

Pastor Dustin Daniels | River Bible Church
Mark 8:34-9:1 | The Reality of Discipleship
 February 14, 2021

REVIEW:

Last week the Holy Spirit taught us that the Twelve Disciples understood that Jesus was the Messiah, but they misunderstood the Messiah's plan.

The Messiah's plan was to first suffer, die, conquering sin and death by walking out of his own grave and ascending back to Heaven where He came from.

So ~~Now~~ the Twelve ~~could~~ ^{learned} also see that their expectations of Jesus were wrong—He is first a suffering servant and then a conquering King.

We saw Peter's response to ~~Jesus' teaching~~. All of this.

Peter and The Twelve couldn't grasp the concept of a dead Messiah.

How is a dead Messiah any good to the nation of Israel?

we saw So Peter interrupts Jesus' teaching and takes matters into his own hands.

we witnessed Jesus rebukes Peter and lets him know, along with the other Eleven, that Peter is unknowingly being used as a tool/mouthpiece for Satan.

Sermon in a sermon...

KEYPOINT:
A rebuke is not rejection; it's a correction.

A rebuke is a warning. It is a very Biblical thing to do with someone that you love.

Jesus did a tremendous amount of rebuking and correcting throughout His earthly life.

+ cf. **1 Timothy 5:20**— **CSB**—Publicly rebuke those who sin, so that the rest will be afraid.

We say to ourselves, well, I don't like the sound of that at all...

The apostle Paul teaches further on this subject...

+ cf. **2 Timothy 3:16** **CSB**— All Scripture is inspired by God, and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness,

Why is rebuking and correcting profitable?

+ cf. **2 Timothy 3:17** **CSB**—so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

Unfortunately, in our culture, when someone gets rebuked in the Church, they often leave the Church—they perceive that as a rejection of them personally.

And when someone leaves the Church, they often miss the blessing that comes from being ~~Biblically corrected~~. A Biblical rebuke

We'll see how Peter and the Twelve not only respond to Jesus' rebuke but how they adapt to today's teaching on discipleship.

+ **INTRODUCTION:**

Today's Scripture passage is really a short sermon from Jesus.

It's recorded in all three Synoptic Gospels (cf. Matt. 16:24–28; Luke 9:23–27).

Jesus' sermon focuses on saving faith and the cost of discipleship.

Jesus uses this concept of a suffering Messiah as a model for discipleship.

Today the Holy Spirit will teach us how a wrong view of Jesus leads to a wrong view of discipleship.

What is that view? And what is the Biblical view of discipleship? Let's find out.

Please stand for the reading/honoring of God's Word.

SCRIPTURE: Mark 8:34-9:1 CSB

Mark 8:34— Calling the crowd along with his disciples, he said to them, "If anyone wants to follow after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.

Mark 8:35— For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life because of me and the gospel will save it.

Mark 8:36— For what does it benefit someone to gain the whole world and yet lose his life?

Mark 8:37— What can anyone give in exchange for his life?

Mark 8:38— For whoever is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

Mark 9:1— Then he said to them, "Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God come in power."

These are the very words of God

PRAY:

*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;
all who follow his instructions have good insight.
His praise endures forever. (Psalm 111:10)*

EXEGESIS:

Mark 8:34— Calling the crowd along with his disciples, he said to them, "If anyone wants to follow after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me."

Big Picture of verse 34...

Imagination Jesus carrying His cross followed by all of His disciples carrying their crosses.

Remember the movie, 'The Passion?'

The picture is that dozens of people have been beaten, scourged, bloody and ashamed carrying their own crosses following right behind Jesus while He carries His.

So with that context...this is the first mention of a crowd around Jesus. *in this narrative*

This crowd shouldn't be a surprise, but we need to know that Jesus is now speaking to the Twelve and a crowd.

Jesus and the Twelve are still in Gentile territory—Caesarea Philippi—so these people are from a mixed background crowd racially and spiritually.

Jesus purposely calls the crowd, those who are on the sideline, those who are on the fence, to come closer so that they can hear His sermon.

Jesus is now going to define what it means to become a “follower” of Jesus.

Everyone is invited to accept Jesus’ conditions.

Last week Jesus spoke of the reality of salvation.

Today we see Jesus speak on the reality of discipleship.

If anyone wants to follow after me...

Notice that this is a conditional statement—‘IF’ meaning, it’s a choice.

If you choose to follow Jesus, these are the conditions from Jesus Himself.

We don’t get to follow Jesus based on our opinion of Jesus.

Just like an employee doesn’t walk into the CEO’s office and start bossing him around.

If you want to stay employed, you must follow the conditions that are set by the CEO.

So Jesus lays down three specific conditions. *in v. 34*

The first two are decisive acts; the third is a continuing relationship. *base ↓ w/ Jesus*

First decisive act: **Let him deny himself—**

I find it helpful to define what something means by first defining what it doesn't mean.

Jesus is not necessarily saying that you are to refrain from something—one or two things — that satisfies you.

Yes, that's a small part of ^{denying yourself} this, mostly if you are refraining from sin.

But, Jesus is giving us a much bigger picture here.

So let's get to what 'denying yourself' does mean:

KEYPOINT #2

Denying yourself is an ongoing daily decision to abandon your natural sinful desire to make yourself the center of your universe.

He doesn't ask the disciples to deny something to themselves—but to deny themselves and all their ambitions.

See the difference?

Let's dig deeper...

Denying yourself means "to have no association with" your old life.

Your old ambitions and dreams are now dead.

Why? Because your old life is dead.

cf. 2 Corinthians 5:17 CSB—Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and see, the new has come!

If you have repented for sin? Called on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ

Since you are a new creation, you no longer want to associate with who you used to be.

Jesus is telling us that we are to completely disown who we used to be.

We must be willing to break off our former way of life completely.

Denying yourself is the rejection that you are your own authority.

Denying yourself is the refusal to allow your self-interests to guide your life.

All that you used to love in the world must now be rejected. Why?

+ cf. **1 John 2:15 CSB**—Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. wow!

Jesus is saying, "I am now the center of your life."

The love of yourself and the love of the world has now been replaced with undivided love for Jesus.

+ cf. **Matthew 10:37 CSB**—The one who loves a father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; the one who loves a son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

Jesus 2nd place
God refuses to accept a minor role in the life of His disciples.

Jesus tells his disciples to follow the way he has chosen for them, not how they would choose for themselves.

Jesus is saying, *This is what I've created you for... a personal relationship with me so that you can fulfill my purposes and my plans for my Kingdom.*

Before the 12? the crowd can swallow that bitter pill, Jesus continues
The second decisive act ~~as a disciple is to...~~

+ **take up his cross**— v. 34

The cross is the heart of the gospel.

Bearing your cross is the central requirement of discipleship.

Unfortunately, this phrase—"bearing your cross" has been cheapened in our culture.

So let's start again by defining what 'taking up your cross' is not...

"Well, my boss is my cross to bear."

No, that's how you make a living.

The Word of God says that it doesn't matter what job you have; it is by the sweat of your brow. (Genesis 3:19)

"My marriage, my kids, my ^{Marthy} ~~bossy~~ mother-in-law are my crosses."

Strike two

No, that's called relational strife.

KEYPOINT: #3

Relational strife is not a cross from God, but a test from God.

God uses these people and events in your life to show you how hard your heart is.

God is showing you how unloving and impatient you are when pushed to your limit.

That may sound like bad news, but it's not. It's very good news.

Because God is fulfilling His amazing promises to you through these people and events by changing and sanctifying you...

So that you will resemble and reflect your Savior Jesus Christ.

~~Moving on now...~~

An ongoing illness or some type of handicap is also not a cross.

These are tragic things, but not crosses.

These things are the result of the Fall. (Genesis 3)

We live in a broken world, and these things are to be expected in our lives.

As a disciple we shall not be surprised when they happen to us.

Now let's move on to what "bearing your cross" truly is.

KEY POINT #4

Bearing your A cross comes from obeying the commands of Scripture, regardless of the cost.

Taking up your cross is going against everything the world offers. EVERYTHING!

Have you noticed that everything the world is selling is a lie?

And it's becoming more challenging to live with Biblical integrity. *in our culture*

Practical / Real

For example...everyone else may inflate their sales numbers—especially when it's at the end of the month and you have made your sales goal or quota...

But you're not— because you are a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Secondly

Taking up your cross is treating people with dignity because every person is made in the image of God.

Even though the boys at work are headed to the bar or the strip club on a Friday night...

You choose to honor your wife and children by going straight home, regardless of the mockery and scorn from others.

You may get passed up for a job promotion or a raise.

Why? Because you're a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Taking up your cross means that you embrace a lifestyle of servanthood when the world clamors for power.

Taking up your cross means extending yourself in difficult circumstances at ~~events.~~

When you hear someone you know railing on God, Jesus, or the Bible...you have a choice to speak up. in love

Speaking up is not the easiest thing to do. We have a lot to learn from Peter.

Even Peter, Jesus' right-hand man—the person whom Jesus said,

+ cf. **Matthew 16:18 CSB**—And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.

And then shortly after, Peter denies who Jesus even is, not one but three times.

+ cf. **Matthew 26:69 NLT**—Meanwhile, Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. A servant girl came over and said to him, "You were one of those with Jesus the Galilean."

+ cf. **Matthew 26:70 NLT**—But Peter denied it in front of everyone. "I don't know what you're talking about," he said.

+ cf. **Matthew 26:71 NLT**—Later, out by the gate, another servant girl noticed him and said to those standing around, "This man was with Jesus of Nazareth."

cf. **Matthew 26:72 NLT**— Again Peter denied it, this time with an oath. "I don't even know the man," he said.

cf. **Matthew 26:73 NLT**— A little later some of the other bystanders came over to Peter and said, "You must be one of them; we can tell by your Galilean accent."

cf. **Matthew 26:74 NLT**— Peter swore, "A curse on me if I'm lying—I don't know the man!" And immediately the rooster crowed.

KEYPOINT: 5

Discipleship is not perfection...but an increasing obedience to God's Word.

Note here that "bearing a cross" was not a Jewish expression.

This phrase or concept is not found in the OT or other in Jewish literature.

Everyone listening to Jesus' sermon that day, doesn't realize that he will carry His own cross and be crucified.

Jesus has only told the disciples that he will die—He hasn't told them how.

When Jesus said that you must take up a cross, the crowd probably gasped in horror.

They gasped because the Romans were perfecters of pain, and the Roman cross symbolizes all that pain.

The Roman cross was not a symbol of salvation like it is today, but in the first century, it signified torture, shame, and execution.

~~Bearing the cross~~ was reserved for the worst of criminals.

The Romans crucified people in public, many times along major walkways, as a reminder of what happens to those who defy Caesar's authority.

The Romans crucified as many as thirty thousand Jews during Jesus' lifetime.

So, Jesus' crowd knew precisely what He meant by this analogy.

Jesus' metaphor is clear, being a disciple—

KEYPOINT: 6

Discipleship means paying any price that Jesus chooses for you.

Back to verse 34.

Mark 8:34— Calling the crowd along with his disciples, he said to them, "If anyone wants to follow after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me."

Those are the two decisive acts from Jesus: 1) denying yourself 2) taking up your cross.

Now we come to the relational aspect of his command.

KEYPOINT: #7

Following Jesus is a relationship based on nonnegotiable obedience.

We as disciples don't define this relationship. w/ Jesus

Notice the conditional statement "if." Being a disciple is a choice of our will.

cf. **John 8:31 CSB**— If you continue in my word, you really are my disciples.

cf. **John 14:15 CSB**— If you love me, you will keep my commands.

+ cf. **John 14:23 CSB**—If anyone loves me, he will keep my word.

+ cf. **John 15:14 CSB**—You are my friends if you do what I command you.

What's the implication?

If you don't do these things, you're not a disciple.

+ **KEYPOINT:** #8

Obedience is the litmus test for discipleship.

+ cf. **1 John 2:3 NLT**—And we can be sure that we know him if we obey his commandments.

+ cf. **1 John 2:4 NLT**—If someone claims, "I know God," but doesn't obey God's commandments, that person is a liar and is not living in the truth.

~~Liar—in other words, a person doesn't know God regardless of what he says.~~

+ cf. **1 John 2:5 NLT**—But those who obey God's word truly show how completely they love him. That is how we know we are living in him.

This verse is an example of true conversion.

+ cf. **1 John 2:6 NLT**—Those who say they live in God should live their lives as Jesus did.

Disciples look like and act like their Disciplemaker.

A son or daughter of God looks like their Father.

+ **Mark 8:35**—For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life because of me and the gospel will save it.

Two things:

1. This 'life' refers to the physical life of the body. It focuses on your personal safety and success.
2. This 'life' is the kind of life you want to live on earth.

Verse 35 is the reality of discipleship in one sentence.

This is life's great paradox, isn't it?

This is the beautiful disaster called the Christian life.

KEYPOINT:

The Christian life is a throwaway life.

Every moment that we live without rejection, affliction, and death is called God's grace.

A life without suffering is not normal.

It certainly isn't Biblical.

cf. **Philippians 3:7 NLT**— I once thought these things were valuable, but now I consider them worthless because of what Christ has done.

cf. **Philippians 3:8 NLT**— Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ.

Back to verse 36.

Mark 8:36— For what does it benefit someone to gain the whole world and yet lose his life?

Jesus is now asking a rhetorical question.

Because no one can gain the whole world.

Verse 36 means more than just dying.

It means that you will lose your true life—eternal life.



Mark 8:37— *What can anyone give in exchange for his life?*

Jesus is now giving us a lesson in spiritual economics.

There is quick profit in gaining the whole world, But if that profit happens at the cost of our souls, there is no profit at all.

Ultimately, we are spiritually bankrupt.

Have you ever considered how valuable your soul truly is?

~~How do we know for sure?~~

Your soul is so valuable that Almighty God became a man for the sole purpose of dying to save your soul.

~~Don't guess. Go to the source of truth.~~

~~What does Scripture say?~~

Scripture says that our souls are worth the death of God in the second person of the Trinity—Jesus Christ.

The actual value of souls was demonstrated by how much Jesus was willing to pay.



Mark 8:38— *For whoever is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."*

+ **KEYPOINT:** 10

Ashamed: The embarrassment or remorse of following Jesus.

Throughout Scripture, this phrase, "put to shame" is to stand before God in judgment.

The person who will not accept the demands of discipleship proves that he is ashamed of Christ.

Ashamed of what? '**My words.**'—The Gospel message.

adulterous and sinful generation—J. 38

Adultery is a very personal and intimate sin.

It is one of the worst things that could ever happen to a spouse, your marriage and children.

You made a vow to your spouse to be emotionally and sexually faithful.

And before you made a vow to your spouse, God has made a similar vow to you.

Jesus is referring to the spiritual unfaithfulness of the Israelite's.

Jesus repeats this OT language referring to Israel's infidelity, the hardness of heart, and spiritual adultery.

+ cf. **Hosea 2:2 CSB**— Rebuke your mother; rebuke her.

For she is not my wife, and I am not her husband.

Let her remove the promiscuous look from her face and her adultery from between her breasts.

Did you know that God divorced Israel? Ah, we'll get to that in more detail in Mark 10.

Back to

Mark 8:38— For whoever is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

'sinful' generation—The word 'sinful' covers more than adultery and unfaithfulness. *Broader term*

Jesus is defining for us what kind of people He's talking to.

It refers to their moral state—wicked and godless people.

The Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

② Jesus will come *with* the glory of his Father.

① Jesus is coming back very soon.

③ He's coming back for His Bride—His true Church.

He's also coming back a second time to judge those who refused His grace the first time around.

The Word of God says that when Jesus comes back, his voice will sound like a trumpet.

What's a trumpet sound like? Loud.

Jesus will be dressed in a white robe with a gold sash wrapped around His chest.

His hair white as snow, His eyes like fire, His feet like bronze.

A double edge sword came from His mouth, His face shining like the sun.

He's going to be tatted up, and that robe will be dipped in blood. (Revelation 1; 19)

Now, does that sound like the Jesus that you know?

Is that the sissified Americanized Jesus that the social and prosperity guys are selling?

Jesus will be ushered in by an army of angels.

Angels emphasize the dignity and power of the returning Lord.

These angels emphasize Jesus' holiness and power.

At the second coming, the Messiah will be ashamed of the resurrected believers who, in this adulterous and sinful generation, are ashamed of Him.

Disciple
there is a loss of rewards in Heaven w/ all this.

Mark 9:1— Then he said to them, "Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God come in power."

This verse is one of the most puzzling ~~statements~~ *verses* in the Gospels.

With these words, Jesus uttered a prophecy, with a deadline.

And Jesus says that this prophecy is going to happen within the lifetimes of some of the disciples standing there.

Notice that Jesus didn't say, "Some standing here will not taste death until I return."

This is important because if we read this verse incorrectly, we'll get confused and our theology starts to get all wonky.

If we read into this verse *Jesus' Second Coming* then we have a problem.

Because if that's what Jesus meant— then He's a liar.

Obviously, the Second Coming hasn't happened yet.

The best way to look at verse 9:1 is from the whole of Scripture.

Scripture interprets Scripture.

Starting in Genesis 1:1, God uses time to reveal His truths.

Jesus also taught this way in one of his parables...

As one sees *the seed develop into a stalk, head, and full kernel.* MK 4:28

The Kingdom of God comes bit by bit and is slowly revealed as a hidden mystery.

In other words, some of Jesus' disciples will see the fulfillment of this prophecy in stages.

Jesus is not referring to a single event, but a series of events.

Think about what is getting ready to happen as we read the Gospel of Mark.

There are six significant events that all happen in the lifetime of these disciples:

Jesus' transfiguration, death, resurrection, and ascension, Pentecost, and the destruction of the temple.

In each one of these events, the Kingdom of God and His power are undeniable.

PREACH:

Let me give you a picture/characteristics of who Jesus says a disciple is:

1. A disciple is a follower.

A disciple walks the same road as Jesus.

cf. **1 Peter 2:21 CSB**— For you were called to this, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. *Are you a follower of Jesus?*

2. A disciple is a learner.

A disciple has a growing hunger to learn the Word of God and apply it to his life.

cf. **Psalm 119:140 CSB**— Your word is completely pure, and your servant loves it. *Are you a learner of the word?*

3. A disciple embraces discipline.

cf. **Hebrews 12:7 CSB**— Endure suffering as discipline: God is dealing with you as sons. For what son is there that a father does not discipline?

cf. **Hebrews 12:8 CSB**— But if you are without discipline—which all receive—then you are illegitimate children and not sons.

Make a note of this verse and ask the Holy Spirit to teach you what it means.

cf. **Hebrews 12:9 CSB**— Furthermore, we had human fathers discipline us, and we respected them. Shouldn't we submit even more to the Father of spirits and live?

cf. **Hebrews 12:10 CSB**— For they disciplined us for a short time based on what seemed good to them, but he does it for our benefit, so that we can share his holiness.

+ cf. **Hebrews 12:11 CSB**— No discipline seems enjoyable at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. *- Do you embrace discipline?*

+ **4. A disciple is involved in community.**
Disciples of Jesus do not operate in isolation.

The entire Bible proves this point. From Genesis 2:18, where we learn that it's not good for man to be alone to where God saves the people of Israel in the book of Exodus, to Jesus being surrounded by the Twelve, to the book of Acts.

God designed you to be in community, because He himself is always in community. The very nature of God is in community—perfect harmony between God the Father, God the Son in Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. *- Are you involved - Committed to God's people?*

- + 5. A disciple denies himself.
- 6. A disciple bears his cross.

~~One last thought on this. These two things come down to your priorities.~~

- How are you doing or denying yourself? bearing your cross?

+ **7. A disciple is a disciple-maker.**

There is no greater joy than to share Jesus with someone and to teach and train in the Word of God—in some or fashion. *- Are you excited about pouring your life into others?*

PRAYER ROOM:

PRAY:

*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;
all who follow his instructions have good insight.
His praise endures forever. (Psalm 111:10)*

** Lord's Supper **

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