

Bible Study - The Cost of Following Jesus - Text: Mark 8:27–38

Many people admire Jesus. They appreciate His teaching. They respect His character. They celebrate Christmas and Easter. But Jesus never called people simply to admire Him. He called them to follow Him. There is a tremendous difference between being a fan of Jesus and being a follower of Jesus. Fans watch from a distance. Followers surrender their lives.

1. Following Jesus Begins With the Right Confession - Mark 8:27–30

Jesus asked His disciples two questions. "Who do people say I am?" Then He made it personal. "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered, "You are the Christ." Peter recognized Jesus as God's promised Messiah. Yet Peter still misunderstood Jesus' mission. He expected a conquering king. Jesus came first as a suffering Savior. Romans 10:9 reminds us that we are called to confess Jesus as **Lord**, not merely acknowledge Him as a historical figure. Lordship changes everything.

1. Why do you think Jesus asked His disciples what other people believed before asking what they believed? _____

2. What is the difference between admiring Jesus and following Jesus?

3. What does it practically mean to confess Jesus as Lord rather than simply believing He existed?

2. Following Jesus Requires Complete Surrender - Mark 8:31–35

After Peter confessed Jesus as the Christ, Jesus immediately spoke about the cross. Peter wanted glory. Jesus spoke about suffering. Peter wanted a crown. Jesus spoke about sacrifice. Jesus then described discipleship using three commands.

Deny Yourself - This is not giving up a few pleasures. It is surrendering control of our lives to Christ.

Take Up Your Cross - The cross represented death. Jesus calls us to die to selfishness, pride and self-rule.

Follow Me - Jesus never asks us to walk a road He has not already walked. Daily discipleship means continually choosing Christ's will above our own. Jesus then gives one of Scripture's greatest paradoxes: Whoever loses his life for Christ will truly find it.

1. Why do you think surrender is often the hardest part of following Jesus?

2. What are some practical ways believers "deny themselves" today?

3. What areas of life are often most difficult to surrender to Christ?

3. Following Jesus Means Living for Eternity - Mark 8:36–38

Jesus asks one of the most searching questions in Scripture. "What will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul?" Our culture measures success differently than Jesus. Jesus measures life by eternity. Everything we own will one day be left behind. Only what is invested in Christ will last forever.

1. How does our culture define success differently from Jesus?

2. What are some ways believers can intentionally invest in eternal things?

3. If someone observed your life for one week, what would they conclude you value most?

Three Responses to the Message

1. Have You Personally Confessed Jesus as Lord? - Christianity begins with a personal response to Jesus.

2. Is There an Area of Your Life You Need to Surrender? - Following Jesus requires daily surrender.

3. Are You Living for Today or for Eternity? Jesus reminds us that everything in this world is temporary. Only what is invested in God's Kingdom lasts forever.