
a *Grace Notes* course

The Gospel of Mark

an expositional Bible study

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Lesson 8

Mark 8:1-38

Grace Notes

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The Gospel of Mark

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Instructions for Completing the Lessons

There are sixteen (16) lessons in the MARK course curriculum, one lesson for each chapter.. There will be questions in the Quiz for each lesson on the topics that are named here.

Begin each study session with prayer. It is the Holy Spirit who makes spiritual things discernable to Christians, so it is essential to be in fellowship with the Lord during Bible study.

Instructions

Read the introduction to the study of Mark.

Study the Mark chapter for this lesson, by reading the verses and studying the notes. Be sure to read any other Bible passages that are called out in the notes.

Before taking the Quiz, **Review** all of the notes in the Mark lesson.

Go to the Quiz page and follow the instructions to complete all the questions on the quiz. The quiz is "open book". You may refer to all the notes and to the Bible when you take the test. But you should not get help from another person.

When you have completed the Quiz, be sure to SAVE your file. If your quiz file is lost, and that can happen at Grace Notes as well, you will want to be able to reproduce your work.

To send the Quiz back to Grace Notes, follow the instructions on the Quiz page.

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Chapter 8

The global food problem illustrates the need for this kind of grass roots participation in the work of the Lord. According to some experts, future menus of the world rest largely in the hands of smalltime farmers. There are about 100 million of them, and they control 80 percent of the world's potential crop output. But these growers lack incentives to produce. By taking advantage of technical assistance, they could double or triple their yields each year. Actually, they are capable of making the most significant long-term contribution to the international food crisis. Whether or not these small farmers can be motivated is the big question. Many are afraid of change and don't understand the importance of their individual efforts.

In our text the Lord is going to provide food for the four thousand but more important, he is going to provide himself.

Jesus is still in the largely Gentile area of Decapolis. The people who will be the recipients of this miracle were both Jews and Gentiles. Earlier, in Mark chapter six, where we saw the feeding of the 5,000 the crowd was exclusively Jewish.

Here again we see Jesus' shifting from those who would not receive him to those who would. We see our Lord seeking out those who are positive to His truth - Just as he does today.

Augustine, commenting on the feeding of the 4,000 noted that the first feeding of the 5,000 gave nourishment to Israel and this feeding gave nourishment to the Gentiles.

The number present, 4,000, has often been compared to the Gentiles from the four corners of the world who will in the Church Age come to know Christ as their savior.

Mark 8:1,2

In those days again, when there was a great multitude and they had nothing to eat, He called His disciples and said to them, I feel compassion for the multitude because they

have remained with Me now three days, and have nothing to eat.

We really do not begin at the beginning. We begin at three days into this time of intensive teaching.

After hearing that Jesus was in the area, the people of Decapolis turned out to seek Him. And Jesus gave them what they needed - His Word.

When they came they had brought provisions but now, three days into this Bible conference in the wilderness, they had eaten their food and were facing a problem, hunger.

In the early miracle of feeding the 5,000, the disciples were the ones who were identifying the problem and trying to come up with the solution.

They had by this time learned a lesson, let the Lord decide what the real problems are and let the Lord determine the real solution.

Notice: It is the Lord who says I feel compassion for the multitude because they have remained with Me now three days, and have nothing to eat.

A few things to note about this statement:

1. Again we see the Lord's compassion. Not only an emotional feeling of pity, but the desire to do something about the problem.
2. His compassion came about (passive voice) as a result of the people remaining with him for three days and learning the Word of God. But because they valued the Word above even food they now have a practical problem.

This is an illustration of:

Matthew 4:4 Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

3. Because they put the Word first, the primary priority of their lives, they ended up with a practical problem.

Most Christians get this backwards, they take care of the practical problems themselves, never living the Christ Dependent Life, and then they end up with a spiritual problem.

Remember that Jesus' compassion and his willingness and ability to help in a time of practical need came as a result of their endurance in His Word.

Mark Lesson 8

4. These people did not recognize their lack of food as a problem. Not one came to him and complained or suggested they send out for pizza - but he knew of their problem, their practical problem, before they even recognized the problem.

Principle: Go through life putting the Word first and the Lord will see your problems and take care of the practical problems of life.

Matthew 6:33 But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you.

Mark 8:3

Jesus proposes a human solution and shows the disciples the inadequacy of it:

And if I send them away hungry to their home, they will faint on the way; and some of them have come from distance.

Now Jesus is talking about physical food, but the application is to spiritual food:

If Jesus were to send us away, we would faint.

If we were to go away we would faint.

FAINT is the fut, pass, ind of EKLUMAI " Used only three times other than this reference.

Future tense means in Greek grammar that this is a definite outcome of the situation, the future in the Greek looks at the present events in light of absolute outcome. Time futures are expressed in other ways (aorist, subjunctives).

1. Galatians 6:9 we are to not be weary in following the plan of God because we might faint.
2. In Hebrews 12:5 we are not to faint at discipline or rebuke from God.
3. To faint is the opposite of endurance. And endurance is only to be found in our relationship to Christ:

Hebrews 12:3 For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you may not grow weary and lose heart.

From our passage in Mark we can see that the Lord never sends us away. When we faint, when we grow weary, it is because we have left Him, we have not endured.

And our endurance can only come from considering, knowing, the one who has endured so much for our sakes, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Also there is the statement that many of them have come from afar.

We have come a long way in our relationship with Jesus Christ, don't allow yourself to go away now, don't become weary and faint.

We are constantly at the crossroads of looking at Christ and His Word and then looking at the practical problems that invade our lives.

What we need to do is examine how far the Lord has brought us. How he has provided and how he has conformed us to his image.

Mark 8:4

The disciples, in the feeding of the 5,000, tried to come up with a human solution; they now realize that the solution is in Christ:

And His disciples answered Him, Where will anyone be able to find enough to satisfy these men with bread here in this desolate place?

This is a great conclusion, these guys are starting to think.

When we are in a helpless situation we are poised at the brink of great spiritual advance. We might come to helplessness in many ways.

And there we are helpless - but not hopeless.

Hebrew 4:16 Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need.

There is the HOPE which is a great confidence, in drawing near to the grace of God in Jesus Christ.

But that is one avenue we can take. We can also allow the helpless situations in life to draw us away from Christ and into despair and depression.

Choice: The dependence on Christ or the Depression of Despair.

Christ alone can solve hopeless problems. He is the only one who has the lasting solution.

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Mark 8:5

And He was asking them, How many loaves do you have? And they said, Seven.

The best man could come up with was seven loaves of bread and, as we see later, a few small dried fish.

And that is not going to feed 4000 people. That is inadequate and by way of application, whatever man comes up with to solve the problems you face will be inadequate.

A few will eat of what man provides, but many will starve.

Mark 8:6

But Jesus is going to take that which is inadequate and make it more than adequate to meet the need:

And He directed the multitude to sit down on the ground; and taking the seven loaves, He gave thanks and broke them, and started giving them to His disciples to serve to them, and they served them to the multitude.

Principle: Jesus takes the inadequate, he takes the insignificant, and makes it count for something.

The bread of life takes the bread of man and makes it matter.

In John 6:35 we are given the meaning of this provision:

Jesus said to them, I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall not hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.

The analytical mind might ask where did the bread come from? It came from the person of Christ himself - he is the bread of life and made the insignificant seven loaves into a feast more than sufficient for the 4000.

Principles:

1. All of us are inadequate and insufficient. And the things that we might have are inadequate and insufficient.

We realize this as a result of understanding our depravity but also when we just look at ourselves - even apart from a perfect God - we aren't much, and if we think we are, we stand in arrogance rather than humility.

2. But when we receive Him, the bread of life, and His Word which is a spiritual manna or bread, that divine power in His person and Word makes us, and what we have, and even what we do, more than adequate.

An analogy by way of application:

I want to draw out an application, but you have to imagine that you are a loaf. But for now, think of yourself as a loaf, inadequate, unable to provide, insignificant and insufficient. What does Jesus do with the loaves:

He took the seven loaves: If we were to see this personified, we would see that we have to be taken by Christ. We have free-will and we need to use our free will to give ourselves to Christ.

This is not something that is done once as is Salvation. Salvation secures our place in eternity while this giving of self to Christ advances us in the Christ Centered Life.

It is a daily giving of ourselves, as loaves, to Christ. Sensing our inadequacies and our insufficiencies.

Once the Lord has the loaves, he prays. As he also prays for us. He is our mediator. He stands before the Father and prays on our behalf.

Those intercessory prayers of Christ on our behalf are always perfect, always for exactly what we need even when we do not see or know what we need.

Then he broke the bread: KLAU " used for the breaking of bread here and at the Lord's Supper.

Means to break with the hands not using a knife.

The analogy here is to our brokenness. We are broken away from self and to the Lord. In doing so he uses his hands never a knife.

Brokenness is not merely a mental agreement with the doctrine of depravity. We see ourselves as depraved whenever we look to God who is perfect. But do we see ourselves as depraved when we look at others?

That is the difference. The believer who is broken before Christ will have no illusions about himself even when he looks at others.

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For each of us it takes some different problem to lay us broken before the Lord:

PAUL: A thorn in the flesh

PETER: Denying Christ three times

DAVID: The rebellion of his son Absalom and Absalom's death

It will be different but it must be there. Just like an unbroken, wild horse, we are no good until we are under the Master's control.

Then he gave the loaves to his disciples in order that they might serve and they did serve the crowd.

Why do we give ourselves to Christ? Why does he break us to the point of total dependency on Him?

So that we might serve -

But an interesting note: In order that they "might serve." The subjunctive verb sees this as only a potential apart from your decision to serve Jesus Christ.

Just as you have to be willing to give yourself daily to Christ, you have to be willing to serve, willing to let Christ make you His servant for His people.

I have a friend, in doctrine, for over twenty years and recently he told me that every day upon rising he prays, Lord use me today, let me be a servant. And God is doing just that -

Mark 8:7

They also had a few small fish; and after He had blessed them, He ordered these to be served as well.

The bread would have been sufficient, but here is a provision beyond expectation. Fish, protein, to prepare the people for their return home.

Mark 8:8

And they ate and were satisfied; and they picked up seven large baskets full of what was left over of the broken pieces.

Christ always provides more than enough, his grace, his blessings are never reduced for lack.

Mark 8:9

And about four thousand were there; and He sent them away.

Now they were ready to go home, they were full, there was no need. There was no lack.

Will we give ourselves to Christ, let him break us, let him supply our need and our lack, and then serve him?

Cicero said: It is the peculiar quality of a fool to perceive faults in others and to forget his own.

In our study of the Lord's earthly ministry, we have seen the companions and we have seen the critics. And the critics refuse to see their faults and attribute great fault to the Lord of Glory, the Servant of God.

Jesus Christ and his disciples have crossed over the Sea of Galilee, leaving behind the now well fed four thousand Gentile and Jewish followers who had been taught by the Lord for three days, and come again to the Jews of Galilee.

In marked contrast to the positive volition shown by the 4000 who listened to the truth Jesus taught, we have the religious leaders who are ready to criticize the Lord at every opportunity.

Mark 8:10,11

And immediately He entered the boat with His disciples and came to the district of Dalmanutha.

And the Pharisees came out and began to argue with Him, seeking from Him a sign from heaven, to test Him.

The Religious leaders of Israel had taken every opportunity to be critical of Jesus Christ:

1. They criticized him for associating with the down-and-out crowd, tax collectors and prostitutes (Mark 2:16)
2. They accused him of breaking the Old Testament Law (Mark 2:24)
3. They demanded he observe their religious traditions (Mark 2:18 and Mark 7:1-5)
4. And they even accused him of being in league with Satan (Mark 3:22)

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They tried to trap him into healing on the Sabbath, which he did, and now they try to test him.

Mark brings us to the bottom line of this confrontation. The Pharisees have been arguing with Jesus and in the midst of the argument they demand that he give them a sign.

The word ARGUE is SUZEITEW which is used in the Gospels and Acts to show doubt or rejection that leads to confrontation and argument.

It shows that it is a result of something else and that that something else is their rejection:

These religious leaders already had rejected the truth Jesus taught and now were debating, arguing with Him.

A few observations on this type of argumentation:

1. They had already rejected the person, work, and words of Jesus Christ.
2. They could have just walked away, ignoring Jesus, but they did not.
3. In order to vindicate their own position, they continued to argue, attack, and criticize.
4. When you are confident about something there is no need to argue the point. You are secure in your position.
5. The insecurity of the Pharisees, however, would not let it go. They followed Jesus and attacked him in order to build themselves up.

Principle: When you put others down, you do so to put yourself up. And when you are looking down at people, you can not look up into the face of God.

But now they go from argument to demands. "Give us a sign from heaven."

And we are even told that this is not a sincere request but a test, demanded to test Jesus Christ.

A few things to note about the demand for a sign:

1. In the Jewish tradition, a sign would guarantee the truthfulness of a statement. Prophetic statements that were to be fulfilled at a much future time were accompanied by a sign to verify the prophecy.
2. The sign was primarily an evidence of trustworthiness rather than of power. The

miracles of Christ were an abundant evidence of Power from God but the Pharisees wanted a sign to verify what Jesus was saying. Mark never refers to the Miracles as signs, but as manifestations of the authority and power of God in Jesus Christ.

3. They want to know that God is with Jesus Christ, but they have already rejected his teaching.

4. Once you have rejected the Word of the Lord, any sign, even one hitting you right in the face, will also be rejected.

5. On the other hand, once you have received the Word, you will see the signs from God in everything.

Romans 1:20 refers to the evidence of God that we see all around us:

For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made -

The sunsets, the ebb and flow of the oceans, the cycle of life, the courses of the stars, all are signs in which we who believe see the work of a sovereign and omnipotent God.

But reject the truth, and you are blinded to the greatness and the vastness of God your creator.

6. But it is not only the unbeliever who seeks a sign to verify the truth rather than letting the truth verify the sign.

Read John 20:24-29 Thomas was not with the disciples at the time of Jesus' first resurrection appearance.

He doubted, he wanted proof, and the Lord in his compassion was willing to give it.

John 20:28 Thomas never took him up on the proof. Instead he obeyed the Word of Christ. At the command "be not unbelieving but believing," Thomas believed.

John 20:29 What is the greater blessing: To not see a sign and yet believe.

Mark 8:12

Jesus' response to that type of rejection is very straightforward:

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And sighing deeply in His spirit, He said, Why does this generation seek for a sign? Truly I say to you, no sign shall be given to this generation.

The word for sighing deeply is similar to the emotional response we saw on the part of the Lord in Mark 7:34 but here, and only here, we have the prefix ANA which suggests a very deep sigh.

You see, instead of a sign they got a sigh. And that was a sigh of emotional disturbance in the humanity of Christ because of the evil, hardness of these Pharisees.

The refusal to give them a sign is a paraphrase of Psalms 95:10-11 in which rest is refused to the ones who reject the truth.

Just as Moses had to deal with the perverseness and unbelief of his generation, Jesus now deals with the same rejection in His generation.

The refusal of a sign has both historical and theological implications:

1. Historically, the demand for a sign expressed a desire to judge Jesus according to scribal tradition rather than the absolute standard of God's word.
2. Theologically, the demand for a sign was a demand for absolute proof that God was working in Jesus' ministry which eliminates the faith factor. Theologically, a sign would preclude a personal decision in response to the revealed Word of God

But isn't that exactly what rejection of truth is all about, if you reject truth, God's truth, you never have to come to a point of personal decision.

But rejection of truth can take a turn other than trying to establish a false standard for belief, and as we shift from the Pharisees to the Disciples, we see another way truth is rejected.

Mark 8:13,14

Jesus leaves the western shore of the sea of Galilee and in crossing over to the eastern shore he is alone with his disciples.

And leaving them, He again embarked and went away to the other side. And they had forgotten to take bread; and did not have more than one loaf in the boat with them.

Here we are presented with a small problem. Really small. In the abrupt departure away from the Pharisees, the disciples did not bring sufficient provisions for the journey across the lake. They had only one loaf of bread with them.

Mark 8:15

Now Jesus is going to use what has just happened with the Pharisees to teach his disciples a principle.

And He was giving orders to them, saying, Watch out! Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.

The metaphor of leaven turns on the ability of a small amount of yeast to mix with its own fermentation allowing bread to rise.

In both the Jewish and Greek cultures, leaven was a metaphor for corruption.

In the NEW TESTAMENT it refers to corruption in the areas of exploitation, human viewpoint, Religion, legalism, and licentiousness. It at all times refers to evil.

The leaven of the Pharisees was just demonstrated by their religious ritual approach to truth that demanded a sign.

The leaven of Herod looks back to Herod's involvement with the murder of John the Baptist and sees the problem of the exploitation of the innocent.

But what we need to see is that the Lord was giving them a warning.

BLEPW be on the lookout for evil:

And what do they do, they fall right into evil.

Mark 8:16

All they heard was LEAVEN, and they thought of bread:

And they began to exchange words with one another regarding the fact that they had no bread.

Four Failures on the part of the Disciples:

1. They failed to understand the figure of speech
2. They failed to listen to all of what was said, hearing only the word leaven

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3. They mis-applied what was said. In subjectivity they thought they were being braced for the lack of bread

4. Then they argued among themselves as to who was at fault for forgetting the bread

This is a type of rejection of the word of Christ:

While not rejecting Christ, they rejected His word by being distracted to an issue that was unimportant.

Mark 8:17,18

Now notice the Lord's response:

And Jesus, aware of this, said to them, "Why do you discuss the fact that you have no bread? Do you not yet see or understand? Do you have a hardened heart?"

Then, to describe their condition of a hardened heart, he quotes from Ezekiel 12:2.

Having eyes, do you not see? And having ears, do you not hear?

But there is a difference as he quotes from Ezekiel. In Ezekiel the one who did not see nor hear were called rebellious.

The disciples are not rebellious, only distracted.

Mark 8:19,20

The Lord then teaches them using his previous miracles as a basis for revealing truth:

Do you not remember when I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces you picked up? They said to Him, Twelve. And when I broke the seven for the four thousand, how many large baskets full of broken pieces did you pick up? And they said to Him, Seven.

Some commentators get very involved with the numbers game, trying to find allegories for the twelve small baskets and the seven large baskets, but in doing so they miss two beautiful points:

1. If Jesus would take loaves of bread and multiply them for the crowds, would he not do the same and even more for the disciples who were close to him? They had one loaf, he could make it into an abundance of bread.

In the same way we need to look around, see what our Lord has provided for those who do not even know Him. The beauty of creation, the freedom of a nation, the love of family and friends - will he not do even more for YOU who are his friends?

2. The disciples, in getting involved with the lack of bread were distracted from their Lord and what he was saying.

They put their eyes on the one small loaf of bread and in doing so took their eyes off the one is the very bread of life.

If you have believed in Christ as your Savior, if you have decided to seek His best, if you have the attitude of a servant that he first embraced for us, then you are just like the disciples, alone in a boat in the middle of the sea, maybe with only one loaf of bread to your name, but you have it all - you are with the Lord, the bread of life.

But there is one more contrast I want you to see:

Look back to verse 13: What did Jesus do at the rejection by the Pharisees?

And leaving them - He left them, he got in a boat and sailed away.

But now what does he do at the rejection of His truth by his disciples as they are distracted?

He teaches them more truth and focuses their attention on to Him. He ministers to them.

Principle:

1. The Pharisees rejected the person of Christ. They refused to believe He was given the power and the authority of God. They rejected him as the Messiah and refused to believe he was the God-man.
2. In that rejection, there is nothing else to say. Jesus abruptly leaves them.
3. The disciples also rejected, but their rejection was a result of distraction, they did not listen, they did not understand, they got involved with the small stuff of life.
4. Jesus did not leave the disciples. You say he couldn't, he was in a boat in the middle of the lake. But my Lord can walk on water, he could have left.

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But he stayed and ministered to them more truth so they would not be distracted away from Him.

5. In correcting their distraction, he first rebuked them, telling them they were hard of heart, that they did not understand, that they were not seeing, hearing, or even remembering.

The rebuke revealed the problem. They were ready to think the problem was lack of bread, a side issue, small stuff.

Oh, how we like to get involved with the small stuff and all of a sudden our Christian lives are focused on issues that are not issues at all.

We need the rebuke to get us to look at the real problem. And the problem was on the inside, on their unwillingness to begin to see, hear, think, understand the Words of truth.

6. Then he called them to remember, remember what was being taught when he multiplied the loaves among 5,000 and then 4,000 - Remember that Jesus Christ is the solution to every problem, and they were with Him.

Application: There will be times that we will not see and will not hear, and there will be truth that is taught that we will not understand, but remember who Jesus Christ is and remember that you are in the boat with Him.

Don't be distracted by unimportant issues and don't be as the Pharisees, who are a picture of the world, rejecting the very person of Christ.

Mark 8:21

Demonstrates the loving concern that Christ has for us in that his desire is that we do understand.

He kept on saying to them, Do you not yet understand?

And I believe that one by one as the Lord repeated this question, the disciples raised their heads and nodded, yes, I now understand.

Do we understand that we are with our Savior and nothing else really matters?

In the Gospel of John, the disciples asked Jesus about a man who was born blind. Why, they asked was this man born this way? Was it a punishment for some sin on his part or on the part of his parents? Jesus' answer came very quickly,

not because of sin was this man born blind, but That the works of God should be made manifest in him.

In our chapter, Mark is serving up for his readers a fantastic contrast. First, we examined the feeding of the 4000 who came and stayed with Jesus to be taught the Word. Then, we saw how the Pharisees opposed our Lord, doubting Him and testing Him at every turn and how even the disciples were so often so easily distracted from the truth.

Soon we will see the disciples, specifically Peter finally come to grips with who this Jesus of Nazareth is, that he is the Messiah, the anointed one, the promised Savior.

But just prior to that we have a miracle that establishes once and for all, for all who wish to see the truth, that Jesus is the one who was promised by God to take away the sins of the world.

It is as a result of this brief miracle that there can be no doubt that Jesus is the Messiah and any doubt on the part of the disciples will soon be turned to confidence.

Mark 8:22

And they came to Bethsaida. And they brought a blind man to Him, and entreated Him to touch him.

REMEMBER WHAT Jesus had just said to his disciples as they crossed the Sea of Galilee.

Verse 18. They had taken Jesus' warning about the leaven of the Pharisees as a rebuke that they had forgotten to bring bread. To this Jesus replied:

Having eyes, do you not see? And having ears, do you not hear?

Back in Mark 7:31-37 the disciples had already witnessed the Lord restoring hearing to a man who was deaf. Now they will see the Lord restore sight to a man who was blind.

Any of the healing miracles not only demonstrate Jesus' compassion but also manifest or reveal even a greater work of God.

Like the disciples we may have sight but we do not always see, and we may have hearing but we do not always hear.

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But now, in Bethsaida, there is one who is physically blind and the Lord will restore his sight and the disciples and the readers of this Gospel, even today, will see that the touch of Jesus is what we need to spiritually see.

Read Isaiah 42

Blindness: Figurative and Spiritual:

Since the earliest written Scriptures, blindness has had figurative meaning. 1500 years before the time of Christ, Moses wrote of a blindness not of the eyes but of the soul when he said a bribe can blind the eyes of the wise (Deuteronomy 16:19)

Prophetically: The work of the Messiah has been related to bring sight to the blind. Both literal sight and spiritual sight.

Isa. 42:1: This is a prophecy of Jesus Christ

Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen one in whom My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations.

In Isaiah 42:16-20 we have mention of those who are blind and an interplay between spiritual blindness and literal sight. In verse 16 we have the work of the Messiah, Jesus Christ:

And I will lead the blind by a way they do not know, In paths they do not know I will guide them. I will make darkness into light before them And rugged places into plains.

This is the Lord doing what we are unable to do for ourselves:

The blind are helpless, the Scriptures even indicate that they need a guide (Romans 2:19).

We have three works mentioned here:

1. The unknown way and the unknown path represent deliverance. The Lord delivers us by his way and by his path.

In John 14:6 Jesus declared: **I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.**

2. The dark space (singular) is the present state of misery of sinful man apart from Christ. Christ, as the light of the world, lights up this dark space.

John 1:4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

3. The crooked things made straight are the dangers that threaten the believer. Jesus Christ makes life straight for the believer by making life a matter of simple priorities:

Matthew 6:33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

Now note the last part of Isa. 42:16:

These are the things I will do, And I will not leave them undone.

We are as the blind, unable to do for ourselves and must rely totally upon the work of Christ.

The great work of Christ brings deliverance to the ones trusting in him but it will also bring shame to the ones who have trusted in idols.

Isaiah 42:17, They shall be turned back and be utterly put to shame, Who trust in idols, Who say to molten images, You are our gods.

Remember: An idol may be something very legitimate that is put as a priority over Jesus Christ, his person and his work.

Now, a contradiction to human viewpoint:

Isa. 42:18, Hear, you deaf! And look, you blind, that you may see.

How can the deaf hear and the blind see? They can't! That is the point - but Jesus Christ brings hearing and sight to those who cannot see or hear.

Now, the value of recognizing that you are blind and deaf to spiritual things apart from Christ:

Isa. 42:19, Who is blind but My servant, Or so deaf as My messenger whom I send? Who is so blind as he that is at peace with Me, Or so blind as the servant of the Lord

Isa. 42:20 shifts over to literal seeing and hearing. This is a criticism of those who would read this and say, "I am neither deaf nor blind, I do not need a guide, and one to lead me."

You have seen many things, but you do not observe them; Your ears are open, but none hears.

This is the arrogant man who doesn't recognize his own deafness and blindness in spiritual things.

The disciples needed to know Isaiah chapter 42.

Principles:

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1. Physical blindness as well as deafness put a person dependant upon another.
2. Recognition of spiritual blindness and deafness makes us dependent upon another - Jesus Christ.
3. Because we know the obstacles created by physical blindness and deafness we can see the handicaps of spiritual blindness and deafness.
4. Therefore: It is only when you realize that you too are blind and deaf that you can then see and hear.

In Mark 8:22, the friends of this man brought him to Jesus and asked and encouraged Jesus to touch him:

“They came,” the verb indicates that they came with an expectation of benefit. We can come with expectations of benefit whenever we come to Jesus Christ.

In asking or encouraging Jesus to touch their friend we have an indicative mood indicating a request without demand. They wanted their friend healed, his sight to be restored, but were not going to order Jesus to do this.

Today, some Christians need to learn that God is not to be ordered around, He will work according to His perfect time and His perfect grace.

Mark 8:23-25

Tells us what Jesus did for this man and teaches us what he will do for us:

And taking the blind man by the hand, He brought him out of the village; and after spitting on his eyes, and laying His hands upon him, He asked him, Do you see anything? And he looked up and said, I see men, for I am seeing them like trees, walking about. Then again He laid His hands upon his eyes; and he looked intently and was restored, and began to see everything clearly.

There are several things that we see Jesus doing:

1. He took the blind man by the hand: This man could not see Jesus Christ, so to establish personal contact with he took his hand.

Remember that the townspeople wanted Jesus to touch the man. As with many they thought that there was some magical power in the touch of

Christ. But here, Jesus touches the man, and he is still blind. This dispelled any superstition on the part of the people.

Now just like this blind man we too cannot see our Savior, but he is ever present with us and in us. This presence is not a feeling but Jesus reveals himself to us in spite of our limitation. When we come to him, and depend upon him, we will know he is with us.

2. He led him out of the town: Not only did Jesus establish personal contact with this man in spite of his limitation but he also take him away from the crowds, establishing a personal relationship with him.

Jesus also takes us away, alone, to deal with our limitations, our hurt, our pain. We have a personal Savior who knows us better than we know ourselves.

One of the great failures of the church has been the presenting of a corporate Savior, a Savior who is near, but not really personal. But we have a Savior who knows us and still loves us and seeks us to establish a personal relationship with us.

Principle: Our relationship with our Lord should be just as dynamic when we are away from the Church as it is when we are with the Church, learning about him.

3. He then spit on his eyes and put his hands on him: As we observed in Mark 7, with the man who was deaf, that which comes from the mouth of the Lord is parallel to the Word of God:

Matthew 4:4 Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

Putting his hands on him is more than just a touch, the Lord holds him.

And in the same way our spiritual sight will be restored when we receive the Word from the mouth of God and then we know that he is holding on to us.

4. Then the Lord questioned him asking if he saw anything: This question is like a test, “Do you now see?”

We who have a personal relationship with Jesus, and have received his Word and are held in his

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arms, are tested. Do we now see? Not just through the eyes of man but with spiritual sight, from the viewpoint of God?

Now here is where it gets interesting. The man had part of his sight restored, but not all.

In other healing miracles restoration was immediate, but here it is gradual, progressive.

Reason: Mark uses this miracle to remind us that the great works of God may come to us in stages. That God's great work in us is also progressive.

We could not handle everything God has for us right now, we do not have the capacity for all the blessings he would like to bestow upon us. So we are part of a process.

Our spiritual blindness is removed gradually as we gradually grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ.

The man answers that he sees, but as he looks out and sees men they have no features, they are like trees walking.

This shows us that he was not born blind. Those born blind do not know what trees look like.

5. So Jesus put his hands on his eyes again: There was no limit to the compassion and care Jesus extended to this man.

Just as there is no limit to the care Jesus extends to us, we need the constant touch of Christ,

As we begin to look honestly at ourselves we may wonder if the Lord ever tires of having to minister to us over and over again. Here we are constantly facing doubts, constantly needing Him, but he never tires of us and our needs - He is man but he is also fully God and God never gets tired. That is Grace.

That is why Paul was able to say:

Philippians 4:19, My God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

Then, as Christ continued to minister to this man, he was able to see clearly all things.

And as we endure with patience in the plan set before us, we will have the blindness of our souls removed and we will be able to see all things clearly.

Mark 8:26

And He sent him to his home, saying, Do not even enter the village.

Jesus sent the man home rather than back to Bethsaida in order to further safeguard against the increasing distraction on the part of the people of Galilee who were more involved with miracles than truth.

Let me give you three lessons from this miracle:

1. Jesus may choose to do great things apart from the crowds, things that we will keep only to ourselves.
2. There is no limit to the Lord's care over us.
3. Often the Lord will do great things in stages and we must wait upon his perfect timing.

Mark 8:27

Jesus went out, along with His disciples, to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way He questioned His disciples, saying to them, Who do people say that I am?

A great deal has been said about knowledge:

Mark Twain said: The trouble with the world is not that people know too little. It is that they know so much that is not true.

A Philosopher once said: Knowledge is not enough, we must apply it. Being willing is not enough, we must do it.

All these concepts of knowledge come together in the next portion of the life of Christ that we are going to examine.

Following the restoration of sight to the blind man of Bethsaida we see the beginning of spiritual sight on the part of the disciples. This spiritual sight, that we all must have, begins with Jesus asking a question:

A few things are very significant at this point in our study of the Gospel of Mark:

1. We are at a climactic point in the narrative. We have seen the ministry of Jesus in miracles and parables, as he has traveled through the region of Galilee.

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From this point on we are going to see a shift to very specific teaching to the disciples as the Lord begins to train them for future work.

2. Up to this point we have seen what the antagonists have said about Jesus. They have labeled him as a mere miracle man, as a heretic, as one who breaks the Law of God and the traditions of men, as one who is empowered by Satanic forces.

Now we will see what the disciples have to say about Christ and what Christ has to say about himself.

3. It is also significant that this insight into the person of Christ occurs while Jesus and His disciples are traveling through the region of Caesarea Philippi because this was a region of strong worship of Caesar as Lord. But we are going to see that there is no other Lord but Jesus Christ.

We read here that the Lord was asking his disciples questions. We have a form of the word ASK or QUESTION in the imperfect tense indicating that this Socratic questioning went on and on as they traveled.

Then he came to a series of questions that will lead to a confession of faith and recognition of who Jesus Christ is.

He questions: Who do people say that I am?

That question continues to be asked today. Who do people say that Jesus is?

I have always appreciated C.S. Lewis' answer to that question. As he taught his students at Cambridge University, he said: "I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people so often say about Jesus: that is I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I do not accept his claim to be God. That is one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic - or else he would be the Devil of Hell. Either Jesus was the Son of God or else a madman or something worse.

The choice is very clear, Lord, liar, or lunatic.

The same attempt to mold Jesus into just being a mere man that is present today, was present 2000 years ago when Jesus walked on earth.

Mark 8:28

The disciples tell him what the popular opinion of the day is regarding Him:

And they told Him, saying, John the Baptist; and others say Elijah; but others, one of the prophets.

When man, by man's opinion and viewpoint, attempts to define Jesus Christ he concludes everything from the absurd to the trivial.

John the Baptist or Elijah returned from the dead, or maybe just a prophet in line with many true and false prophets.

Go out today and ask that question and you too will get answers based on human viewpoint. Especially in our New Age society, you will hear that Jesus was a good man, a wise teacher, the forerunner of us all and what we all can become. One major cult even teaches that Jesus was the brother of Satan.

Just like Mark Twain said, the problem is not that we know too little, it is that we know so much that is not true.

Jesus himself proclaimed the truth about himself. He did not claim to be anything that ancient or modern man attempts to thrust upon Him. His claim was that he was God:

John 10:30,31 I and the Father are one.

And the Jews certainly understood what he meant: The Jews took up stones again to stone Him.

John 8:58, Jesus said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.

Mark 8:29

So now he has heard the opinions of the people. His next question is the one upon which salvation hangs in the balance:

And He continued by questioning them, But who do you say that I am?

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The YOU is a plural pronoun. He asks this to the entire group of twelve disciples, Who do you say that I am?

In this the impersonal, objective declaration of what others say is set aside for the personal, specific understanding of who you say that Jesus is -

In these two questions we see the questions that the servant of God continues to ask a lost and dying world:

Who is Jesus, according to the World?

And then, Who do you say He is -

This second question brings the issue from the corporate to the personal. Not merely what is said, but what do you believe?

Peter, bold and often brash, is the one to speak up. As spokesman of the disciples he makes a personal declaration:

Peter answered and said to Him, Thou art the Christ.

The title CHRIST is the Greek for the Old Testament title Messiah. This name means the one anointed by God.

1. It implies divine election and appointment
2. It set a mission and divine power for that mission
3. It includes divine protection in service. It looks at the three-fold office of Christ. In the Old Testament prophets, priests, and kings were anointed to God's mission and Jesus is the prophet, the priest, and the king of kings.

Peter knew the Old Testament and by saying that Jesus was the Christ, the Messiah, he knew that he was the one who came from God and is God and will save His people.

I am sure that at this personal declaration the elect angels of the universe cheered. Here is Peter, a big, often hardheaded fisherman from the rugged area of Galilee personally believing that Jesus is the Christ.

But the adulation is short lived - as we noted as we began:

Knowledge is not enough, we must apply it.

Mark 8:30,31

And He warned them to tell no one about Him.

And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

Jesus Christ capitalizes upon the recognition of His person to go on to teach about His work.

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The aorist tense looks at a definite beginning, as Peter declares Jesus to be the Messiah. His personal faith in the person of Christ moves Christ to provide information regarding the work he came to do.

The middle voice sees this as beneficial, to Christ and to all who would hear, believe, and apply what he teaches.

Christ tells the disciples that because he is the Messiah, because he is the Son of Man, which is emphasis on his humanity, four things must happen:

1. He must suffer many things
2. He will be rejected by the religious leaders
3. He will be killed
4. He will rise again from the dead after three days

In each of these statements the Lord uses an infinitive to show that these are results of his mission.

This is like saying to the disciples, you have seen my mission, this is what is going to result.

Peter had just used his understanding of the Old Testament scriptures to declare that Jesus was the Christ. Now we see his lack of understanding creating a blind spot.

He does not apply what he has just declared.

Mark 8:32

And He was stating the matter plainly. And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him.

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Peter was very good at that, as we all are. He at one moment declares that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah, the anointed one of God. That Jesus is in fact God - and then turns right around and rejects everything he says.

In Acts 10:11-14 Peter received a vision from God:

And he beheld the sky opened up, and a certain object like a great sheet coming down, lowered by four corners to the ground, and there were in it all kinds of four footed animals and crawling creatures of the earth and birds of the air. And a voice came to him, Arise, Peter, kill and eat! But Peter said, By no means, Lord, for I have never eaten anything unholy and unclean.

So here the Lord says do this, and Peter says NO, yet calls Him Lord.

In Mark Peter says Jesus is God, but is blind to his teaching.

I want you to see an application:

Peter believed in the person of Christ, and at the same time rejected the work of Christ.

And that is not so different than what we have today.

Application:

1. Every Christian has, at salvation, believed that Jesus is the Christ, the God-Man, their personal Savior.
2. Yet most Christians, while believing in the person of Christ, reject the work of Christ as a power in their lives.
3. They believe the biblical information about salvation but then reject the biblical information about the life that salvation brings.
4. It is our Lord's intention to not only give life eternal but also a quality of life that is lived everyday.

In John 10:10 Jesus promises: I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly.

5. Too many believers today are doing exactly what Peter did. They are not believing the rest of the story. NOW WHY DID PETER reject this truth and then go so far as to rebuke the one he has just recognized as God?

Simple: He did not like what Jesus said. It did not line up with what he wanted. It did not conform to Peter's world view, nor to his Human viewpoint.

Peter and we also need to heed the words of Isaiah:

Isaiah 55:8,9, For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Neither are your ways My ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.

We need to realize that we will not always understand what God is doing, but that is not at issue - at issue is whether we put our faith in Him and trust Him for what He is doing?

Peter did not like the fact that Jesus said he was going to die and so often we do not like what the Lord is saying to us through his word and in the circumstances of life.

We come together on a Sunday morning and declare that Jesus is the Christ, that he is our Savior.

And then we turn right around and say, Not so, Lord.

Now get the point:

Peter at one moment puts full faith in Christ calling him the Christ, and in the next moment rebukes him, disagrees with him, and rejects the truth.

Does that sound like a pattern of most of our lives? How often do we go from the pinnacle of faith one moment to the depth of disbelief the next.

This reminds us of our sinful nature, that we lack the consistency of faith in the person, the work, the truth of Christ.

This is a problem but for every problem there is a biblical, divine solution.

Mark 8:33

The four-fold solution to our rejection and lack of faith: this verse could also be called: One good rebuke deserves another:

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But turning around and seeing His disciples, He rebuked Peter, and said, Get behind Me, Satan; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's.

1. Jesus turns and faces his disciples: That is part of the solution. Jesus did not reject Peter and the others, just as he does not reject us when we lack faith. We are in His sight and under His care, and he will correct us.

2. He rebuked Peter: Whereas Peter's rebuke was a present tense infinitive, the Lord's rebuke of Peter was an aorist tense, indicative.

This change in form shows that the Lord gave a very specific and definite rebuke. This is the divine discipline the Lord gives us to wake us up, to shake us out of our unbelief.

Not only does the Lord not reject us, he will give us specific discipline and specific tests to get us over our lack of faith.

3. The content of the rebuke: Get behind Me. Satan: Here we see that lurking in the shadows of the situation is Satan himself.

While we might laugh at Peter and even ourselves in this and similar situations, Satan is laughing at us in derision and he is laughing at our Lord.

Satan was unable to get you to not believe in Christ for your salvation, but he is too often able to get us to not believe in the truth of Christ for our abundant life.

Satan wants to keep you in the dungeon of disbelief. He wants you to have a miserable life lacking faith, lacking abundance.

4. The way to overcome the evil one: Set your mind not on the interests of man but on the interest of God.

Replace Human viewpoint with Divine viewpoint. That can only come about as we choose to be positive, as we choose to learn the Word, as we choose to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ, and as we choose faith in Him.

That is exactly what Peter did. I cannot help but wonder if many years later, as Peter was moved by the Spirit to write to the saints, whether he recalled his own lack of faith upon first hearing that Christ must die, when he wrote:

1 Peter 3:18, For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, in order that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit.

Acceptance replaced rejection, God's way was substituted for man's way, unbelief gave way to faith.

We may be as Peter is Caesarea Philippi, standing before the Lord unwilling to believe in his words and his work - or we may be Peter the mature believer, who embraces the suffering and sacrifice of the Savior with all joy.

Press the advance, do not give place to the enemy, choose to place your faith in Christ for abundant life.

Let your knowledge of God move you towards loving Him and being obedient to Him.

Speaking of Loyalty, Theodore Roosevelt said: It is far better to be faithful than famous.

We have seen Peter's confession of faith. He made a statement based upon his knowledge of Old Testament scripture and his observation of Jesus Christ - "You are the Christ."

But then the Lord began to teach him about his impending suffering and death, and Peter could not handle that. He rebuked the Lord and the Lord turned and rebuked Him.

By way of application we saw in that dialogue two things that occurred:

1. Peter's confession of faith. Now he had believed that for some time but now clearly identifies Jesus as the Christ.

That parallels our salvation decision. To believe in Jesus as the Christ, our Savior.

2. And then, secondly, Jesus in His power takes care of the enemy Satan. When we begin our Spiritual lives we come under the attacks of Satan. He is a strong enemy but our Lord is stronger and it is our Lord who puts Satan and his influence behind us.

That section of Mark's Gospel is a turning point in the ministry of Christ. In the first eight chapters we have seen the Lord present himself to his

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followers as the Christ, the promised Messiah. Now he turns to training the twelve for service.

Mark 8:34-38 describes the choice the believer must make if he is to follow the Lord Jesus Christ and have the highest and best that God in His grace offers.

Mark 8:34

And He summoned the multitude with His disciples, and said to them, If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.

This verse sets the scene and then presents the first of six statements the Lord gives regarding the abundant life that we can have in Jesus Christ.

The scene:

1. The verb that is used for summoned or called is an aorist, middle, participle of a compound Greek word.

The prefix is PROS which means to face the multitude and the disciples.

The aorist tense looks at a specific point in time, a specific time for doctrinal instruction.

The middle voice sees the benefit derived from any situation in which teaching occurs.

The participle precedes the main verb HE SAID and shows us that a coming together must precede the imparting of truth.

This would later be stated doctrinally in Hebrews 10:25 "Not forsaking your own assembling together, as is the habit of some."

2. Two groups were called: The multitude and the disciples. The distinction is important because the information Jesus is about to give is not only true for the twelve, but for all those who seek truth, including us today.

The goal, or the objective, is stated first:

If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.

We have to see this as something that is after salvation. Peter and the others have already believed in Christ and now the instructions are not regarding salvation but the Christian way of life.

WISH is a present tense, active voice. Keeps on making a choice or wishing to come after Jesus. QELW _desire.

The verb TO COME AFTER ME goes back to an aorist, here and aorist infinitive.

This looks at specific decisions that are made as a result (infinitive) of your desire.

Principles:

Once you are saved, two factors combine in coming to Jesus and living the Christ-centered life.

The first of these is your DESIRE. You make a choice to keep on wanting what God has for you in His perfect plan. When that desire is not there, you will have no desire to make the right choices.

That desire is a moment by moment choice you make. Now even when you get out of fellowship, even when you begin to think your plan is better, your overall desire in life should be to have what God wants for you.

The expression of that desire is made in the decisions we make to come and keep on coming back to Jesus Christ. Those decisions are made in specific points of time under pressure, in the midst of a problem, and at the point of testing and temptation.

But in application you might say that you have a desire to have God's highest and best just like Peter, the right choices are not always there.

The Lord describes in these six statements how to make the right choices. In His grace it is not a matter of just do this or do that. If that were the case the New Testament would be very short - one statement: Follow Jesus.

The first statement:

If your desire is to come to Jesus Christ making the right choices or decisions then -

Let him deny himself and take up his cross and let him follow me.

The word DENY means to forget one's self, or lose sight of one's self and of one's interests.

It again is an aorist tense but here an imperative mood of command, middle voice of benefit.

The aorist tense looks at the choices we make either for self or for what God has for us.

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As a command Jesus makes this a condition of the abundant life he has to offer. If we want what he has for us, we cannot be preoccupied or focused upon self.

We are also told that in addition to setting aside self we are to take up our cross.

The verb looks at specific situation where we have a choice between the saving of self and the Christ Centered Life.

The Cross was an instrument of death and the analogy is to death of self.

The people hearing this did not think of the Cross as we do, knowing historically it was the place of our Savior's sacrifice. They saw it as a morbid reference to a horrible death.

This Taking up of one's Cross to them meant a denial of self and a servant attitude towards Christ.

Then the third command, Let him follow Me.

Here is a present tense. The right decisions having been made, the outcome is following Jesus Christ.

The word for FOLLOW is not merely to follow someone is a physical sense. But to follow them as to travel the same road they traveled. The idea is that of accompanying another, fellowshiping with them as you travel the same road.

Principles:

1. After salvation the conflict is between self and our Savior
2. We must make choices, decisions. The first choice is to deny self interests and choose the interests of Christ for us.
3. The second choice is our life, or the life that Christ has for us. That life he has for us may mean hardship, suffering, even death, but it will all be worth it in time and eternity.
4. Most of us can look at the decisions we have made in the past that have centered on self-interest. That alone should influence us to want to chose for Christ over self.
5. The choices form the foundation of our present continuous action of fellowship with Jesus Christ.
6. We accompany Him, and he takes us no place that he himself has not gone.

We have seen that Jesus called the crowds to him along with the disciples and began to teach them:

His message was very simple: There will be Christians who will desire the very highest and best that He has to offer through grace.

If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.

That wish or desire is present tense, a consistent attitude of knowing that God's way is the best way and a continual attitude of wanting that highest and best.

While that must be the consistent attitude, it is not always the continual attitude. We let ourselves get in the way. Our egos, our emotions, and our manner of life which includes sin, disobedience, human good, works, and legalism.

So that consistent attitude must be followed up with specific decisions, choices that we make from our free will.

There are two mandates:

1. Let him deny himself: This is a denial of self interest, self-centeredness, egotism, the old sticking up for self and self alone.
2. Take up his cross: The cross was an object of shame and a means of death.

What does it take to face hardship, sacrifice, even death? Courage - and that courage that we must have before men is gained only from Christ.

William Lane, one of the world's noted scholars on the Gospel of Mark, says of this passage that in it:

Jesus stipulates that those who wish to follow him must be prepared to shift the center of gravity in their lives from a concern for self to a reckless abandon to the will of God. A sustaining willingness to say NO to self in order to say YES to God.

And what follows in the next four verses gives us the reason, the motive, the means, the influence, and the opportunity to do just that. Say NO to self and YES to God.

But this is only for those who have made that decision and continue in the attitude of wanting to follow Jesus Christ.

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Psalm 25:4-5 Make me know Thy ways, O Lord; Teach me Thy paths. Lead me in Thy truth and teach me, For Thou art the God of my salvation; For Thee I wait all the day.

Paul declared:

Philippians 3:13-14 Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

So all that follows in the Lord's teaching is designed to answer the question HOW? How do we deny ourselves, take up our cross and follow him?

Mark 8:35

For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's shall save it.

We begin with a coordinating explanatory conj, GAR, For you see - explains the challenge of verse 34:

Then the principle of paradox:

Whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's shall save it.

The word WISHES is a repeat of the word WISH in v 34 but here it is subjunctive mood which indicates that some Christians will desire to save their way of life rather than submit to Christ.

And when this is the attitude, the idea of saving self, you will lose it.

The result of that is our manner of life, way of life, the life style of self.

SAVE IT is an aorist act infinitive which views a result. Which looks at a result of an attitude and the choices that are made from that attitude.

LOSE IT is a future tense which looks at the normal results of a life lived for self protection, self interest, and self promotion. The result of the choices made when attempting to save your life.

Principle: The sum total of a life lived for self is not gain but loss.

This becomes more than a paradox, it becomes a tragedy.

Just think of the people who have set out to live life their own way, constantly sticking up for number one, and what do they have in the end: LOSS

Just think of the times you have tried to plot your own existence, to save your inner self not giving way to all God has for you. What is the result? LOSS -

But there is an alternative for you.

But whoever will lose his life for the sake of Me and the gospel will save it.

Whereas saving our way of life was an aorist infinitive, here, losing that way of life is a future tense.

The future tense looks at the end result of an ongoing process. Unlike the meager attempt to save our way of life which is based upon decisions for self, this is a process of growing in the Lord by learning, thinking, and applying his word.

John the Baptist said it best in John 3:30 He must increase, but I must decrease.

That is more than a paradox, it is a process. If you want to save your life it is to saved in Jesus Christ.

Jesus in these passages is dealing with the factors that influence the decisions we make:

EGO ---- EMOTION ---- EVIL all influence the decisions that bring destruction.

EVIL was dealt with when Jesus said, Get the behind me Satan. EGO and EMOTIONS are dealt with as we deny self, as we take up the process of accompanying Jesus Christ, as we lose ourselves in Him.

The Lord also gives us a motivation for doing this: "for My sake and the gospel's [sake]."

The word SAKE is ENEKA and in about 20 of its 26 occurrences in the NEW TESTAMENT. it focus upon the person of Christ and what he has done for us as a motive for enduring life and possible hardships even to the point of death.

It means: Because of, for the sake of, for this reason.

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So we lose our life or life style for this reason, Christ lost his life for us. He gave up His eternal position in heaven as the Son of God and became the Son of man to suffer and die for us.

Look at the result. He is now seated in the heavenlies in full honor and glory at the right hand of the Father. He is honored beyond measure.

His sacrifice was for us and that grace becomes the motive for us to stick with it, to endure when endurance is required, to lose ourselves when we begin to permit ego and emotions to rule us, to deny self, take up even sacrifice and death, and follow in fellowship our Lord who has done so much for us.

And what did Jesus Christ do for us?

Jesus Christ paid the price of sin, we could not do that for ourselves, only the sinless Savior could do that on our behalf:

I Corinthians 6:20 For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.

I Corinthians 7:23 You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men.

Our obligation, which David in the Psalms so clearly understood as a vow or debt, is to first glorify God and then not become the slaves of men. But instead, become the slaves of Christ.

Psalms 50:14, Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, And pay your vows to the Most High.

We could never, nor does God expect us to, repay Jesus Christ for what he has done for us, for the price he paid.

But as we consider the cost of the Christ Centered Life we are motivated by the fact that we are under debt to God.

The Price: Deny self interest, lose your ego and emotional motivation in life, and put your life in the hands of Jesus Christ.

The Result and Reward: Whoever will lose his life for the sake of me and the Gospel will save it.

This motivation focuses on both the person of Christ and the Gospel, the Word of Christ:

The Gospel here is far more than just salvation. It is the good news that Christ not only has life for you but also that that life is ABUNDANT.

Our self-life is set aside, abandoned for something far greater - the person of Christ and the Word of God.

The next Statement is again said in the context of belief. This is not salvation, although it would be applicable. But it is for us who have been saved:

Mark 8:36

For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul?

Now the word SOUL in v 36 and 37 is the same word used for life in v 35, meaning the inner life of man.

Here the Lord steps back from the high motive of Grace in what He has done for us to a more basic motive in life - profit.

Is there anything profitable in material possessions if the inner life is at conflict with the one who has saved us?

And then to remind us that we do not have the price to pay to purchase that abundance of life, we have verse 37:

Mark 8:37

For what shall a man give in exchange for his inner life.

And Jesus Christ desires us to have that inner life in abundance.

Illustration: If you go into a store in Tulsa and try to buy something with Mexican pesos, you are not going to get what you want. Pesos are not the coin of the realm. You may pick something out, something you really like, but you can't have it.

You see, you want something that cost far more than you can pay. Only a great God does for his children what they cannot do for themselves.

Spiritually we may want a healthy and sound soul and an abundant inner life, but we do not have the coin of the realm. Only Jesus Christ could have paid the price, and he did, now our lives must be lost in him.

Mark Lesson 8

Mark 8:38

The sixth and final statement is a warning:

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.

The adulterous and sinful generation looks back over the preceding chapters of Mark's Gospel. They are the ones who have criticized, maligned, even attributed Jesus' ministry to Satan.

Indeed that was an adulterous and sinful generation but so is ours today.

This adultery and sin is not physical but a spiritual adultery and sin of unfaithfulness and disobedience to the one who has done for you what you could not do for yourself.

When Christ died on the Cross for you he had you personally in mind, he gave up his life to save your life.

And just as then, there are now those who are ashamed of Jesus, who stooped so low to bring you so high.

The key to the warning is understanding the word ASHAMED:

It is the passive of AISCUNEI _which means to be put to shame but in the sense of dishonor.

Every one of us has the potential of dishonoring Christ in every area of application:

1. We fail to acknowledge what he did for us, and keeps on doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.
2. We deny Christ before others anytime we think that taking a stand for Christ will bring rejection and ridicule from the world. We become closet Christians.

3. And we even dishonor Christ before God our heavenly Father every time we try to live the Christian life apart from the Grace that was gained by Christ. We want to do it on our own, not denying self, not losing our life in Him.

Christ is never ashamed of us in that sense.

Hebrews 2:11 For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father; for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren.

2 Timothy 2:11-13 It is a trustworthy statement: #For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him; If we endure, we shall also reign with Him; If we deny Him, He also will deny us; If we are faithless, He remains faithful; for He cannot deny Himself.

The issue is reward and honor for the winner and no honor for the loser. At His coming in the glory of the Father with the holy angels he will be ashamed in the sense on not giving honor to those believers who lived apart from what he has promised and stated in these verses.

Now verse 38 is referring to the second advent which is appropriate for Israel's resurrection. But I think we can see this more easily if we look at the Rapture and events that occur in heaven after the Church is taken out of the World.

1 John 2:28 And now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming.

When we arrive at the BEMA and the crowns and rewards for eternity are passed out, there will be shame for the ones who are passed over.

Mark Lesson 8 Quiz

Instructions

The following questions relate to your study of this lesson.

To answer a question, type your response in the space provided after the word "Answer:". A question may be True/False, multiple choice, fill in the blank, or short answer type.

The last question requires you to write one or two paragraphs in "essay" form. Use the space provided; it will expand to accommodate your response.

You have choices about sending the quiz back to Grace Notes.

- If you received an email file containing the quiz, you can use the REPLY feature of your e-mail application to open the quiz. Enter your answers in the reply message. Then SEND the message to Grace Notes.
- You can enter your answers on these pages, then send the whole file back to Grace Notes as a file attachment. This is handy, but these lessons will average 100K to 200K in size. As an alternative,
- After you answer the questions here, copy and paste the whole list of questions into a new MS Word document; then, send the new file to Grace Notes as an attachment. The new file will, of course, be much smaller than this main file.
- Finally, you can print the Quiz pages on your printer and send your response back to Grace Notes in the regular mail. If you do this, send the mail to:

Grace Notes

% Warren Doud

1705 Aggie Lane

Austin, Texas 78757 USA

Whichever transmission method you use, when Grace Notes receives your completed Quiz, the next lesson will be sent to you, by the same means you received this one. EXCEPT: when you have sent in the FINAL QUIZ, we will send your certificate to you, by regular mail.

Mark Lesson 8

Questions on Mark Lesson 8

1. How long had Jesus been teaching the people in Decapolis when the feeding of the 4,000 took place?

Answer:

2. According to Hebrews 4:16, what is the source of confidence?

Answer:

3. There were _____ loaves of bread available for the disciples to distribute.

Answer:

4. Memorize John 6:35. Write it out here from memory.

Answer:

5. How did the Pharisees in Dalmanutha try to test Christ?

Answer:

6. Where in the New Testament can you find a verse that tells us that God's power is visible all around us?

Answer:

7. Jesus performed a miracle for the Pharisees to show them that He was God. [True/False]

Answer:

8. In the New Testament, to what does leaven refer?

Answer:

9. The disciples understood perfectly the doctrine that Jesus was teaching them with respect to the small loaf of brea. [True/False]

Answer:

10. When Jesus and the disciples had crossed the lake, what town did they first come to?

Answer:

11. Where is Caesarea Philippi, where Jesus and his disciples visited several villages?

Answer:

12. What was the popular opinion of the day regarding the identity of the Lord Jesus?

Answer:

13. "...whoever _____ his life for My sake and the _____ shall _____ it."

Mark Lesson 8

Answer:

14. What did Jesus do for us that we could not do for ourselves?

Answer:

15. What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?

Answer:

End of Quiz