

## Gospel of Mark Chapter 8C

Have you taken the time to study the prophetic scriptures that describe the second coming of the Lord Jesus and the glorious Kingdom that He will establish?

- Have you envisioned the streets of gold, the walls of jasper, trees that grow 12 kinds of fruit. Have you meditated on the images of the New Jerusalem. (1500/1500/1500 miles)
- Are you old enough to remember those early Christian movies, “Mark of the Beast” Have you read the “Left Behind” series? Are you looking to the Rapture as your escape from this corrupt world?

Do you think that you have a Biblical understanding of how this present world is going to come to an end? Do you know where the battle of Armageddon is going to take place? Have you studied the 1000 year reign of Christ described in Revelation 20?

Do you believe that a literal “AntiChrist will arise out of the sea of humanity?”

- What if you were totally wrong? What if your interpretation of the future events recorded in the Scriptures was completely mistaken?

The Jews of Jesus’ Day had what they believed was a biblical view of the Messiah and his coming kingdom.

- The Disciples were excited about the possibility of ruling and reigning with Christ.
- James and John actually had their mother ask Jesus for prominent position in his coming kingdom.
- Even after he rose from the dead the disciples were looking for a physical earthly kingdom. WHY?

They were taught that the Messiah would establish a kingdom that would never pass away.

Daniel 7:13 I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him.

14 And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

They believed that the Messiah would subdue all of their enemies.

Psalm 72:7 In his days may the righteous flourish, and peace abound, till the moon be no more!

8 May he have dominion from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth!

9 May desert tribes bow down before him and his enemies lick the dust!

In their view, The Messiah would be the greatest political leader known to man.

Isaiah 9: 6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

7 Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

- They anticipated a strong deliverer.
- They expected a powerful ruler.
- They were waiting for the day when Israel would be the chief of all of the nations of the world.
- They desired to hold important positions in his kingdom.

HERE in Mark Chapter 8, when the Disciples confess that Jesus is the long awaited Messiah He immediately announces his impending suffering, his death and resurrection. BUT that is not at all what they expected.

As a matter of fact, the description that Jesus gives them of his great SAVING work is SO totally unexpected that Peter takes it upon himself to REBUKE the Lord Jesus.

- He is not describing the Kingdom the way that Daniel did.
- He is not going to destroy the Romans like the Psalmist described.
- HE is not taking over the government like Isaiah predicted.
- Their idea of victory was completely opposite from His.

So as we study this portion of Mark's Gospel be prepared to have your thinking challenged. In the words of Isaiah: (55:8) "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD." Outline follows this thought: The Disciples were:

1. Mystified by God's Plan
2. Minding the things of Man.
3. Maintaining life by losing it

1. Mystified by God's Plan:

Mark 8:31 And he (Jesus) 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. 32 And he said this plainly.

- The clarity, the plainness of Jesus speech, added to the distress of his words. This is not a parable to be deciphered; this is not a puzzle to be explaining. For the very first time Jesus is speaking clearly about his impending suffering and death!

The Son of Man MUST suffer, be rejected and killed. He is not describing a possibility, he is communicating a necessity! But THIS doesn't make any sense to the Disciples.

- They think he can ride into Jerusalem on a donkey, throw the Romans out of the city and take his rightful place on the Throne of David and reign forever!
  - STOP and THINK: In reality that wouldn't do anything to change the corrupt heart of sinful man.

The oppression that Jesus came to overthrow was NOT the tyranny of Rome. He came to bring an end to the pervasive dominion of SIN.

Isaiah the Prophet foretold the Messiah's great victory:

Isaiah 25: 7 **And he will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations.** 8 **He will swallow up death forever; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken.** 9 **It will be said on that day, “Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us. This is the LORD; we have waited for him; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.”**

- SIN is a covering that is cast over all peoples, death is the veil that is spread over all nations and the messiah will finally and fully **“Swallow up death forever.”**
- BY giving himself, his perfect, sinless life over to death and rising to new life, He will conquer death completely.
- THIS is the Lord we have waited for! HE will remove the reproach of our sin.
- Through his suffering, his rejection and his death he will provide atonement for sin, remove the wrath of God and give eternal life to all who believe.

The disciples were MYSTIFIED by this plan and did not understand.

Even though the Scriptures clearly foretold the tragedy of God’s Suffering Servant (Genesis 22:8, Psalm 22, Isaiah 52-53)

NO ONE in Israel understood this mystery; all of their eyes were blinded to the truth.

HOW sure are YOU??? That what you have been taught, that which you cling to is actually true? Is the Jesus that you follow the Jesus of Scripture or a cleverly invented imitation?

- Do you follow Jesus because He WORKS? He can give you a better life? Make you successful? Heal your diseases? Pay your bills?
- Do you believe that he wants to make the United States a great nation once again?
- Are those things his priorities? Or are they YOURS?

## 2 Minding the Things of Man.

This talk about suffering and death was too much for Peter so he decided to correct Jesus.

Mark 8: 32 **And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.**

- Matthew records Peter’s Words:

Matthew 16: 22, **“Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you.”**

- It is one thing to disagree with a teacher. A student might raise his hand and politely ask for further clarity on a point that he disagrees with.
- Sometimes in a Bible Study a participant might stop the teacher and say, *“I’m not sure that I agree with what you just said.”*

BUT this teacher is the Lord Jesus Himself, the incarnate Son of God and Peter doesn’t politely ask for a redefinition he blatantly rebukes him. (Rebuke is the same word used to describe Jesus interaction with demons)

**Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you**

- I understand that Peter is full of emotion at this point, we know he has a tendency, like some of us, to move his mouth before his brain is engaged.
- This time he really overstepped his bounds. He is assuming a position of authority that is not his to take.

I sense a hint of “BRAVADA” in Peter’s rebuke as if he was prepared to prevent this from happening. “Not on my watch Jesus!”

HOW did the Lord Jesus respond to Peter's rebuke?

Mark 8: 33 **But turning and seeing his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man."**

- HERE is the problem as Jesus sees it: Peter has set his mind on the things of man and not the things of God. BY doing so he has unwittingly aligned himself with Satan.

Remember the wilderness temptation, how Satan offered Jesus a Crown without a Cross (**he showed him all of the kingdoms of the world, I will give you all of these if you bow down**)

- It appears that Peter has the same thing in mind. (He wants Jesus to take the Crown without going to the cross)
- BUT Peter has his mind set on the things of man and not the things of God.

What kind of things were filling Peter's mind? FEAR, DOUBT, Ambitions, Success?

- Following Jesus gave purpose and passion to Peter's life and he had risen to a position of prominence among the disciples.
- Tens of thousands of people were following Jesus but Peter was in the inner circle, one of the top three disciples. (Peter, James, John)
- Remember when the crowd tried to take Jesus by force and make him king. He sent his disciples away. (Protect them from the things of man)
  - Think, what kind of position, power and prosperity would that give Peter?

The announcement of Jesus' impending death must have been a SHOCK to Peter!

You could say that it was the death of Peter's personal agenda, the death of his fleshly ambitions the death of his false image of an earthly kingdom.

- With one statement it seems that all of Peter's hopes, his dreams were put to death.

LAST POINT: Maintaining life by losing it

According to the Lord Jesus ANYONE who desires to follow him must follow him through the cross.

- What we discover here is that being a disciple of Jesus Christ holds TWO requirements: DENIAL and DEATH. (we will only get to one today)

3 Maintaining life by losing it

Mark 8: 34 **And he called to him the crowd with his disciples and said to them, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. 35 For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it.**

"Denying Self" is not the same as "Self Denial"

- "Self denial" could be equated with most religious practices: giving up meat on Fridays, Fasting a day or two each week, taking a vow of poverty, wearing plain garments, praying 5 times a day toward Mecca.
  - While these may have an outward show piety they have no ability to justify sinful man before a holy God.

“Denying Self” is the spiritual realization that “*In me, that is in my flesh, there dwells no good thing.*” That all of my good works are as filthy rags before a holy God.

- Denying self is an acute recognition that apart from Christ my whole self is totally depraved and unable to please God.

There is a great example of this in the Gospel of Luke 18:

Luke 18: 10 “Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector.

12 I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.’

- The Pharisee exercised self denial. He denied himself food twice a week, he gave a tenth of all of his income but these religious exercises did not gain him a right standing with God.

13 But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ 14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.”

- Unlike the Pharisee the Tax Collector exhibited a clear understanding of his depravity. Well aware of his sinful condition he could not even lift his eyes to heaven.
- In an expression of deep humility he cried out to the Lord for MERCY.

The Pharisee sought justice from God by exalting his self denial.

- He thought that obeying the Law and following the traditions of the Fathers would make him right with God but he was sorely mistaken.
- The Tax Collector was justified by the grace and mercy of God through his humble expression of repentance and faith in God.
- We will dig deeper next week into Jesus’ call to discipleship. For now let me ask you:

HOW sure are YOU? That what you have been taught, about the Lord Jesus, what you believe about justification, sanctification and the glory to come is actually true?

I was taught that if I was baptized as a baby and made a confirmation of my faith at the age of 13 I would be assured eternal life. It didn’t matter how I lived.

- Is that the truth? (multitudes of people cling to that belief)

I was taught that when I gave my life to Jesus that all of my troubles would go away, that God would prosper me in whatever I did and he would heal all of my diseases.

- Is that true?

I was taught that if I had enough faith I could make the sun stand still in the heavens like Joshua. But I can’t even make my grandchildren stand still.

I am totally dependent on the Holy Spirit to guide me into all truth.

I rely upon the Word of God to be a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

I study the Bible diligently to see if the things I am hearing actually align with God's revealed truth.

- A truly noble life, is one that eagerly receives the Word of God and examines the scripture daily in search of God's truth..

Acts 17: 10 The brothers immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived they went into the Jewish synagogue. 11 Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.