

Mark 8:31-38

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[0 : 00] Good morning, everyone. As Nathan said, we'll be in Mark chapter 8 this morning, so let's go ahead and look at our text. So as he said, we'll be picking up in verse 31 of Mark chapter 8.

So this is the Word of God, picking up in verse 31. 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. And he said this plainly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. 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.

And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it. Whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospels will save him. For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? For what can a man give in return for his soul?

[1 : 02] For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

Now, I believe this morning, many of us are very familiar with this passage and with the context. Those of us that are on the scripture replay and we read this Tuesday. But I think for all of us, it would be helpful to just remind ourselves of a little bit of the context before we jump right in.

So this is in Mark's gospel. Just before this, there's many different miracles and healings recorded of Jesus's ministry. And all of these are really interspersed with teaching.

And we've heard many of these parables actually in this account. And we see the death of John the Baptist. We see more miracles. We see Jesus begin to really call out some people too.

He was calling out the Pharisees for holding their traditions higher than the commandments of God. And then something really important for our text this morning. Just before our text, we see Peter make the bold statement that he believes that Jesus is the Christ.

[2 : 09] But then right after that, because of Jesus's desire to finish and fulfill his father's plan, he tells Peter and the rest of the disciples to not tell anyone at this point.

This seems to primarily be because the disciples had much more of a political view of a reigning Messiah coming and delivering them from the reign of Rome.

And they don't understand yet the need for the cross in the kingdom or how the Messiah will suffer and die. And so Peter made a really great statement just before this yes. But he doesn't even quite understand that statement that he himself just made.

And then we have our text. And our text, I think, is a rather intense one. Starts off with Jesus foretelling his death and resurrection. And both Jesus and Peter rebuking each other.

Then a command for all of those who follow Jesus to put their own desires to death. To take up their cross and follow him. A talk of a life being lost.

[3 : 10] A talk of a life being gained. And all of those ways are exactly how we're going to break down our study today. So the five sections this morning that we're going to look at will be, number one, Jesus's foretelling.

Number two, and I think I made up this word, but I think that's okay. The rebukings. Number three, the taking up of our cross.

Number three, the taking up of our cross. Number four, the life we lose. And number five, the life we gain. I know there's five, but I promise they'll be really quick this morning.

So getting right into it, let's look at Jesus's foretelling. So in verse 31, in the first part of verse 32, Jesus begins talking about something that I believe the disciples had seen coming for a while.

Something that they were dreading and did not like the sounds of too much at all. And in some ways they'd already experienced some of them. And that was suffering. And being rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes.

[4 : 09] I believe at this point in Jesus's ministry, the disciples were quite used to being rejected. Jesus was drawing large crowds, many due to just his miracles, but many others because of his teaching.

And we've noted through these gospels, people were astonished by his teaching, right? It says that he spoke as someone with authority and not as their scribes had typically been speaking. And this made many of the scribes and the chief priests nervous.

Many disliked the crowds. That he was drawing people away from them and to himself, away from what was the typical religious setup they had. And many others disliked the teachings he was presenting.

We read the account recently. It stuck out in my mind. I'm showing this. It's actually just after this text about a young man who comes to Jesus and he asked, How can I inherit eternal life?

And Jesus let him know. Jesus began listening up the commandments. And the young man answered back to him and said, Yep, I've done that. Am I good? But Jesus got to his heart.

[5 : 11] He got to the heart of this young man. He said, You're missing one thing. You're lacking one thing. Go sell everything you have and give it to the poor. And the young man became very disappointed.

It seems like he was really frustrated by Jesus's response. And if we think about the why of that a little bit, it's because Jesus didn't give him a way out. This young man was looking for a way out. He said he had fulfilled the commandments from his youth. And he was thinking, Oh, am I good? Do I have eternal life now? But Jesus cut right to his heart.

He knew where the young man was living in disobedience. And our Lord didn't just care about his outward actions. He cared about the desires of his heart that he saw.

And when Jesus brought that out, this young man was offended. And Jesus did this all the time. That's just one example. He offended people because he was very truthful. And he was drawing crowds.

[6 : 11] People weren't happy with him. And I think the disciples were quite aware of this, as they were, of course, experiencing some of the same being right there with him. But Jesus took it a bit further.

And I think this is why Peter begins to be pretty upset. Jesus said that he would be killed. And Jesus also said three days later he would be raised. So obviously really, really bold statements that he's making here.

And Mark notes that Jesus made them very clear. Very clear. But Peter did not like this. Peter did not especially like the part about him being killed.

And that's going to get us into the second part. So secondly, the rebukings. The rebukings. So there's two here. So first, let's look at Peter's rebuking of Jesus.

So in our text, it lets us know that Peter took Jesus aside and rebuked him. If you look over at a couple of parallel passages, there's one in Matthew and Luke. You can get a little bit more detail.

[7 : 08] And in Matthew's account of this event, he gives a bit of detail of what Peter says. So this is Matthew 16, verse 22. It's recorded that Peter said, far be it from you, Lord.

This shall never happen to you. So obviously, Peter was really upset. Remember that right before this, right, just before this in the chapter, Peter had declared Jesus as the Christ.

The long-awaited Messiah, our Lord, our Savior. So Peter, hearing who he had just asserted as the Messiah, saying, I'm about to suffer. In fact, I'm about to be killed. Killed?

That didn't sit well with Peter at all, right? And so, of course, he's going to say, no, Lord, that can't be right. That can't happen to you. And we can see at that point, a lot of Peter's issue seems to be stemming from a bit of a misunderstanding of what Messiah would truly be like.

Like we talked about earlier, he had a view that it would be a political leader that would save them from the rule of Rome. He didn't fully understand the eternal or the heavenly aspects of the kingdom yet.

[8 : 11] He didn't get yet that Jesus would usher in so much more than just a political rule. Peter, and likely the rest of the disciples at this point, as Peter typically spoke their mind, was a bit too concerned about the here and now.

And that gets us into how Jesus responds. So this is the second rebuking. This is Jesus' rebuking Peter. So let's look at exactly what he says. This is in verse 33 here.

It says, So this is a very, very intense rebuke.

It starts off with a get behind me, Satan. This is Peter that he's talking to. Peter said something so good right before just the verses right before our text this morning.

Made the declaration that he believed that Jesus was the Messiah. But right after this, he does not like what Jesus says. And Jesus rebukes him really, really intensely.

[9 : 13] And that is, what is the why that Jesus gives? It says, For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man. So it's not, it may be immediately apparent to some of us, but it's a little bit interesting to think about.

Why does he respond in that way? In other words, how does this relate to him really not wanting Jesus to be killed? Well, Jesus being killed would likely crush Peter's whole notion of this political rule.

And Jesus continuing and continuing and continuing to be rejected by the religious leaders of that day. It doesn't seem too good for that either. As we said earlier, and as Jesus is making clear right here, Peter is a little too concerned with the here and now rule and not setting his mind on the heavenly future, the things of above.

And so that's exactly what Jesus says. Peter, you're not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man. And now note the flow of this passage, because it's really important for our understanding of the later verses to understand this flow here.

I just looked at 31 through 33, right? A conversation between Jesus and his disciples, and even more specifically, primarily Jesus and Peter. Now, with their misunderstanding of the Messiah's role, they're setting their minds on the here and now, the things of man, not the things of God.

[10 : 38] Now note, in verse 34, before Jesus begins making his next statements, he draws over the crowd, right? To be with him and with the disciples. And he begins to speak to all of them, not just Peter and the disciples anymore.

Again, right after he noted that Peter and the disciples were thinking about the here and now and not God's kingdom. So he says to the crowd and the disciples, and this is part of the way through 34. Let's look at this again.

Jesus says, He says, So note, in this context, that Jesus is continuing the theme.

Continuing the idea of where we saw Satan drawing Peter's mind away. And he's seeking to redirect people's hearts to the things of God. And that brings us to our third point.

So our third one, the taking up of our cross. The taking up of our cross. Jesus calls us to deny ourselves, to take up our cross and follow him. And this is same concept is put so many different ways and so many different passages.

[12 : 06] Colossians 3, we put it, Put to death, therefore, what is earthly in you, sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Or a bit later in Jesus's ministry, it says after the disciples, they're having that debate about who's the greatest.

This is Matthew's account in Matthew 20. This verse is 26 through 28. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant. And whoever would be first among you must be your slave.

Even as the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve. And to give his life as a ransom for many. And then Paul continues to super expound upon this idea in Philippians 2.

In fact, we already did a little chunk here. So go ahead and turn with me there to Philippians 2. Philippians 2. Philippians 2. So this is the first time that it's felt super strange because I hear no Bible flipping, but I see lots of Bible flipping.

So Philippians 2, we're going to pick up in verse 3. It says, Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.

[13 : 18] Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men and being found in human form.

He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore, God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name.

So that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth. And every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. So we looked at

a bunch of texts, and I'm aware.

So let's pause right there and think about some of these implications of the denying ourselves. Colossians, that first one we looked at, showed us very clearly that this denying of ourselves includes denying our flesh, right?

Fighting our sin, not giving in to our sinful natures, and truly pressing on into the things that the Lord would have us. And then after that, the disciples having their argument and wanting to be guaranteed seats right by Jesus.

[14:28] Jesus reminds us to follow his own example, that whoever would be first among us must actually humble themselves, become a slave, right? To all, just as he came, the eternal ruler of the universe.

He came not to be served, but to serve. And then this big chunk that we just read in Philippians 2. We see the idea of not thinking so much about our own interests, not looking for selfish ambition or gain for ourselves.

But again, seeing the model of Jesus, right? Who humbled himself. And now Paul reminds us that Jesus became so humble, so humble even to the point of death. Death on the cross.

And in that way, Jesus has been exalted. And we now see him as the prime example of this self-denial, this taking of our cross. And we are to model this giving up of ourselves, even to the point of death when necessary.

And this leads us into the next point of our study. The life we lose. The life we lose. So let's look at verses 35 to 37 one more time.

[15:33] It says, For whoever would save his life will lose it. But whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel will save it. For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his own soul?

For what can a man give in return for his soul? So verse 35, we see someone trying to hold on to their life. Whoever would save his life, they're going to lose it.

In other words, whoever tries to hold on to the things of this world, keep their selfish ambition. Do things that look out for their own interests and not the interests of others.

Live a life of comfort or of ease. Experience all the things that the world has to offer. And then verse 36 and 37, it even talks about gaining the whole world.

Everything in the world. According to worldly standards, having all you could ever want. Being able to do everything you could ever want to do. A life of leisure.

[16:32] Whoever would choose to live this way, that our text is saying. Jesus makes it very clear. They will lose their life on final judgment. Those who do not humble themselves under our Lord's authority and take up their cross and follow him.

They will lose their life, right? And think about these rhetorical questions that Jesus poses here in 36, 37. For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?

For what can a man give in return for his soul? I believe Jesus asked this question to show a bit of the ridiculousness about caring for the things of this world.

If we truly believe that at the end of this life, there is an eternity ahead of us. More time than we can fathom. And those who choose to follow Jesus to submit to his authority to humble ourselves.

Will have life everlasting. And those who choose to seek their own interests. To live after the things of this world will have the eternal punishment due for their sin. With those beliefs in mind, it seems so silly.

[17:37] So out of order. To think about choosing a life of gain in this world. And to suffer an eternal punishment. Because there is truly no profit in gaining everything we could ask for in this world.

But losing our own soul for eternity. And also think about this a little bit from our perspective as believers. A believer's perspective on this. This means that as we choose to follow Christ.

As we put others' desires ahead of our own. As we choose to seek his kingdom first. As we seek to take up our cross and follow Jesus. We must put to death those desires that are earthly within us.

Not seek our own comfort, our own pleasure. Or all that the world has to offer us. But instead seek others' interests above our own. And this may mean suffering.

Even suffering to the point of death. We're asked to take up our cross. And follow Jesus. And Jesus' path leads through suffering. I think Paul talks about this trade-off really well.

[18 : 38] In 2 Corinthians 4. This is verse 17 and 18. Paul reminds us. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory. Beyond all comparison.

As we look now to the things that are seen. But to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient. But the things that are unseen are eternal. And that's going to bring us to our fifth point.

Last one. It will be a little bit longer. Of our study. The life we gain. The life we gain. So as believers we have seen what we must give up.

We've seen that we must give up our earthly desires. We must give up our own interests. So as to put the desires of others above them. We must give up many things. But we gain so much. Paul said in 2 Corinthians that we just read.

That this light momentary affliction. Whatever suffering we face. In this life. And think about how insignificant. So many times that our suffering is. Compared to the one who wrote that.

[19 : 37] Paul who suffered so much for the name of Christ. This life. Whatever we go through here. Cannot compare to the eternal weight of glory. That we are being prepared for. Like I mentioned earlier.

Margaret and I have been. Down in Hiram for a few days now. With my parents. And we were talking. I guess a couple nights ago now. On the topic of Jesus' return. And I think.

Often in my heart. I can get concerned with. Not truly. Feeling like I have an appropriate longing for it. And I think that especially happens.

When I feel like things are going well. When our life feels at ease. When it seems like things couldn't be better. But I think. Most if not all of us. Are feeling some measure less than that right now.

We're not feeling. That life is at ease. That the world is going well. In fact. I think the Lord may be working in our hearts. Throughout this time of the virus. Just a deeper longing for his return.

[20 : 38] And. Now. For those of us though. That sometimes that. Is a struggle. With that longing. Wanting to long for Jesus' return. But feeling like we don't. Why is that?

Why do we think that. This life is just as good. As it would be if he returned. Because if we're real with ourselves. We act like that sometimes. What's going on in our hearts.

When that is happening. Something to note here. From this passage. We just looked at in 2nd Corinthians. Is. Paul describes this life. As a momentary affliction.

I would wager to say. That most of the time. Most of us. Don't feel like this life. Is much of an affliction. And sure. There are certainly. Good times in this life.

That the Lord has ordained. That he's giving us such joy. In the true life. That we are. Gaining in him. But Paul still describes this life. The suffering here.

[21 : 35] As an affliction. If you want a huge list. Of what he suffered. He gives it to you. Right there. I believe that's 2nd Corinthians. Right. And according to 2nd Timothy 3.

Verse 12. Says all who desire to live a godly life. In Christ Jesus. Will be persecuted. But do our lives look like that. It says all who desire to live a godly life.

I hope that's us. So. We should be seeing some sort of pushback. And if we're not. Why not? Are we truly living out our faith?

Are we actually. Doing what. Our passage here. That Jesus. Makes it very intense. Are we actually taking up our cross. And following him? I remember.

Many many times. Whether it was like a community group meeting. Or whether it was. Just catching up with Clay. He would begin. Talk to me about somebody.

[22 : 30] That he had been sharing the gospel with. And tell me about where they were at. In their understanding. What he'd been reading with them. All that kind of thing. And. Almost always.

He would get to a point. I mean. Tell me that. They'd gotten to a point. Where he was trying to convince them. To not follow Jesus. And the first time I heard him start talking about this.

I was really confused. I believe a lot of the time. When we're sharing the gospel with somebody. We get really excited. When someone. Actually ends up being interested. Wants to.

Wants to follow Christ. So why would anyone ever want to try to convince anyone. To not follow Jesus? It's because it. It's a serious weight. And I think we sometimes forget that.

Our passage here. That we've looked at. Makes it really clear. And another place I'd like to look to. Is Luke 14. Go ahead and turn to Luke 14 as well. Luke chapter 14.

[23 : 35] So we're going to look at. Verses 25 through 33 here. Picking up in verse 25. It says. Now great crowds accompanied him. And he turned and said to them.

If anyone comes to me. And does not hate his own father. And mother. And wife. And children. And brothers. And sisters. Yes. And even his own life. He cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not bear his own cross.

And come after me. Cannot be my disciple. For which of you. Desiring to build a tower. Does not first sit down. And count the cost. Whether he has enough. To complete it. Otherwise. When he has laid a foundation.

And is not able to finish. All who see it. Begin to mock him. Saying. This man began to build. And was not able to finish. Or what king. Going out to encounter. Another king in the war. Will not sit down first.

And deliberate. Whether he is able. With 10,000. To meet him. Who comes against him. With 20,000. And if not. While the other is yet. A great ways away. Way off. He sends a delegation. And asks for terms of peace.

[24 : 32] So therefore. Any one of you. Who does not renounce. All that he has. Cannot be my disciple. Notice that weight. Weight of everything here. The whole idea.

Of counting up the cost. Is that foreign to us? Do we sometimes. Forget. That we. Truly need to renounce. All that we have. And follow Jesus.

That it requires. A total. Total life change. Or do we even cross. Sometimes. Into a form of easy. Believism. Where. We don't see much change.

Can we echo. With Paul. In 1st Corinthians 15. That. If Christ. Hadn't truly been raised. That we were of. All men. Most miserable. Why does he say that?

Because he had given up. Everything. To follow Jesus. He had given up. His entire. Way of life. Because he had. Counted up the cost. And found that Christ.

[25 : 30] Was truly worth it. Do we feel that same way? Have we truly given up. Everything. Now. I've talked on. Much of all the.

Rough parts. I think. Seen from a human perspective. Of the life we gain. As we follow Christ. Because I think that's what our. Text is trying to stress. But why is it worth it?

Why have we all chosen to. Follow Jesus? Well. Like we talked about earlier. Peter had just made. A really great statement. Even though he didn't.

Quite understand it yet. He had made a great statement. And what does his statement mean? That Jesus is the Christ. The Messiah. That meant the inauguration.

Of the kingdom of God. That meant the inauguration. Of the new covenant. Think about. Jeremiah 31. With the prophecy. Of our new covenant. You can turn there. If you want. Jeremiah 31. Very familiar passage.

[26 : 27] 31 to 34. Is what I'm going to read. Says. Behold the days are coming. Declares the Lord. When I will make a new covenant. With the house of Israel. And the house of Judah. Not like the covenant.

That I made with their fathers. On the day. When I took them by the. By the hands. To bring them out of the land. Of Egypt. My covenant that they broke. Though I was their husband. Declares the Lord. For this is the covenant. That I will make.

With the house of Israel. After those days. Declare the Lord. I will put my law. Within them. And I will write it. On their hearts. And I will be their God. And they shall be my people. And no longer shall one.

Each one teach his neighbor. And each his brother. Saying. Know the Lord. For they shall all know me. From the least of them. To the greatest. Declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity. And I will remember their sin no more.

Note the preciousness here. In this. New covenant. This covenant. That Jesus is bringing about. A covenant that is putting us. As God's people. And him.

[27 : 23] As our God. And we can know the Lord. We can know the Lord. From the least of us. To the greatest. And he will forgive. Our iniquity.

And remember our sin no more. The joy in that. The joy of knowing our Lord. And in being in right standing with him. Through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus.

And we have this life. This eternal life. That's even beginning now. Through knowing our Lord. And the eternity. That we'll spend with him in glory. To trade a good life.

For a so-called good life. In the eyes of this world. For eternal forgiveness of sins. And being in the presence of our Lord and Savior forever. It's a cost. But for those of us who know Christ. I believe we can. Echo with Paul. That this momentary affliction. Is nothing to be compared with the eternal way of glory. And so we do. Take up our cross. [28 : 21] And follow Jesus. So I'd encourage you today. This week. To really consider that. Are you truly. Taking up your cross. And following Jesus. As he's called us to.