



THE GOSPEL OF

MARK



Sermon Series Notes

“What it means to follow Jesus and why it’s worth it” (Mark 8:27-38)

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Topic: Discipleship

v.27a Caesarea Philippi is not to be confused with Caesarea (map, history). Caesarea is located on the coast, it’s where Phillip the evangelist made his home (Acts 8:40; 21:8). Caesarea Philippi is 25 miles north of the Sea of Galilee, near the base of Mt. Hermon. It’s a beautiful area. One of the largest springs that feeds the Jordan is there. In the OT it was known as Baal Hermon or Baal Gad, and later Pnias after the Greek god Pan. It was named Caesarea Philippi by Phillip II in honor of the Roman emperor Augustus Caesar.

vv.27b-28 Herod thought that Jesus was John the Baptist raised from the dead (Mark 6:12-16); Some thought Jesus was Elijah because of Malachi 4:5-6; Some would not commit to either John the Baptist raised from the dead or Elijah, they simply thought Jesus must be one of the many OT prophets come back for an end times revival that would usher in the kingdom of God.

v.29a This is not the million-dollar question, this is the question upon which no price tag can be placed, because the answer to this question is connected with determining one’s eternal destiny!

Now that we know what other people’s opinion are about who Jesus is, Jesus wants to know what these apostles have to say about Him.

v.29b Peter didn’t come up with this answer based on his IQ. See Matthew 16:15-17. We do not know if the answer was immediate, or if there was a period of silence before Peter spoke up.

Even though Jesus made it clear that Peter’s revelation came from the Father, he must have felt pretty good at that moment. He has been granted privilege and spiritual insight that none of the other apostles had. I wonder if this was one of the things he would later use to argue that he was greater than his peers?

v.30 Another potentially mysterious verse. The clear answer to me is that the Father is working out the perfect timing for Jesus to die on the cross. And speaking of the cross. Read Mark 8:31-38.

There is so much in this text we could unpack. I pray the Lord helps me to know what to emphasize the most, and what to view from the bird’s eye.

A personal conviction regarding the person of Jesus Christ.

- See John 18:33-34; Pilate was given very clear and personal revelation as to who Jesus is, but unlike Peter, was not willing to go public. Pilate resisted the Holy Spirit, gave in to the pressure of the crowd (public opinion), and was never saved. He attempted to remove himself from personal responsibility, but God will allow no one to skirt the personal responsibility of being for or against Jesus (Matthew 27:24). Especially see Matthew 12:30-32.

- Coming to terms as to just who Jesus Christ is absolutely essential to salvation. Once we clearly receive revelation as to Who He really is, what we do with that revelation becomes the bridge between heaven and hell.
- A personal conviction is essential to keep one from being swayed by the crowd, and the crowd can be very influential in a person's life (Matthew 7:13; Acts 19:32).

An understanding of what it really means to follow Jesus.

- Jesus wants everyone to know this; He addresses the apostles first, but then calls the crowd so that all might understand.
- Acts 9:16 I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.
- See Luke 9:57-62; 14:25-35
- See Acts 26:24; Hosea 9:7; II Timothy 1:8.
- Political and papal Rome certainly have a history of killing true saints of God; Roman rulers such as Nero, Domitian, Trajan, Hadrian, Marcus Aurelius, Diocletian, and many others brutally persecuted Christians; Paul the apostle was executed by Nero, & all the other apostles except John died martyrs deaths under Roman rule; John of course was banished to the island of Patmos by Domitian; Polycarp was a direct disciple of John's. Rome burned him at the stake. Here's what he prayed just before his execution:
 - Lord God Almighty, Father of your blessed and beloved child Jesus Christ, through whom we have received knowledge of you, God of angels and hosts and all creation, and of the whole race of the upright who live in your presence: I bless you that you have thought me worthy of this day and hour, to be numbered among the martyrs and share in the cup of Christ, for resurrection to eternal life, for soul and body in the incorruptibility of the Holy Spirit. Among them may I be accepted before you today, as a rich and acceptable sacrifice, just as you, the faithful and true God, have prepared and foreshown and brought about. For this reason and for all things I praise you, I bless you, I glorify you, through the eternal heavenly high priest Jesus Christ, your beloved child, through whom be glory to you, with him and the Holy Spirit, now and for the ages to come. Amen.

The fire was then lit and shortly thereafter a soldier stabbed Polycarp to death by order of the magistrate.

- Among those persecuted by papal Rome are people like John Wycliffe, John Hus, who was influenced by John Wycliffe. They burned John Hus at the stake. His name in German sounded like "goose," so his nickname was "the goose," and that's where the phrase "the goose has been cooked" or "your goose is cooked" came from.
- William Tyndale translated the first English Bible taken directly from the Hebrew and Greek texts. He was strangulated and then burned at the stake.
- You may have also heard the name Martin Luther.

A resolve that nothing and no one will deter me from living out the will of God for my life.

- Peter obviously has no idea how foolish his words to Jesus are here. He thinks he is acting out of love and concern for Jesus, but the truth is he is being used by Satan to deter Jesus from the will of His heavenly Father – the cross.
- Peter wasn't the only one who attempted to deter Jesus from the will of the Father. See John 11:6-16. Meaning of vv.9-10, a person walking by the light is a person walking in the will of God. A person walking in the darkness is a person not walking in the will of God. And what happens to the one walking in darkness? They stumble. If these disciples were going to continue to follow Jesus (walk in the will of God), they would have to be willing to die with him.
- See Acts 21:4, 10-12, 30-36 All the warnings about what would happen if Paul went to Jerusalem are beginning to come true. And when word reached the ears of all who had warned him, there must have been a variety of emotions and reactions. Many would immediately think, "I told him so," or "He should have listened to us." There would be emotions of grief and deep concern, but also of anger at Paul's stubborn determination to go to Jerusalem. And who are these people who had adamantly attempted to dissuade Paul from going to Jerusalem? They are fellow disciples, ministry associates, even close friends. Paul, knowing God's will for his life, would not allow fellow disciples, ministry associates, even close friends to deter him.
- Sometimes it's the person closest to you that seeks to deter you from the path God has for your life. Peter's motives were sincere, but he was sincerely wrong. I have seen parents, friends, family members, spouses, deter or at least attempt to deter those they love from the will of God. Parents who are concerned about their child going on that short term cross-cultural mission trip. Loved ones who don't understand a couple taking their young children to live in a dangerous and uncomfortable part of the world for the sake of the gospel. They may get sick, they may suffer, and yes, they may die. ***But to die for the cause of Christ and in the will of God is to live, and to live for only the comforts & pleasures of this world outside the will of God, is to die.***
- Can you imagine what it was like for Mother Mary to see the Father's will worked out in the life of her Son? See Luke 2:33-35; But can you imagine how proud Mary is of her Son, and how heaven & eternity has erased all the pain she endured for her Son to follow and live out the Father's will for his life?
- See I Cor.2:14-15; If even those with the Spirit at times attempt to deter us from God's will (Acts 21:12-14, Matt.16, John 11), we should not be at all surprised when those without the Spirit do not understand.
- We are seeking the mind of the Spirit in regard to one of our pastors, Pastor Frank Dehn, and an invitation to go to Mosul, Iraq, with Samaritan's Purse.
- Luke 9:51; Now, I want us to understand something that I think is so cool. Once we determine that we will follow Jesus, even if it means suffering, or death, no one can touch us unless the Father grants them permission to do so. Jesus said to Pilate, "You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from heaven." Satan could not touch Job apart from God's permissive will.

A life perspective that includes resurrection, & belief in a world beyond this present world.

- See Mark 9:9-10, 30-32; 10:32-34; 14:27-28; 16:9-15.

- A perspective that does not include resurrection will cause one to place greater value on the things gained in this life rather than those gained for eternity. Jim Elliot was killed by members of the very people he was trying to reach with the gospel, a cannibalistic tribe in Ecuador. A quote he made about following Christ no matter the cost has now become well known - "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose."
- Heb.11:19, 25-26; 12:2-3
 - (Moses) Heb.11:27...he persevered because he saw him who is invisible.
- The eternality of the issue of the soul; We are spirit beings who possess a soul and live in a body. God has set eternity in every person's heart (Eccl.3:11). Eternity is a long time!
- See Phil.1:20-24; Isa.57:1
- As I stand here today, I am as right with God as I've been at any time in my life, and am extremely thankful to the Lord for that. If it were not for my wife, my family, and the good that the Lord may still want to do through my life, I am ready to meet my Savior. I have a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far. Do you? I pray you do. And if you don't, I pray you will. Because it is only that kind of commitment and perspective that will see you through the dark days as a follower of Jesus Christ.

A need to repent when we fail.

- Peter would need to repent of trying to deter Jesus from the cross.
- Peter would also need to later repent of his unwillingness to suffer for Jesus, for the shame of not only not being willing to confess Christ, but to actually deny Him publicly. Peter, the very apostle who first received the revelation from heaven regarding the truth about Christ, was also the first to publicly deny him. Thank God that, after he did so, he was filled with the kind of grief that accompanies repentance.
 - Matt.26: 75 Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken: "Before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times." And he went outside and wept bitterly.
- After repenting, Peter would become an example to his brothers of courage in the face of suffering and threats (Acts; See Luke 22:32; Phil.1:12-14).
- Peter would years later fail again (Gal.2:11-13).
- See "On Being A Servant," pp.34-35

CONCLUSION

Once I come to terms with who Jesus is, and commit my life to following Him, I must realize that to follow Him in this world will require self-denial and a personal cross.

It takes courage to follow Jesus Christ. There is an interesting list of the character of people who are not "saved" in Rev.21:7-8.

I must also realize that I am weak, and I will probably fail on the way to maturity, and possibly even after I become mature. Even John the Baptist, when living out the reality of his personal cross, doubted whether Jesus was really the Messiah. And we have been reminded today of Peter's repeated failure.

Perhaps you have failed in following Christ. Repent. Your renewed courage for Christ will not only prove the genuineness of your salvation, make you glad when you stand before Jesus one day, but also be used to strengthen other disciples (Phil.1:14; Luke 22:32).

Perhaps you are a hindrance to someone else in their commitment to follow God's will for their life. Place them in God's hands, look beyond this present world, and allow God to be glorified through their lives, whether by life, or by death.