

Surrendered to the Savior

Mark 8: 34-38

For the past few weeks we have discussed some intense conversation between Jesus and the disciples. He had questioned them regarding His deity and their acceptance of Him as the Christ. While others had a skewed perception of Christ, Peter boldly, and rightly proclaimed that Jesus was in fact the Christ.

No doubt the disciples were feeling good about their situation, but Jesus quickly took the conversation in a direction they were not expecting. He began to speak of His betrayal, death, and resurrection. Clearly this did not fit the disciples' vision for their future, and Peter quickly rebuked the Lord for speaking in such a way. Jesus immediately confronted Peter's response, revealing his words had been motivated by Satan instead of relying on faith.

Imagine how the disciples must have felt after hearing Jesus speak of the coming events. Surely they all considered how they would respond when these events came to pass, and what their lives would be like after Jesus is crucified. They did not have long to contemplate their thoughts before Jesus revealed another startling truth. He revealed that serving Him will come at a cost for all who choose that path.

As we continue our study of Mark's gospel, I want to examine the [principles](#) revealed in the text as we consider the thought: [Surrendered to the Savior](#).

I. The Mandate for Service (34) – [And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.](#) There are many who are truly saved, but are accomplishing very little for the Lord. Jesus revealed the requirements for committed service. Consider:

A. The Decision Involved – [Whosoever will come after me...](#) Clearly this involves a personal choice. The word **will** means "*to desire, to resolve, or to determine.*" The first thing we must do is determine in our hearts that this is our desire. This is a deliberate choice, a determined resolve to follow Christ.

- I don't know what you want in life, but I want to live a life that pleases my Lord. There are times when I can do fairly well, but there are others when my resolve isn't what it ought to be. We must make a daily, conscious decision to follow Christ and serve Him!

B. The Denial Involved – **Let him deny himself.** That is “*to disown, forsake, reject, restrain, or simply do without.*” These are strong words. They carry the idea of subduing our fleshly desires and disregarding what the flesh would have us do. It isn’t easy to forsake ourselves, to restrain the flesh, and do without our desires.

- Do you realize that you are your own greatest hindrance? We like to give Satan the credit many times, but often he doesn’t have to do a thing because we do it for him! Notice what the Apostle Paul said in [Rom.7:18-21](#). Can you relate to what Paul has described? Sure, we all can. Paul fought the same battles we deal with every day. We wake up each morning facing a battle with the flesh. When we were saved we became a new creature in Christ, but the flesh wasn’t saved. It still carries those same sinful desires.
- Much of the problem with our Christian influence is that we have a problem denying the flesh. I realize that it is much easier said than done, but that is what Jesus requires. Now, denying ourselves involves more than laying aside a few of our habits or desires. We are to bring ourselves, the whole of our being, into the subjection of the Lord. By saying “no” to myself, I am saying “yes” to the Lord. When we can do that, it allows Jesus the freedom to rule and reign in our lives.

C. The Death Involved – **Let him...take up his cross.** We may do fairly well up to this point, but here is where most Christians draw the line. Take a moment to consider the thoughts that must’ve ran through the peoples’ minds as Jesus made this statement. They were no strangers to Roman crosses and the awful crucifixions. In that day, the roads would often be filled with crosses as men hung there dying. The cross was a cruel instrument of death.

- Now, I had always looked at this verse as Jesus expecting me to bear my burdens, and there is application for that. There is much in life that we must endure for the cause of Christ. God often uses the times of difficulty to mature our faith and conform us to the image of His Son. We must bear our burdens, but remember the cross is an instrument of death. Taking up our cross doesn’t involve only bearing burdens, it involves dying to ourselves.
- [Rom.6:6](#) – *Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.* [Gal.2:20](#) – *I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.* [Rom.12:1](#) – *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.* We must die daily.

D. The Devotion Involved – *Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.* The phrase “follow me” means “to be a follower or companion, to be a disciple.” It has the idea of *actively seeking fellowship with Christ and reflecting His likeness.* We are to seek after the Lord with a desire to become more like Him daily.

- This isn't an idle task; we can't follow Christ without action. It will require effort and work on our part. The flesh has no desire to follow Jesus and it certainly doesn't want to become like Him. There will be many obstacles that we shall face, but we must be determined to overcome.
- The light in our world would be much brighter if believers would simply follow Christ. Keep in mind that we must first make that conscious choice, deny ourselves, and take up our cross before we can follow Jesus. Salvation was a free gift, but living for the Lord requires sacrifice. Are we willing to pay the price for the needs of our day?

II. The Mystery in Service (35-37) – Here Jesus reveals a mystery, a paradox, a seeming contradiction, but in fact it is truth. Notice:

- **Mark 8:35** – *For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it.* I know this world looks at us and wonders why we do what we do. Why would anyone deny themselves the pleasures of this life? Why do we give of ourselves for the cause of Christ? Why do we refuse to embrace the ways of this world and go against the grain?
- We must lose our lives in order to gain life in Christ. I'm glad that I have more than what this world has to offer. There is pleasure in this life, but it is only for a season. There is coming a day when all will stand before God. The only thing that will matter is our relationship with Christ.
- **Mark 8:36-37** – *For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? ^[37] Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?* There are millions alive today who have chosen to save their life of pleasure rather than die to self and live with Christ. They are consumed with only one thing: the desires of this world. They are like the rich man in **Luke 12:19-20** – *And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. ^[20] But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?* Sadly one day they will die and leave it all behind. All of the wealth this world can provide will not be enough to secure their salvation.

III. The Motivation for Service (38) – *Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in*

the glory of his Father with the holy angels. In these final words Jesus presents a profound and sobering realization. Those who accept Him in this life will be rewarded in the life to come and those who deny Him will be rejected.

- Sadly, many in our day are **ashamed** to identify with Christ. This is a strong word that implies a strong personality of those who possess it. It literally means “*unwilling or restrained because of fear of shame, ridicule, or disapproval.*” Many will not identify with the Lord because they are ashamed to deny themselves and live godly in the presence of others. Many today are more concerned about the temporal approval of mankind than they are the eternal approval of God. They would rather be accepted in this life and spend eternity in hell than to suffer ridicule and shame for Christ.
- Christ will return just as He said; and when He does, He will judge those who rejected Him. You may feel on top of the world, but one day you will stand before a holy God in judgment. If you were ashamed of Him in this life, He will be ashamed of you in the life to come. You will be rejected of the Lord and separated forever in eternal condemnation and torment in hell.
- The life you live and the choices you make today could very well have eternal implications. If you reject the Lord today and die in your sin, hell will be your home. There will be no second chances or hope of reprieve. The lost will not enter that heavenly city. Jesus will declare unto you, “Depart, I never knew you.”
- Child of God it may seem as if our efforts are in vain. You may feel as if you can’t make a difference anyway. Let me encourage you to consider what you have in Christ. It will all be worth it when we hear our blessed Lord say well done, enter in to the joys of the Lord. **Mat.19:29 – And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.**

Conclusion: I think you will agree that this passage is contrary to our human nature. The flesh doesn’t like to submit to anyone or anything. It has one desire and goal – complete satisfaction. If we are to please the Lord, being used of Him, and have assurance of reward in heaven, we must be willing to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Jesus.

Do you know Christ as your personal Savior? Have you confessed your sin, admitting your need for salvation? If not, now is the time. You must respond to the offer of salvation in this life. If you deny the Lord, and are ashamed of Him, He will deny you in judgment. Christian, are you living a surrendered life unto the Lord? Are you willing to deny yourself the pleasures of the flesh? Are you bearing your cross, literally dying to self, in order to follow Jesus? If not, seek Him for the faith and strength you need to fully surrender.