

The Life Challenge

"I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." John 10:10

Series: Following Hard After Jesus

Title: Follow Jesus to the Cross

Text: Mark 8:27-38

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WARM-UP

Describe a time when you were in a class but you were not grasping the concept the teacher was trying to explain to you. Your teacher groaned and you sat perplexed. What were the barriers to this teaching/learning experience?

The confrontation between Jesus' kingdom mission and the Jewish/Roman rivals is coming up quickly. Jesus is on a retreat with His disciples to make a critical advance in their discipleship. He wants us to do the same today. What would make Jesus groan today? What leaves you perplexed, "Jesus, I just don't get it?"

DISCUSSION*

1. Mark 8:27-38 are a "hinge" for Jesus and all who would follow Him. Discuss the comparison between Mark 1 - 8:26 and Mark 9 - 16:8:
 - the message (1:14-15; 8:31)
 - the call to respond (1:15; 8:34)
 - the confession of faith (8:29;15:39)
- The Jewish people were expecting the Messiah in a way that God would set up their kingdom and sort out the political mess that Israel was in. How does Jesus redefine what the Messiah would do in Mark 8:31-9:1?
- Jesus asks us the same questions He asked his disciples: "Who do you say that I am? What is your answer to who Jesus is and what he is doing in the world?"
- The disciples certainly knew that following Jesus came with certain risks and sacrifices. But now Jesus calls us to follow Him to the cross - 'deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Me.' What does this call to follow Jesus to the cross look like for you?
- Mark makes it clear that following Jesus to the cross is the way to live. How have you seen in yours and others lives that if you want to save your life, you 'll lose it; but if you lose your life because of Jesus and the Gospel you'll save it?
- Pray for each other: to understand and embrace the discipleship Jesus is calling us to live and the strength follow Him even when there is risk and sacrifice to do so.

*Some thoughts from *Mark For Everyone*, NT Wright