

Announcements:

- 1) I talked about ChurchTrac last Sunday at the annual meeting. It is where our directory will come from, you can access your giving amounts, look at the calendar, sign up for events, send prayer requests, and more. If you need help with it, let me know and I would be glad to help you understand it. [www.glidebaptist.churchtrac.com](http://www.glidebaptist.churchtrac.com)
- 2) Women's Coffee Talk Next Sunday @ 3pm
- 3) February 7 we should be back in the sanctuary
- 4) Men, we are looking at a Men's retreat in May, keep your ears open for more coming soon

## Road to the Cross

### Mark 8:31-38

After a brief hiatus, we are going to move back to our study in Mark. As a brief reminder, the first readers of Mark's gospel would be those that are seeing persecution of Christians rise. There was angst building towards the Christians as well as false teachings. Mark's gospel is a reminder of who Jesus is, His mission, His authority over creation. Jesus came to sacrifice, serve, and save.

I like the old classic joke about the chicken and the pig who were talking about going into business. The chicken says: "Hey Pig, we should open a restaurant." The pig replies: "I'm not sure, what would we call it?" The chicken answers: "What if we called it 'Ham and Eggs'?" The pig doesn't like that idea: "No Thanks, I'd be committed and you'd only be involved." So the chicken counters: "What if I am committed as well?" The pig asks: "I don't see how you could be?" The chicken explains: "We can open a place called 'Wings-N-Ribs'!" The pig answers: "With both of us committed, I'm in!" The big question about discipleship that I want us to wrestle with today is: Am I just involved with Jesus, or am I completely committed to Jesus?

Jesus is completely committed to us. The road to the cross was not easily traveled nor was it safe. It meant suffering. It meant loss. It meant persecution. It meant being despised. It meant separation of family. It meant choosing what's right and obedience when there was an easier, less costly path that could be traveled that wasn't purely wrong, but wasn't right either. James 4:17 tells us "...it is sin to know what you ought to do and then not do it." The road to the cross meant death. And it wasn't everyday death. It wasn't the death every person would face. For Jesus, it was death for the enemy. It was suffering the effect of sin for His enemies.

Matthew 5:43-48 says, “You have heard the law that says, ‘Love your neighbor’ and hate your enemy. But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you! In that way, you will be acting as true children of your Father in heaven. For He gives His sunlight to both the evil and the good, and He sends rain on the just and the unjust alike. If you love only those who love you, what reward is there for that? Even corrupt tax collectors do that much. If you are kind only to your friends, how are you different from anyone else? Even pagans do that. But you are to be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.”

Jesus can say this and challenge us to do this. He did it, and did it perfectly. He died perfectly for those that would despise Him, hate Him, sin against Him, and even kill Him. He died for you and me. We were enemies of the cross. Romans 5:10 says, “For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of His Son while we were still His enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of His Son.” His love is that real and that deep.

The question for us today is are we committed. Are we truly committed to Christ? Are we willing to walk the road of the cross? Verse 34 of our text says, “If any of you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross, and follow me.” This is not an easy saying to live by. It has a cost. It may mean giving up certain habits. Maybe changing what you watch, how you talk, what you listen to. It could be family members may turn on family members because of their faith. Friendships may be broken. Anger may grow between parent and child, child and parent. Jobs could be lost because of the call to purity and integrity that a follower of Christ is called to. Emotional or physical persecution may come, maybe even death. The cost may feel cheap at times, but others it will feel costly...but, the reward is great! There will be times of suffering, but there is great reward.

Peter once asked Jesus, “We’ve given up everything to follow you. What will we get?”. Mark 10:29-30 says, “Jesus replied, “and I assure you that everyone who has given up house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or property, for my sake and for the Good News, will receive now in return a hundred times as many houses, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, and property—along with persecution. And in the world to come that person will have eternal life.” Romans 5:3-4 tells us of

spiritual rewards now, “perseverance, character, hope.” James 1:2-4 mentions we will go through trials, but they will produce godly wisdom. John 10:10 speaks of abundant life in Christ. We can go on and on with verses speaking of God’s presence with us, the Spirit’s seal upon us, answered prayer, family of Christ, a peace that surpasses all understanding, not to mention forgiveness, grace, God’s mercy and compassion, eternal life and blessing.

Let’s read our passage: Mark 8:31-38. It’s also recorded in Matthew 16:21-28 and Luke 9:21-27. [Read passage]

In just a moment we are going to look deeper into our passage. But first, I want us to see that there is going to be a change in Jesus’ dealing with the disciples and the crowds in Mark’s gospel from this point forward. Until this point, Jesus spoke in parables (earthly stories with heavenly meanings); these almost cryptic stories that would shed understanding as time went. He had traveled around the Sea of Galilee teaching, healing, and interacting with the crowds that were following Him. The climax of Jesus’ incarnation was about to come. It was time to be intentional on the journey to Jerusalem. Jesus, for the most part had kept away from Jerusalem, the center of Jewish religion where the religious muckety mucks were, to minister to the people on the outskirts. If Salem were Jerusalem, He spent much of His time in Glide, Sutherlin, Riddle, Coos Bay, Bandon, Klamath Falls. It was now time to go to the epicenter of religious bureaucracy, hypocrisy, and pride.

Jesus would now plainly speak to the disciples. He would spend more time talking to them and preparing them for what He was about to face and what they were going to be faced with.

This last half of Mark we will also see the battle of the Sanhedrin, the chief priests, elders, and scribes, the Pharisees and Sadducees challenge Jesus more and their hostility towards Him will grow to the point of putting feet to their plan to kill Him and doing things explicitly against the law of God.

Three times on the journey to Jerusalem does Jesus foretell His death. Here in Mark 8:31, in Mark 9:31, and then for the third time in Mark 10:33. Each time in Mark humanity’s pride gets tied to Jesus’ death. In the second account of Jesus foretelling His death, the disciples were ‘filled with grief.’ They didn’t get the rising again part. The third time

Jesus foretold His death, they wanted to have positions of authority and prominence, of power when Jesus sits on the throne. They missed it. Jesus said, the greatest in the Kingdom is a servant on earth. He said He came to serve, not to be served. Humility, meekness, submission, surrender are all traits of one who will have greatness in the kingdom.

#### Verse 31

-Son of man—Daniel 7:13-14

—Title Jesus uses for himself

—Messianic title

—Jesus connects this with what Peter says in verse 29

-*must* suffer—Isaiah 53:3-6 “He was despised and rejected— a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief. We turned our backs on him and looked the other way. He was despised, and we did not care. Yet it was our weaknesses he carried; it was our sorrows that weighed him down. And we thought his troubles were a punishment from God, a punishment for his own sins! But he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed. All of us, like sheep, have strayed away. We have left God’s paths to follow our own. Yet the LORD laid on him the sins of us all.

#### Verse 32-33

-Peter rebuked Jesus...why?—Peter was seeing things through the human point of view, not from God’s and because of it tempting Jesus to an easier path.

-Peter doesn’t understand the Messiah, this great leader that is going to lead Israel into a place of prominence over Rome, the Son of the living God as he calls Him in Matthew’s account, is going to die. Instead he pulls Jesus aside and reprimands Him for saying such crazy talk. Peter is still looking at this in human terms, with human limitations, and with the human mindset of conquering. Peter was seeing Jesus as the Messiah he wanted Him to be, not the Messiah He was. Daniel 7 speaks of Him as the ruling Son of Man. But, Peter missed the Messiah as the suffering servant of Isaiah 52 & 53.

-Peter was tempting Jesus, just as Satan had tempted Jesus in the desert.

-Matthew 4:3-10

-Satan was trying to get Jesus to:

-twist and misuse the authority and power He had

-to circumvent God's plan and fix the problem in a way that was easier, convenient, and less painful

-Jesus knew He must suffer. Jesus' humanity was tempted. It would be easier, less painful, more convenient to give in to His humanity. But, it would have been disobedience. God gave His Son. Jesus believed and trusted the Truth. The truth was that sin caused physical and spiritual death and the only way for it to be overturned was a perfect death sacrifice to absolutely and completely not just cover over, but wash away the stain, filth, dirtiness, shame filled and guilt filled heart of humanity. Physical death was not overturned. Our bodies are the result of death, but our souls are built everlasting. Spiritual death was overturned for those that would follow.

-We have to be careful not to do the same

-we often are quick to claim the authority of Christ without the sacrifice and the suffering and the servanthood

-we often pray in a way of manipulating God into doing what we want

-we often serve with an intent of human success and benefit

-Peter would have been better served to step back and ask God to reveal his human thinking and then counter it with God's truth so He can see what God was doing.

-Peter would have been better served to accept the suffering that was coming and not look to circumvent it, but trust God as he walked through it.

-Peter would have been better served to choose to look for the good that will come of the suffering and use it to glorify God

This ties into the 2nd part of the passage. Because Jesus applies it to His disciples and to the rest of us that claim to follow Him. It is so easy for us to get lost in the temptations, ways, and thinking of this world. Our minds need constant transforming as Romans 12:2 says. Our thinking needs constant overhauling. Isaiah 55:8-9 says, "My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts," says the LORD. "And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine. For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts. We are called to a higher thinking." Colossians 3:2 says very clearly, "Set your minds on the things above, not on earthly things." 2 Timothy 3:16-17, which we looked at last week, says, "All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and

teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.”

In scripture, there are many hard sayings, and this is one of them. Look at verse 34, “If any of you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross, and follow me.”

**I have to turn from my selfish ways.** Doesn’t that sound like, “I came to serve and not be served.” “The first shall be last and the last shall be first.” “Not my will, but Your will be done.” “I will decrease so you can increase.” How do you turn from your selfish ways? Worship God. Ingest and digest God’s Word. Choose to love it. Fight to apply it. Flee sinful thoughts and actions. Resisting the devil. By the way, resisting the devil is less about rebuking the devil, however, there is time for that, but it’s more about seeking God’s kingdom. It’s more about putting your effort and your fight into being your relationship with God. As you do that, sin and the enemy will begin to fall off you.

I was reminded yesterday, we often think of this great cosmic battle going on between God and Satan. Let’s not give too much power to this enemy by thinking of it as a battle. It isn’t a battle or war. A war is two sides fighting with an outcome yet to come. There is no outcome yet to come in God’s Kingdom. Sure, Satan has power in this physical world, and the earth is his realm that he pours out his power. The outcome is already decided. God spoke Satan into existence as He spoke the rest of creation into existence, and if God wanted to, He could speak Satan out of existence. There is just a time stamp upon that date. Do we fight against the powers and principalities of this world, yes. God already has the victory. He has always been the victor. We are the ones that struggle in and war. Our fleshly nature war against our spiritual nature in Christ. That is where the battle is. Satan falls under the sovereign and perfect will of God. Satan’s time has not ran out yet, because God wants more people to know Him. There are more people to be redeemed yet.

**We take up our cross.** The picture of the cross in Roman times was one of suffering and shame for sin. But, it was also a picture of submission and surrender. It was the picture that Rome had authority and power over your life and the destiny of your life. To take up our cross and follow Jesus definitely means putting to death the sin in our life. But, we must also

understand the other side of it. It means we are submitting and surrounding to the authority and power of the cross Jesus died on.

The cross He died on did not have power over Him. He freely gave up His life. The cross He died on was under the power and authority of God. The work of that cross was not administered by Rome, but by God Himself. Jesus surrendered and submitted to the will of God the Father. He submitted to death, but after three days was given a glorified body that He would have as He reigned on the throne over all of creation and now sits at the right hand of God, as Lord and Savior ready to judge the living and the dead.

Taking up our cross is putting ourselves under the submission and authority of God to kill the sin in us and raise us up in eternal life in His kingdom.

**We follow.** We follow by being His disciple. We go where He is. We do what He does. We love what He loves. We hate what He hates. We learn His heart, His mind, and learn to walk in His steps. And as you grow in that process, you glorify Him.

Verses 35-38 are simply to get you to think about the severity and depth and the blessing of following Christ.

“If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake and for the sake of the Good News, you will save it. And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul? Is anything worth more than your soul? If anyone is ashamed of me and my message in these adulterous and sinful days, the Son of Man will be ashamed of that person when he returns in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”

These verses aren't speaking to our moments of weakness and ignoring God, failing to be bold about our faith, or sin even. Being ashamed of Christ means to reject, to disgrace, dishonor, not associate with. It is a statement of the heart.

The road to the cross is a road that requires sacrifice, surrender, and submission. It is a road that requires commitment. It's a commitment that may require your life, but at the very least your obedience. It's a commitment that will take work, but will pay you back. It's a commitment

that will cost you, but it is an investment not some spenditure. It's a commitment that takes effort, but will not be for nothing, it will strengthen you. It's a commitment that takes trust, but it will be rewarded.