**The Gospel of Mark Sermon #5**

**Lessons on Discipleship**

Theme of Mark:

Jesus: Messiah and Son of God: suffering servant and savior of mankind.

Theme verse: Mark 10:45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

We have seen Jesus as the suffering servant.

We have seen Jesus as a kind of superhero, traveling around, healing people.

We have seen Jesus who has power over nature (calmed the storm).

We have seen Jesus as one who has power over the spiritual/demon world.

We have seen Jesus who tells us to show mercy before offering sacrifice.

Mark 8:22-26 One more miracle. Jesus heals a blind man.

It is curious that he is only partially healed at first…

Jesus touched him a second time, and then he “saw everything clearly.”

Does this mean that Jesus is not sufficiently powerful?

No. Look at the context to get the point!

1. blind

2. see partially

3. see clearly

1. Mark 8:14-21 when they do not even get that Jesus can feed 4000 “Do you still not see or understand? Are your hearts hardened? Do you have eyes that fail to see, and ears that fail to hear? Don’t you remember? When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand… Do you still not understand? Mark 8:17-21)

Step 1. They are blind.

2. Mark 8:27-33 But then look at the next story, where the disciples can also only partially see.

Mark 8:29 Now Peter partially sees. He now “sees” that Jesus is the Messiah.

Peter: Ahhhhh… Now I get it. You are the Messiah, [the Son of the living God] (Matthew).

But they are still partially “blind” to the fact that he must suffer (as they must suffer)

But Peter still only partially sees. Mark 8:31-32. Peter rebukes Jesus.

They see who Jesus is, but they do not see their participation in the suffering.

Q: Do you see only partially? Do you need Jesus to touch you a second time?

3. Jesus predicts his death three times! Mark 8:31-33, (they still were like the blind man… they did not understand),

Mark 9:30-32 But they did not understand what he meant… They still see, but only partially.

They don’t get that discipleship involves suffering and perhaps even death.

Mark 10:32-34 the most clear yet. (again, we see here the theme of Mark. Jesus the suffering servant and Savior of mankind)

They are on the way to Jerusalem. It is kind of important that Jesus’ followers “get” him!

Are you like Peter? Are you trying to make Christianity a thing which does not include suffering? A thing that has a Messiah, but not a Lord. A victorious Savior, but not a suffering Savior. Are you counseling people to avoid hard situations so that they will not be hurt? (this is a matter of balance, is it not?)

Many people are fired up about Jesus as Savior, but are “blind” to the cost of discipleship (Acts 2:36 God has made this Jesus whom you crucified both Lord and Saviour)—hardship and suffering. They don’t get it. What about you?

Mark 8:34-38 (parallel to the more well-used Luke 9:23-27)

Put yourself in their sandals: What image came into their minds when they thought about crosses?

Paul said, “I die every day.” (1 Cor 15:31, ESV) I die daily NKJV

Q: Have you ever made the decision to deny yourself and take up your cross?

Q: Have you made a decision this week to deny yourself and take up your cross?

OK. Great. What does that mean in a practical way? How will you suffer? What will you give up that you desire for the sake of the gospel?

v. 36-37 Q: What are some of the things that people give in exchange for their souls?

Esau: a bowl of lentil stew.

People I have known: A more prestigious job. A boyfriend. A moment of pleasure. “Success” for your children. An addition on the house.

v. 38 Have you been ashamed of his word? (ex: me hiding my Bible)

Mark 9:1 One of them (Judas) would not see the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2)

Skipping the Transfiguration (will cover later) and the Boy possessed by an evil spirit.

Mark 9:38-41 Don’t stop them. If they are not against us, they are for us.

But what about Matthew 12:30-32 “Whoever is not with me is against me.”

Mark 9 is about a person who calls him/herself a Christian (but probably is not actually saved), and is doing good in Jesus name. Do not challenge them, but encourage then. (I would go so far as to say the same thing about a Muslim or a Hindu or an atheist who is serving people, although they do not do it in Jesus’ name)

Matthew 12 is about a person who opposes Christianity—who denies Jesus is the Son of God and Savior of mankind. They blaspheme the Holy Spirit. They say they are not against Jesus, but they are. Such a person is not neutral on Jesus. To not agree with Christianity on its fundamental truths is to oppose the truth and to oppose Jesus—to actively cause people to go to hell.

There is no middle, neutral ground with regard to Jesus. Those who do not accept him for who he says he is are opposing him. (but still… do not rebuke them if they are doing good things!)

More on discipleship.

Mark 9:42-50 Jesus gets radical here!

These “little ones” are not children, but the newer/weaker disciples. Or they are people who are “open” to Jesus but not yet disciples.

Jesus is using hyperbole here, but he is not kidding!

Stumble how? -by teaching them false doctrine

 -by being a hypocrite and living a false Christian life

 -by causing division in the body of Christ

Q: Would it literally be better to have a millstone tied around your neck and be thrown into the sea than to cause a young Christian or child to stumble and go to hell?

OK, can you think of a better idea? Does Jesus intend we do this?

v. 43 Q: Would it literally be better to have a hand or a foot cut off than to use it to sin, leading you to hell for eternity?

OK, can you think of a better alternative? Does Jesus want anyone to do this?

Q: Would it literally be better to pluck your own eye out with a knife or spoon than to look at pornography or another impure thing, to sin to the point that you would lose your salvation?

OK, can you think of a better alternative? Should we have a bunch of one-eyed Christians walking around?

Will there literally be worms eating our bodies and fire burning our bodies in hell?

The message: We need to be REALLY radical in our own lives and in each other’s

 lives when it comes to sin!

Mark 9:50 Salt is a preservative. It prevents spoilage.

“Have salt among yourselves.” He is talking about being in each other’s lives and, as a faith community, helping one another overcome sin.

Q: Have you been salt to someone this week? To whom?

Summary:

Let us decide today to take Jesus, not only as Savior, but also as Lord and let us go with him to the cross.

Let us make a decision to pick up the cross every single day, even as we are stuck in our homes.

Let us help one another together to deal with sin, and cut it off by whatever means we can (short of gouging out one another’s eyes). Let us be salt to one another.