

Mark 8 v. 31 – Chapter 9: v. 1 –

Title: The way of the Cross for Jesus and for Us.

³¹ And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. ³² He spoke this word openly. Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. ³³ But when He had turned around and looked at His disciples, He rebuked Peter, saying, “Get behind Me, Satan! For you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.” ³⁴ When He had called the people to *Himself*, with His disciples also, He said to them, “Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. ³⁵ For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s will save it. ³⁶ For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? ³⁷ Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? ³⁸ For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.”

And He said to them, “Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power.”

Introduction

We are now entering the second half of Mark’s Gospel.

The first half concluded in chapter 8: v.29 where we finished last month.

This was Peter’s confession of faith. He confessed that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God.

The second half of Mark’s Gospel will keep us focused upon Jesus as the Son of God.

The climax of this will be the centurion’s confession of faith in Mark 15: v.39.

³⁹ So when the centurion, who stood opposite Him, saw that He cried out like this and breathed His last, he said, “Truly this Man was the Son of God!”

In addition to this theme Mark will concentrate on the forthcoming death and resurrection of Jesus.

Up to now Jesus has been concerned with demonstrating, through his words and miracles, that He is a King of a different Kingdom.

This is the kingdom of God.

Jesus has not mentioned yet how He will ultimately deal with the sinful human heart, or how he will destroy Satan.

So far all the miracles of Jesus have been moving towards the greatest miracle of all.

This is the final victory for every believer, through the death of Jesus on the cross.

This victory will also result in the defeat of Satan.

In the verses that we will learn from today Mark introduces us to the death and resurrection of Jesus.

I will divide these verses into three sections.

These are:

Chapter 8: v. 31-33 – The necessity of the death of Jesus

v. 34-38 – The necessity of our spiritual death

Chapter 9: v. 1 – The Glory which follows both deaths

1. The Necessity of the death of Jesus - 8: v. 31-33.

These three verses must have come as a real shock to the disciples.

Nothing that Jesus has said so far has prepared the disciples for this statement.

In v. 31 Jesus told His disciples that He must suffer many things, be rejected by all the Jewish religious leaders, and be killed.

The only blessing in that statement came at the end when Jesus said that after his death, three days later, He would rise from the dead.

Peter was so disturbed that he actually rebuked Jesus for this statement.

Jesus responded to this rebuke and spoke to all the disciples.

In plain simple terms, Jesus said to His disciples, “To avoid my death and rejection, and resurrection, is to follow the way of Satan”

In other words, in order to defeat Satan, Jesus had to die.

There would be no future glory in the resurrection without the death of Jesus.

The people at that time, including the disciples, had the wrong mind-set about why Jesus had come to this earth.

Peter had declared his faith in Jesus as the Son of God, but had failed to understand the real purpose of Jesus coming to this earth.

They believe who Jesus is, but fail to understand his real mission on this earth.

Many Christians today don't really understand the full significance as to why Jesus left the glory of Heaven to come to this world.

Let me just explain briefly why Jesus had to die on the cross.

1. God created the first man, Adam, perfect and without sin, for a friendship relationship. God was Adam's creator owner. Adam was created to live forever.
God placed Adam in a beautiful garden. He was given only one prohibition, with one warning. The prohibition was not to eat any fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The warning from God was that if Adam disobeyed then he would die.
God created a woman to support Adam. This also enabled them both to have children.
2. Unfortunately, one of God's Angels, called Lucifer, Satan, or the devil, depending on the translation in your Bible, entered the garden, tempted Adam's wife Eve to disobey God's word, and eat the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
Later Eve persuaded Adam to do the same.
3. God kept his promise and Adam and Eve had to die. As a result, we all have a short life span on this earth, and will eventually die. We are also part of that judgement, because God's word the Bible tells us this.
(Romans 5: v. 12 –in N.L.T.)
¹²When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned.

There was also a curse made upon our present earth. (Gen. 3:17)
4. However, such was God's love for his created people, that he had to find a way of forgiveness for their sins and restoring the original relationship, without compromising His Holiness.
The only way he could do this was to provide His Son, Jesus Christ, as a sacrifice to pay the penalty of our sin.
When Jesus died on the cross, He took the punishment for all those people who would believe in Him and put their faith and trust in Jesus.
5. So everybody who believes in Jesus and His death for their sins, is released from the power of Satan. Satan no longer has power over their destiny.
In other words, Satan is defeated. In addition to this release from Satan, all believers will start a new life one day in their resurrected bodies on a "New Earth" which will be perfect.
God will start again, except this time, Satan will be confined to a place called hell, together with all the other people who refuse the love of God, through Jesus.

In the sermon notes I have listed all the important verses that you need to look up in the Bible to be fully informed about what I have told you.

Everything I have told you is written in the Bible.

It is not my idea or thinking, it is what God has said in His word, the Bible.

Here are the verses to study.

Genesis Chapter 2-3, John Chapter 11: v. 17-27, John 14: v. 1-6, Romans Chapter 1: v. 18-20, Romans 3: v. 9-26, Romans 5: v. 6-12, and Romans 6: v. 15-23. Revelation Chapter 20: v. 7-15. Revelation Chapter 21-22.

2. The necessity of our spiritual death – v.34-38.

In v. 34-38 Jesus tells the crowd and His disciples the implications of His death for the way they must follow Him.

In v. 34 Jesus makes it very clear that Christian discipleship involves self-denial and cross bearing.

So what exactly does that mean for us today?

Firstly, we need to understand what this challenge by Jesus meant to the original hearers. How would they have understood what Jesus said?

Jesus had just spoken about His physical death.

To follow this statement with a reference to taking up your cross, would have been understood by His hearers as an invitation to come and die with Him.

So to the people at that time, in order to follow Jesus, it would have meant a willingness to give up their lives for the sake of Jesus and the gospel message.

They would have understood that they were committing themselves to making any sacrifice needed in order to follow Jesus.

Jesus then goes on in v.35-37 to explain the spiritual significance that is involved in this radical call to discipleship.

In v. 35 Jesus says that if you want to avoid the cross and go your own way, then ultimately you will lose your life.

In other words, you will not share in the resurrection life which follows later.

The second half of v. 35 explains what will happen if you do sacrifice your life and follow Jesus.

You will ultimately save your life for all eternity and you will share in the resurrection life that Jesus promises to all those who follow Him.

In v. 36 Jesus points out the value of your soul.

Jesus said, you can have everything in the world, for this moment in time, but in the end, your soul is more important, because it continues for eternity.

Either your soul will continue in your resurrected body on the future new earth, or your soul will continue in some form and be punished in hell for all eternity.

The Bible teaches that there is no possibility of a second chance later of getting your soul moved from Hell to Heaven.

Jesus told a parable to give an example of this truth.

Luke 16: v. 19-26.

¹⁹ "There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. ²⁰ But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, ²¹ desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. ²² So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. ²³ And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. ²⁴ "Then he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.' ²⁵ But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. ²⁶ And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.'

The final warning comes from Jesus in v. 38.

If we are ashamed of Jesus and His words now, by that statement Jesus means the way of the cross and the sacrifice needed to follow Him, then when Jesus returns in His Glory at a later date, He will reject us.

In other words, if we want a future glorified life with Jesus, then we need not only to believe in what Jesus has done for us on the cross, dying for our sins, but we also must be prepared to do, whatever it takes to follow Him.

Over the last 2,000 years, in order to follow Jesus, for many Christians it has meant losing their life.

For many Japanese Christians over the last 60 years it has meant breaking with family Shinto and Buddhist traditions. They have had to stop going to shrines and Temples in order to please their families. To them it has been a sacrifice.

They have also had to remove the family altar in their homes.

We are coming up to the New Year Celebrations.

The challenge for Japanese Christians is not to go to the shrines and Temples, even if you are doing it just to keep your family happy.

Actually, you are not keeping your family happy. You are making it harder for them to believe in Jesus. If people notice that you are prepared to make sacrifices for Jesus, then they will realise that Jesus means something to you.

Don't believe the devil's lie about compromise. The devil always tries to offer you an easy way, this is the way of compromise.

The way of compromise is NOT the life that God blesses.

3. The Glory which will follow both deaths. (Jesus and our death) 9: v. 1.

In Chapter 9: v. 1, Jesus gives His disciples a promise.

I would like to read this verse in the New Living translation

Jesus went on to say, "I tell you the truth, some standing here right now will not die before they see the Kingdom of God arrive in great power!"

Jesus here promises some sort of personal experience that will give the disciples the confidence to believe in a glorified life after death.

Six days later, Jesus took Peter, James and John up a high mountain and they had an experience that Jesus had promised them.

Next month we will continue our studies in Mark, starting from that experience which is called the transfiguration.

We now come to our time of Communion.

This is a service of "Thanksgiving" in which those who take part are thanking Jesus for dying on a cross for their sins.

If you are a Christian and have asked Jesus to forgive your sins, then please take part in this service.

If you are not yet a Christian, please remain in your seat, but refuse to receive the bread and the wine, when it is offered to you.

We will not be offended by your refusal to take part in this service.

Let us pray.