

A WORD ON WORSHIP

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Mark 8:34-35

“And He summoned the crowd with His disciples, and said to them, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. “For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s will save it.”

If ever there was a man who could be right and yet simultaneously wrong at the same time, Peter must be him. In our passage, Peter makes his stunning confession of faith in Jesus being the Messiah. But then Jesus tells the disciples His path will lead to suffering, humiliation and ultimately death on the cross and Peter’s reaction is to tell Jesus no way! One can hardly blame Peter for missing the point since the cross was contrary to every interest in Peter’s life at this time. Are we any different than Peter today?

We need to remember the Jewish method of execution was stoning. When Jesus told them they would need to take up their cross to follow Him, they heard Roman execution. To be Messiah meant possessing the Wisdom of Solomon, providing bread in the Wilderness like Moses, leading in conquest like Joshua and establishing an eternal kingdom like David in the minds of the disciples. Nowhere in their job description for the Messiah was death at the hands of the same Romans they expected Jesus to overthrow. Jesus is heading to His own death and they will be following Him to the same destination.

Following Christ requires the believer to act in ways which are contrary to our basic instincts and interests. Jesus is not going the way our culture is going. That leaves us with the hard choice to follow our goals and self interests or to die to them by taking up a cross, a Roman method of execution. That certainly was no more popular in the minds of the disciples that in our minds today. The gospel is all about taking up our cross and embracing death. The result of following Jesus means our lives will turn upside down. No matter what our culture may be—American, Chinese, Islamic or even Jewish, when you come to Christ He will turn your values upside down. Following Jesus means we are going to die to the way we used to live our lives.

When I read through the Gospel of John, one of the key words is BELIEVE. But here in the Gospel of Mark the key word is FOLLOW. Many would like to apply this as a multiple choice where we can believe or follow Christ. Jesus makes it clear it is both to believe and follow. What do you believe about Jesus ? Will that compel you to follow Him? With what you know about Jesus, are you willing to get behind Him and follow His lead, even when the road He has chosen leads us to Golgotha? We must be ready to follow when Jesus leads us along the roads we would never have chosen for ourselves.



Sunrise Community Church
Come acknowledge the Lord in our midst
EVERY SUNDAY BEGINNING AT 8:45 A.M.

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