

# Mark 8:27-9:1

**Date: Sunday, 30 May 2021**

**Scripture: Mark 8:27-9:1**

**Sermon: Recognising Jesus**

**Preacher: Justin Ang**

## Passage

Mark 8:27 And 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 told him, "John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets." 29 And he asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Christ." 30 And he strictly charged them to tell no one about him.

Mark 8:31 And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again. 32 And he said this plainly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. 33 But turning and seeing his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man."

Mark 8:34 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."

Mark 9:1 And he said to them, "Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power."

## **Transcript**

One of my favourite authors is Stephen King. He does write some scary stories, but one that has struck me is the Shawshank Redemption. It's been made into a movie. It's about a man who is falsely accused of a murder and is sent to prison for two decades. I won't ruin the ending of the story, but a case of mistaken identities can really have a large impact on people's lives. When you don't recognise someone properly, it can be devastating, can't it?

Here in this passage, we have a case of mistaken identity. Where people don't recognise Jesus properly. Jesus is with his close disciples, he asks "Who do people say that I am?" Jesus asks. You are the Christ, replies Peter. But does Peter really understand who Jesus is? "Jesus, you are going to be the one who liberates us from Rome." I can imagine Peter thinking that. But does Peter really understand who Jesus is? No he doesn't. Because Jesus shows us that being the Christ, the chosen one means that he'll die. He will suffer many things, be killed and after three days will rise again. Peter doesn't recognise Jesus.

You know, being locked in gaol for decades for a crime you didn't commit is terrible. But you know what's worse? If you don't learn to recognise Jesus for who he is. If you think he's just a great teacher, then you might agree with some of his teachings, sure. But what if he's the king of the world? Saviour? The question that this passage wants us to ask is this, "Do we recognise Jesus for who he really is?" If we learn to recognise Jesus for who he really is, then we're going to do a couple of things. Firstly, it means setting our minds on things above. Secondly, it means giving Jesus our complete allegiance. Thirdly, we'll talk about finding the strength to follow Jesus.

## **Setting Our Minds on Things Above**

Let's talk about the first point. Setting our minds on things above.

Here in this passage Jesus talks about the fact that he's going to be killed and then three days later will rise again. What would you do if someone told you that? We get to hear how Peter reacts here actually. And we see that he doesn't recognise what Jesus is about to do, let's have a look.

*And he said this plainly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and seeing his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man."*  
(Mark 8:32-33 ESV)

It's a serious accusation that Jesus makes against Peter. It's not that Jesus thinks that Peter has been possessed by Satan, but rather he's calling Peter out because he is opposing God's way, isn't he?

Growing up with my parents, I disagreed with my parents, especially my dad. He'd want things one way, and I would go out of my way to want the same thing in the opposite way. There was this one time, I was fairly young, that I decided that I would hide my dad's shoes. I remember now, that I hid the shoes behind the television set. And he was upset, he got the whole family looking around for the shoes. After I felt like he had suffered enough, then I "miraculously found the shoes." He looked at me, and he knew. And as I reflect on that time, I'm embarrassed to admit now that it was very childish. It was very immature. And in all honesty, I was opposing my dad. And I deserved to be rebuked, because I wasn't honouring my parents. I wasn't seeing things from my dad's perspective. Because if I saw it from his perspective, I should have realised that he had our whole family's interest at heart, that he has always wanted to see his family.

One thing that we learn as Christians is learning to see things the way that God sees things, rather than seeing things from a human perspective. To see life with spiritual eyes open rather than with our worldly eyes. We're reminded by Paul the Apostle, aren't we, to set our minds on the things that are above and not on the things that are on earth. For we have died and our lives are hidden with Christ in God (Colossians 3:2-4).

Many of you who have nieces, nephews, children of your own, probably know a little bit about what I'm talking about. Perhaps when they were young, they wanted something, you and you spoke that famous word that all loving parents have to say. Do you know the word? No. Sorry, no can't do that. Or maybe, wait. And the kids

get upset because they don't understand that you are doing it with their best interest.

I wonder whether we, as our Heavenly Father's children, are learning to set our minds on heavenly things, on the things of God. Fixing our eyes on God, only God.

## **Giving Jesus Our Complete Allegiance**

Because if we are fixing our eyes on the things of God, we then need to talk about our second point. Giving Jesus our complete allegiance. Aren't we told by Jesus in this passage that we need to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Him.

*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. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. (Mark 8:34-35 ESV)*

To take up our cross, to follow him, means that Jesus demands our complete allegiance. There are no half measures, no half hearted hearts. There are no distracted glances back to our life before Christ. There is no one foot on the pier and one foot on the boat. It's all in with Jesus. No holding back. He wants our complete allegiance to him. He calls us to follow him, even into death.

It's kind of how in the US, children are taught the pledge of allegiance from a very young age. They know and can recite it, they pledge their allegiance. They'll say, "I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all." JFK in one of his speeches famously said, "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country." When you become a citizen of Australia, you give a pledge as well, "From this time forward, (under God,) I pledge my loyalty to Australia and its people, whose democratic beliefs I share, whose rights and liberties I respect, and whose laws I will uphold and obey." It's really a call to be loyal for one's country and its people., isn't it? But it's not just to countries that we can pledge our allegiance to.

Jesus calls us to give him our ultimate allegiance. To take up our cross. To be willing to give up our lives. "I have decided to follow Jesus" What's the line that's repeated in each of the verses? "No turning back, no turning back." When Jesus calls

us to take up our cross and follow him, it means we are to follow him to the place called Golgotha, to Calvary, where he dies.

He asks that we deny ourselves, die to ourselves, die to the world and live only for God. The call of the cross is for all for each one of us! Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a German pastor and theologian that opposed Nazi Germany wrote the following,

*"The cross is laid on every Christian. The first Christ-suffering which every man must experience is the call to abandon the attachments of this world. It is that dying of the old man which is the result of his encounter with Christ. As we embark upon discipleship we surrender ourselves to Christ in union with his death—we give over our lives to death. Thus it begins; the cross is not the terrible end to an otherwise god-fearing and happy life, but it meets us at the beginning of our communion with Christ. When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die."*

The dying to ourselves, and giving our allegiance to Jesus is something that happens each and every day. It's a continual process. As you know, Rachel and I rock climb. It's really something that I enjoy. I love it, and I try to go at least once a day. There's different grading of difficulties, 1 to 10 for each climb. And I remind myself that every day I get better, I will never reach perfection, but each day, I improve a little.

Our allegiance to Jesus, is something that we continue to grow in each and every day and there are areas that each one of us will need to surrender to Jesus.

Maybe it's your tongue, you are a gossiper, and you need to surrender to Jesus and learn to speak well of people.

Maybe it's to do with your foot, you have a lead foot. You need to surrender your driving to Jesus.

Maybe it's your money, you love money, and you need to surrender money to Jesus and learn contentment.

Maybe it's control, you're a control freak and you need to surrender control and learn to trust Jesus.

Maybe you know what he wants you to do, and you just don't want to do it and you need to learn to die to your selfishness.

Because he wants our complete allegiance.

## **Finding the Strength to Follow Jesus**

So, let's talk about the final point. Why is it that we can give Jesus our complete allegiance? Where do we find the strength to follow Jesus even when he tells us to take up our cross and follow Him?

Because he is the one who shows us his allegiance before we are asked to show our allegiance to him. He is the one who was willing to die for you and me. Does money promise to show you allegiance? No, absolutely not. Do our cars, our houses, our mortgages promise to die for us? Absolutely not. Jesus is only one who has shown himself to be different. Because even whilst we were his enemies, he pledged his life for us.

And have a look at the passage, what does Jesus say, if we choose to follow him?

*For what can a man give in return for his soul? 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. (Mark 8:37-38 ESV)*

We may work and work for ourselves, and gain everything in the world, we may own all the corporations, the land and resources of the world in our lifetime. But that is nothing compared to losing the world and having Jesus. Because we have the promise that he will not be ashamed of us on that last day. It's why we can take up our cross daily and follow him into death. Because he has shown his allegiance to us. We can only be willing to give up the whole world, to give up our lives, to give up all our possessions, our houses, our cars, our computers and phones, my coffee, when we realise who we have!

The approval that we will receive on that last day will be greater than any possession we could have get today. Greater than any house, any car, any success at work. As Jim Elliot has said, "He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep, to gain what he cannot lose." Jesus has already given you his allegiance through his death and resurrection, let's show him ours and set our minds on things above. Let's pray.