

Sunday, October 2, 2011—Mark Dispensationally Considered—Mark 8:34-38: How Much is Your Soul Worth?

Mark 8:34

- *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.*
- Jesus and his disciples are once again in the presence of other people when these statements are made. When Peter makes his confession of faith and Christ begins to teach them regarding his death, burial, and resurrection they are alone.
 - Mark 8:27
- Up until this point the crowds that had followed Christ had been feed and benefitted from being healed and so forth. In other words, it was easy to follow Christ. Now after beginning to teach the Apostles regarding his betrayal, death, burial, and resurrection, Jesus intensifies the content of his public teaching.
- Jesus teaches that anyone who will come after him must do three things:
 - *“let him deny himself”*—according to *Strong’s Concordance* the Greek word translated deny means “to forget one’s self, lose sight of one’s self and one’s own interests.” In order to follow Christ there was now to be a process of active self denial.
 - *“take up his cross”*—“the poor human heart likes position and glory, and is quite willing to exalt the Messiah even to heaven, but it shrinks from self-mortification and shame and persecution and death. The term “the cross” means all this. If anyone wished to go after Jesus he must consent to share His reproach and die with Him. At the door of the Roman Court of Justice, crosses were piled, and the condemned on leaving, took up a cross and carried to the place of execution. The believer must follow Christ in that path. It is the only path; there is no other; and if anyone would be His disciples he must enter it, for it is the path the Master took.” (Williams, 716)
 - *“follow me”*—there is a difference between “come after me” and “follow me.” Judas Iscariot went after Him but did not follow Him. To follow demands affection and repentance and loyalty of heart. (Williams, 737)
- So there are three conditions for discipleship during the earthly ministry of Christ: 1) the attitude of the disciple to himself—“let him deny himself,” 2) the attitude of the disciples to the world—“and take up his cross,” 3) the attitude of the disciple to Christ—“and follow me.”

- Once again it is important to note the timing of this teaching as being subsequent to private announcement of his death, burial, and resurrection. Furthermore it is important to consider this passage in relation to the parable of the sower.
- Matthew 13:1-8, 18-23—in a manner of speaking, Jesus was being followed around by a lot of stony ground. People that were rejoicing in the signs, wonders, and miracles but who were not willing to coming tribulation and persecution that the followers of Christ would suffer.

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.”***
- “Those who take up that cross lose their life in relation to this world, but find it in the next; those who refuse, safeguard their life in this world, but suffer eternal loss in the next.
 - Matthew 16:24-25, 27—this truth is demonstrated in the judgment of verse 27; every man will be rewarded according to his works. Those in Israel who elected to play it safe as it were and took steps to save their life will ultimately lose it, while those forsook all to follow Christ will ultimately save their lives.

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?”***
- What profit is there from having riches, fame, and prestige if it costs you your own soul? How much is your soul worth? Jesus asks these famous questions to make a spiritual point.
- What is all the money in the world going to gain you if you lose your own soul? Do you remember a few years back when those “No Fear” t-shirts were popular? There was one that said, “He who dies with the most toys still dies. No Fear”
- Have you seen Disney’s The Little Mermaid?
- Matthew 10:16-23—the rich young ruler is an example of someone who put more value on the temporal monetary comforts of this life than on the value of his own soul. In a manner of speaking, through his refusal to part with his possessions, the ruler was saying that the value of his soul was equal to the net worth of his possessions.
- Acts 2:44-45—when Christ speaks in Mark 8, he knows that the day is coming when his followers will literally have to part with their possessions and goods.

- Acts 4:32-37
- Acts 5:1-5—in Ananias and Sapphira we have an example of some people who attempted to save their own life that ultimately lost it.

Mark 8:38

- ***“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.”***
- Given the context we have been studying the meaning of this verse is clear. The current generation in Israel was adulteress and sinful. Anyone who was ashamed of Christ or his words while he was alive and with them, will Christ (the Son of Man) be ashamed when he comes in glory with the holy angles at his second coming.
- Matthew 16:27
- Luke 9:26
- Matthew 10:33

Conclusion

- Many in our day use Mark 8:34-38 as a model for discipleship. Believers today are routinely instructed that if they want to follow Christ they need to deny self, take up their cross, and follow Christ.
- Romans 6:1-15—makes it clear that the believer today positionally died with Christ on the cross, rose with Christ from the dead and therefore ought to walk in newness of life. Our responsibly is to reckon these things to be so in our lives not actively take up our cross. Jesus Christ has already suffered our death for us thereby setting us free to walk in newness of life.
- Galatians 2:20—we have already been crucified with Christ. We hung there with Christ on the cross.
- Colossians 3:1-4—your life is hid with Christ in God. God is never going to be ashamed with you and I because when he looks down from heaven he doesn’t see us he sees Christ.
- Galatians 3:27—if you are saved you are wearing a Christ suit.
- II Timothy 2:13—he cannot deny himself