surrender to those transitional moments, you will become more like Christ. If you reject them, you'll become more deformed, less human.

Christianity has been preached as a “your best life now, up and to the right,” type of doctrine. But that's not the doctrine here. If you want to call yourself a Christian, it will involve constant death, burial, and resurrection. It's the way for every Christ follower.

How Did the Early Christians Understand This?

They saw the criminals carrying the cross beams on their bleeding backs before a violent, suffocating death naked and in front of the whole community.

Jesus was willing to take that pain and then spells out that this denial of self, denial of the right to revenge, and to suffer and carry burdens and injustice, dark nights of the soul, and shows that this is what it is like to follow him.

And what's true is that all humans will suffer like this, but Jesus weaves it into a paradigm of the suffering servant. He was willing to receive painful moments and get under a wooden beam, and carry it in surrender to the will of the Father and walk with him through it. But he also puts us into a community where we are each helping each other carry our crosses.

Suffering alone is not what God has called us to, and the paradigm always leads to resurrection if we submit to God's timing and process.

The paradigm in the USA lacks the paradigm of the suffering servant. And so when Christians experience suffering out of a prosperity paradigm, it messes with their faith. But the Bible guarantees us suffering, so are we willing to reconcile our paradigm with scripture?

Death - Burial - Resurrection is the normative way of life as a Christian.

Regular Transitions in Life

Moving is a death to the old and life to a new; death to old patterns, friends, community, and life to a new rhythm, new normal.

Transitions in school or work are the same way — death to the old year, old season, old rhythms, and life to the new. This can lead to new rhythms in parent's lives.

Birth to a child is death to an old way of life and birth to a new way of life.

If you don't understand this as normative for everyone, in Christ, there is empowerment from the Holy Spirit and transformation into Jesus' new humanity — if we deny ourselves and pick up our cross. There is no resurrection life without accepting the death and the cross.

If you have shut down that area of your life by denying the death and the cross, then you are losing your life. The reason why you may not be feeling God is because you've shut God out from that process of your life.

If you've shut down your emotions out, you've shut down an avenue of communication from God and losing out on the Spirit that will set you free.

Why should you say yes to suffering and death and resurrection?

We experience deaths every week and sometimes every day. Jesus will lead you through that path of burial and resurrection if you submit to that. And at the end, you will gain your soul. You will also gain maturity in the image of God and be empowered to comfort other people who are going through their own death.

How you handle Jesus now has a direct impact for the future. You will gain the Father's approval.



Otherwise, you will experience that death which leads to death, rather than death which leads to life.