

**Sermon series:** Book of Mark  
**Sermon title:** *'For Christ and the gospel'*  
**Scripture:** Mark 8:34-38  
November 26, 2017  
Clearwater Bay International Baptist Church  
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Pray.

As I mentioned last week, there is a real danger as we come to some important and well-known passages of scripture.

**Like a man who rides his bicycle every day past the Potala Gong in Lhasa,..... after a while he doesn't even look up.**

**Or like a woman who lives on Victoria Peak,..... after seeing it every day.... she no longer stares at the view.**

People may come from around the world just to see it but to another....it has lost its brilliance with familiarity.

In a similar way, we may have heard Bible passages many times. So many times, that they've lost their radicalness or cutting edge.

Today's passage is surely one of those.

So, we need God to help us see it clearly and feel the weight of it.

Turn in your Bible to **Mark 8:34-38**

**34 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.**

**35 For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it.**

**36 For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?**

**37 For what can a man give in return for his soul?**

**38 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.”**

In this passage we have a clear teaching about what it means to be a follower of Jesus.

This is for everyone, not just the disciples. It is for all Christians everywhere and at all times.

Notice that Jesus calls the crowd to himself, along with the disciples...so that everyone can hear this message.

The Christians in Rome, whom Mark is writing to...need to hear it. We need to hear it too. No matter how much we have *heard* it.

**“If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.**

What does this mean??

‘Come after me’ means the same as ‘follow me.’  
So, ‘if anyone would follow me....he needs to do 2 things...

1. Deny himself.
2. Take up his cross.

**What does it mean to Deny ourselves?**

It means that our center of gravity shifts from us to God. It’s a radical shift in self identity.

We are no longer our own, as **1 Corinthians 6:19-20** says, **“You are not your own, 20 for you were bought with a price.”**

Or as **Colossians 3** says,  
**3 For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.**

To Deny Ourselves is to surrender all that we are to Jesus Christ.

**Our goals.**  
**Our dreams.**  
**Our plans.**  
**Our identity.**  
**The life we hope for.**  
**The standard of life we long for.**  
**The comfort we desire.**  
**The acceptance from others.**  
**The face we hope to have.**

And it means to....Take up our Cross.

What is the Cross?

It's an instrument of torture and execution devised by the Romans and others by which a person suffered and was shamed and killed.

The Jews to whom Jesus spoke to, knew all too well what a CROSS was.

The Romans whom Mark was writing needed no explanation either.

As John Piper says in his commentary on this passage, a cross meant:

**Opposition-** you're a criminal and an outcast.

**Shame-** you're publicly ridiculed and exposed to embarrassment, even nakedness.

**Suffering-** You're exposed to pain and torment.

**Death-** You're lose everything- your life.

So, Jesus says, “If you want to follow me, you must surrender your whole identity and embrace [take up] the opposition, shame, suffering, and death that comes because you associate with me.

**If you want to be accepted,  
then follow someone else.**

**If you want to be honored,  
then follow someone else.**

**If you want comfort,  
then follow someone else.**

**If you want safety,  
then follow someone else.**

Well, if that’s what life with Christ is like, then why should I follow him? I mean, why should I follow Jesus then? That doesn’t sound too attractive!

Jesus gives us 4 reasons.

He uses the word “FOR” four times.

### **Why should we follow Jesus?**

- 1. If we choose to say ‘yes’ to ourselves and ‘no’ to Jesus, than we will LOSE our life forever. But if we chose Jesus and the gospel, we will ‘SAVE’ our life forever.**

Love Jesus and the gospel and you'll live forever or love self and you'll perish forever. It's that simple.

**That's a good reason to follow Jesus.**

**2. To reject Christ so that you can gain the world for a mere 70 years or so...and lose eternity.... is a terrible wager.**

Listen to the words he uses....Profit. Gain. Forfeit.

It's stupid math and bad economics. Forfeiting your soul for temporary acceptance, honor, comfort and safety is dumb.

And the reason is in verse 37.

**3. Because...nothing is more important than your soul.**

Perhaps Luke 16:19-25 can help illustrate what Jesus means.

**19 "There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. 20 And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, 21 who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table.**

**Moreover, even the dogs came and licked his sores. 22 The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried, 23 and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. 24 And he called out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in**

anguish in this flame.’ 25 But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish.

You see how important the soul is and how little the things of this life mean?

**Those are good reasons to follow Jesus.**

So you don’t perish forever.

So you don’t lose your soul.

And lastly, let’s look at verse 38

**4. If we our proud to know Jesus now...[in this life] ...he will be proud to know us forever.**

Or if we confess and acknowledge we know him now... he’ll be proud to confess and acknowledge he knows us forever.

Or if we are ashamed of Jesus now...he’ll be ashamed of us when he comes.

Or...if we choose to try and gain the world... and the approval of this ‘sinful and adulterous’ generation...and promote self....and ignore Jesus and the gospel....

The SON OF MAN...will be say to us, “Depart from me..I never knew you.”

**That's good reason to follow Jesus.**

**The choice is this:**

**Jesus and the gospel OR self and the world.**

can't have both because they are opposed to each other.

**Which will you choose?**