

## To Be a Disciple

Mark 8:34-38

6/30/04

### Intro

As we come to Mark chapter 8, we are coming towards to last part of Christ's ministry during His time on the earth. He is beginning now to prepare His disciples for His death and resurrection.

Mark wrote that Jesus told the disciples that He would be killed and after three days rise again. And, Mark wrote, "He was stating the matter plainly."

Peter in particular didn't approve – and was soundly rebuked for it. That was the occasion that Jesus used to teach them what it meant to truly be His disciple.

*The lessons we will learn today are some of the most important insights we can gain; for how we live our lives depends on learning these important lessons*

### I. We Must Deny Ourselves

#### A. Giving up our selfish desires

- The reason Jesus addresses this issue is because Peter rebuked Him for saying He would be killed and rise again.
- Jesus said that he had man's interests ahead of God's; **selfishness, in other words.**

- Peter had just said that Jesus was the Messiah, but they thought of Messiah as the son of David, the great warrior king who conquered all his enemies.
- Our problem is that selfishness is a basic part of man and must be conquered.

**Illus – two boys were hungry for breakfast and started fighting over who would get the first pancakes...**

#### B. We are not our own

- Many people like to think of themselves as being their own man. "No one tells me what to do!"
- But if we want to come after Jesus, we must know that we are not our own.

**1 Corinthians 6:19b-20a, "you are not your own; for you have been bought with a price."**

- That means that He has Lordship of our lives

#### C. What should we deny?

- There are desires, or drives, of the flesh; the more our lives are led by these desires, the more base we are.

- The more we deny these base desires and allow God to have control in our lives, the more righteous we live.

**1 Corinthians 6:12, “All things are lawful for me, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be mastered by anything.”**

**Illus – An animal is led by its drives within – we should be much higher than that.**

**Illus – When you don’t feel like being nice, be nice anyway.**

- Deny self- trust.
- Deny self-sufficiency.
- Deny self-confidence.
- Deny self-pride.

## II. We Must Take Up Your Cross

A. What it doesn’t mean

- Carrying a heavy burden or hardship.
- I guess that’s a cross I’ll have to bear.”

**Illus – meaning some unchosen burden like a difficult neighbor, or a mother-in-law, etc.**

**Matthew 11:28-30, “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and**

**humble in heart, and you will find rest for your soul. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”**

B. Jesus took up His cross willingly

**Illus – in the movie “the Passion of the Christ,” this is seen beautifully when Jesus crawls up onto the cross in His own power.**

- That’s the point Jesus makes – we must choose to take up our cross.
- Some people believe that if God can do much with little, then they will just give God a little of their hearts.

**John 10:17-18, "For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again. "No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father."**

C. How do we take up our cross?

**The answer is found in verse 35...**

- Whoever wished to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake (and the gospel’s) will find it.
- By this Jesus is saying that there are two attitudes toward life:

- **Save your life now** - hoard it, cling to it, and in every situation see “what’s in it for me.” “Look out for #1.”
- **Lose your life now** – give yourself away, consider others more important than yourself, do what God wants you to do.

- Jesus said the results are predictable... If you save your life you will lose it.
  - **“You will find that you have everything you want, but you will not want anything you have.”**
  - Your life will slip through your fingers
  - You will be dissatisfied, hollow and empty

**Illus** – If you asked someone who had everything if they were happy, they might say yes, until you pressed him, **“Will you go to your grave satisfied that your life was spent well?”**

- **If you lose your life you will save it.**
  - You will find contentment in the soul, your life can be rich and satisfying.

**Luke 12:15, “for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions.”**

**2 Corinthians 12:15, “And I will very gladly spend and be spent for your souls;”**

### **III. We Must Follow Jesus**

#### A. Follow Him to the cross

- The way of the cross is the way of life.
- We died when Christ died.
- **But we also lived when Christ lived.**

**Galatians 2:20, "I have been crucified with Christ; and 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 up for me."**

**Romans 6:3-4, “Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.”**

#### B. Follow the way He lived

- He lived His life before the Father.
- We see in His character the heart of God.
- He taught a radical way that showed us life.

**Matthew 5:44-45, "But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven;”**

### Conclusion

**Jesus is offering life and desires that we would choose willingly to follow after Him by these simple words, “deny yourself, take up your cross and follow me.”**

C.S. Lewis summarized it well in Mere Christianity.

God is going to invade this earth in force. But what is the good of saying you are on His side then, when you see the whole natural universe melting away like a dream, and something else -- something it never entered your head to conceive -- comes crashing in; something so beautiful to some of us, and so terrible to others, that none of us will have any choice left? For this time it will be God without disguise; something so overwhelming that it will strike either irresistible love or irresistible horror into every creature. It will be too late then to choose your side. There is no use saying you choose to lie down when it has become impossible to stand up. That will not be the time for choosing; it will be the time when we discover which side we have really chosen, whether we realized it before or not. Now, today, this moment, is our chance to choose the right side. God is holding back, to give us that chance. It will not last forever. We must take it or leave it.