

MARK 8:27-38 - WHO DO YOU SAY THAT I AM?

We ended Micah on a question that was really a declaration: "Who is a God like you?" Doing justice, loving mercy, walking humbly with God. A Shepherd-King who bears the curse of His followers on Himself.

Mark's Gospel runs asking a similar question. Not "who is like you?" but, more directly: "who is this?"

The scribes ask it when Jesus forgives sin He has no business forgiving:

mark 2:7 - nrsv ⁷ "Why does this fellow speak in this way? It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

The disciples ask it when a word from His mouth silences a storm:

mark 4:41 - nrsv ⁴¹ And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

His own hometown asks it when His wisdom and power don't fit the carpenter's son they thought they knew.

mark 6:2 - nrsv ² ... "Where did this man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been given to him? What deeds of power are being done by his hands!"

Eight chapters of miracles and questions, and nobody has the answer.

Just before Jesus turns to His own disciples and asks the question of them directly, Mark first sets the scene which will help us to understand what Jesus is actually teaching them:

mark 8:22-26 - nrsv ²² They came to Bethsaida [the hometown of Peter, Andrew, and Philip - rebuked by Jesus for the village's lack of faith in Him even after the many miracles He performed]. Some people brought a blind man to him and begged him to touch him. ²³ He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village; and when he had put saliva on his eyes and laid his hands on him, he asked him, "Can you see anything?" ²⁴ And the man looked up and said, "I can see people, but they look like trees, walking." ²⁵ Then Jesus laid his hands on his eyes again; and he looked intently and his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly. ²⁶ Then he sent him away to his home, saying, "Do not even go into the village."

First touch - partial sight. Second touch - full sight. Mark places this healing directly in front of what happens next.

1 - THE REVELATION (8:27-30)

mark 8:27-30 - nrsv ²⁷ Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" ²⁸ And they answered him, "John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets." ²⁹ He asked them, "But who do you [julle - plural] say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Messiah." ³⁰ And he sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him.

- Foot-in-mouth Peter answers first: "You are the Messiah." And that's the right answer. A rare moment for Peter.
- **Confessing Christ is right. Recognising Him as God's chosen Son is good.** BUT it's first touch sight - partial seeing - seeing people who look like trees, walking.

2 - WHAT 'THE CHRIST' MEANT FOR JESUS (8:31-33)

mark 8:31-33 - nrsv ³¹ Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. ³² He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. ³³ But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."

- The teaching from Jesus that follows isn't the second touch itself - Peter proves that by rebuking Jesus for it.
- **The second touch is: actually receiving what's been taught, not just hearing it.**
- Jesus takes the title that Peter just gave Him and immediately gives it meaning.
- "Messiah/Christ" was Israel's word for a conquering king from David's line. "Son of Man" was a term simply meaning "100% human". Jesus used it invoking a vision from Daniel's prophecy ... of a son of man being given glory, dominion, and an everlasting kingdom. This is what Peter was envisioning.
- Jesus fuses His glorious title to Isaiah's suffering servant - a King who reigns by way of rejection, death, and resurrection. Nobody in Israel was expecting that combination. **That's exactly why Peter refuses the truth / rebukes the truth - because it isn't the truth he wants to hear.**
- This time, without parable, Jesus plainly, says: the Son of Man must suffer, must be rejected by the very leaders who should have recognised Him first, must be killed, and will rise on the third day.
- **Jesus tells them plainly, in person, not in riddles, and Peter still doesn't see it. We like to say it's the Word that opens blind eyes. Here the Word Himself explains it directly, and Peter rebukes Him for it. Plain teaching wasn't enough. The second touch is never just a matter of better information.**
- His suffering comes at the hands of the learned and the religious - the people with all the Biblical information, best placed to see clearly, and the people who refuse to see clearly.
- Peter pulls Him aside and rebukes Him for it. He wants Christ without the cross, without the suffering and without death.
- Jesus turns and rebukes Peter in front of everyone: "Get behind me, Satan. **You are not setting your mind on the things of God. You are setting your mind on the things of man.**"
- This is the same trap Israel fell into with Omri and Ahab - your earthly kings will cause you to think and walk according to man. The Heavenly King will cause you to think and walk according to God.
- **Peter wanted Career, Comfort, and Control wearing the name of Christ. Jesus refuses to wear another king's clothes.**
- The disciples are no longer completely blind, but not yet seeing clearly.

3 - WHAT 'THE CHRIST' MEANS FOR US (8:34-38)

mark 8:34-38 - nrsv ³⁴ He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ³⁵ For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. ³⁶ For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? ³⁷ Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? ³⁸ Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

- "The Son of Man **must**" vs "if any **want** to follow me." What was necessary for Jesus becomes an invitation for us - but the invitation carries the same cost.
- **THE KING YOU FOLLOW FORMS THE LIFE YOU LIVE** - throughout Micah that was aimed at a nation. This week Jesus aims it straight at His own disciples.
- **Being right about who Jesus is, is only the start. Believing the correct facts and doing nothing with them is not yet discipleship.**
- "Deny yourself, take up your cross, follow me" is not a mood you work yourself into. It is an actual redirection of your whole self - the **ONLY** response that fits the truth of confessing Jesus and Christ.
- **Self-denial** lays down your sinful desires and your naturally selfish ways. It is a serious adjustment to your life, not a feeling of one. It is the opposite of entitlement.
- **Taking up the cross** means more than how we use it: a little inconvenience. It implies unexpected, frightening, heavy, painful, seemingly random suffering and ultimately death. It is submitting to God's way with your life.
- **Following Jesus** means walking humbly with Him daily, becoming "part of His ministry team", and giving your life - **now that you're dead to yourself** - to the work of establishing His Kingdom.
- None of these three stand alone. You deny yourself so that you can pick up the cross. You pick up the cross = the first step to following Jesus.

- C.S. Lewis: God isn't asking you to trade real pleasure for less pleasure. You're not losing anything by denying yourself. You're settling for mud pies in a slum because you can't yet imagine the holiday at the sea.
- Drink. Sex. Gaming. Ambition. That's the mud. Not because those desires are too strong, but because they're aimed far too low. You will only lift your head out of the mud when you receive the second touch and see clearly that following Jesus gives the ultimate joy and satisfaction.
- If you can't see that, you need a second touch.

Take this into worry specifically. Christ's truth teaches:

philippians 4:6-7 - nrsv ⁶ Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

- Most of us can quote that promise. Fewer of us actually experience it.
- Mark already shows us what it looks like to run out of your own remedies: A woman bled for twelve years, "endured much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was no better but rather grew worse." [mark 5:25-26](#) Every means available to her, she used. None of it touched the actual wound. Then, in desperation, she reached for Jesus, and He healed her.
- **Back to the man at Bethsaida. He was brought to Jesus, and people "begged him to touch him." Is that your posture? Not a calm request. Not taking Jesus aside and rebuking Him because His "truth" is not what we want. This is what we do every time someone guides us with Scripture, but we belittle it or say: it doesn't apply to me here. Instead, we need a beggar's desperation.**
- When the anxiety hits, when you can't sleep, when your mind won't stop - have you begged Him to touch you? Or has the screen, the drink, the pill, the porn, the work during family time, taken the place of the begging, with God never actually being approached at all?
- Don't let yourself off with "my situation is different." Ask the harder question honestly: when last did you actually beg God about this, specifically or have you gone straight past Him to something else, again?
- **Does your complaining outweigh your fasting?**
- But, Glen, we need to live a balanced life. I want to debunk that myth. James and I wrestled this concept this week. The man has a sharp mind. **Jesus never calls us to a balanced life, He calls us to walk the narrow road.**
 - A balanced life will never tell you to deny yourself.
 - It will never tell you that your life will be filled with unexpected, frightening, heavy, painful, seemingly random suffering and ultimately, the self-ruling-you must die.
 - It is the narrow road - there are few, even among God's disciples - who will willingly choose to walk it - no matter the cost.
- **It is the only way to get real life from God, and it's the only life that will prove to be true life.**
- Save your life - keep your life safe - and you will lose it. Lose your life for Jesus and for the gospel, and you will save it.
- Gain the whole world and forfeit your soul, and you land right back in Micah's curse - eating without being satisfied, saving what the sword still takes. What could you possibly hand over to buy your soul back? Nothing. There isn't a price big enough.
- **Carrying a cross was never a metaphor for hardship.** It meant carrying the instrument of your own execution, publicly, as a condemned man walking to his death. Jesus is not offering you inconvenience. **Social and self death is the cost of following Him.**
- Followers of Jesus ought to look different from the world, not like a cleaned-up version of it. Different desires. Different motivations. Different loves. Different source of healing.

WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE?

- Work hard, work diligently, and work with gratitude. Stop complaining about your job, your church, and the people God has put around you.
- When someone asks you the reason for your hope, give them a confident answer. Don't dodge it. Don't shrink Jesus down to a private opinion you keep to yourself.
- Losing yourself for the sake of Christ and His gospel is not a loss. It is the only way you actually gain your life.

DENY YOURSELF.

- It is through suffering that we are purified, not through glorifying your suffering with moaning and moodiness.
- Find two other men/women to carry your suffering with them. Not so they can pity you, but so they can remind you that God is refining you, hold you up, and help you finish this race faithfully to the end.

PICK UP YOUR CROSS.

- **Fathers/husbands:** lead your home toward Jesus. With a Cross on your shoulder and your eyes fixed on Him. That is not optional, and it is not someone else's job. **You need a second touch from Jesus.**
- **Young men:** With a Cross on your shoulder and your eyes fixed on Jesus, do you willingly submit to your parents? Do you make their job a joy? If not, you have not died to Christ. **You need a second touch from Him.**
- Men, be first in line to love Christ and His church, and first in line to serve her. Keeping His Church at arms length, expecting people to serve you instead of you putting your God-given gift to build up the Body - you're missing the second touch of the Lord.

FOLLOW CHRIST.

- Engage the world, yes, but offer it a whole new way of existing, not an improved version that is destined for destruction.
- Honour and glory come by way of the cross, by way of suffering, and, ultimately, by way of dying to yourself.

To confess Jesus as the Christ is to accept the cross as necessary for him and normative for us: the only life saved is the life surrendered to him and his gospel.

- To confess Jesus you must deny yourself.
- To accept His cross you must pick up yours.
- To become His follower you must actually follow Him. His commands and His example - Jesus equates Himself to His Words.
- **To confess Jesus, but not live this TRUE life, will leave you miserable.**
- Jesus doesn't intend to leave you rebuked and dejected. He intends for you to have life - REAL life - and have it abundantly.

Jesus makes living this life possible in you through the indwelling of His Spirit. You are not gritting your teeth through this on your own strength. You must be born again.

CLOSE

mark 9:1 - nrsv ¹ And he said to them, "Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see that the kingdom of God has come with power."

- Jesus is not referring to His ultimate return. He is speaking about Pentecost - the Kingdom of God come **with power**.
- Are you desperate for a second touch from Jesus?
- Perhaps you've never had the first. Perhaps you've never acknowledged Him as Christ, Son of God, Saviour of the world. If you believe that and confess it, Jesus promises to save you.
- But, then the truth of what it means to "be saved". To be a follower of Jesus. To deny yourself, pick up your cross and to follow Him. To lose your life that you might gain true life ... you need the second touch that you might see clearly.
- The narrow way is not our natural way. Few walk it. If any want to walk it.

mark 8:34-38 - nrsv ³⁴ ... "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ³⁵ For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. ³⁶ For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? ³⁷ Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? ³⁸ Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

The application of this is manifold. 100 different people needing His touch for 100 different situations. But, you need to want it!