

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The word of God for this morning is found in the Gospel of Mark 8:31-38.

"31 And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. 32 He spoke this word openly. And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. 33 But when He had turned around and looked at His disciples, He rebuked Peter, saying, "Get behind Me, Satan! For you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men." 34 When He had called the people to *Himself*, with His disciples also, He said to them, "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. 35 "For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. 36 "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? 37 "Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? 38 "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."

So far our text. Dear fellow redeemed.

NO! How did you respond? Generally speaking I believe being told no, even in this situation when you don't know why I said causes us to go on the defensive.

Parents use the word often while they're raising their children; so much so that the first word of a child can be 'no'. Even before a child can speak and they're told 'no' they will react by becoming angry. They're not getting what they want and respond in a very base way. But a way that is very familiar to us all.

As children we want to eat desert before eating our fruit and vegetables. We hear that we can't do it that way and we become angry. The older we get we are told no when we ask to stay out late at an age that isn't appropriate. We want to start driving before we're able. We don't want to get that paper route to learn about what work is. Homework isn't as important as video games. We seemingly want to date all the wrong people.

Later in life we believe we should've received a better grade on a paper than what we received. We are told no by colleges we applied to. We are told no by an employer with which we've put an application in with.

Being told 'no' is a hard thing to hear and bear up under. So much so that the world goes to great lengths to try and say yes to everything. Mankind says yes you can marry someone of the same sex. Mankind says yes to having sex before you're married. Marriage itself is something that is optional. The worship of any god, even yourself is OK as long as you find comfort in it.

Being around these things and having them in our own hearts causes troubles for the Christian. It is a way used by the devil to weaken us and turn us away from God. The Lord revealed to His disciples and the crowd that day that it is necessary that we should **"Deny ourselves, not the Cross."**

Peter and the disciples had this problem as well on a day which in actuality should've caused them great joy. **“And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He spoke this word openly.”**

What a Bible class that must've been! To have God Himself teaching about His work as the Redeemer of mankind from sin. This particular verse is only a summary of what they were taught. The word 'teach' in our text for today is of a form that reveals that Jesus was very specific and complete about what He was going to do in regards to the summary statement found in this Gospel.

Jesus went into great detail not just for the disciples which was His custom, but our text says, **“He spoke the word openly.”** Jesus spoke to the general public in parables. But here Jesus spoke openly to everyone who was around Him. He revealed to them all a detailed account of what was going to happen to the Son of Man.

There would be no way the disciples or His other followers could mistake what Jesus came to do. He was to die and rise again. Along with that message though came the clear declaration for the purpose of His coming would've been included. These things Jesus would've told them must take place so that your sins may be washed away in the perfect life, in the innocent death that I'm about to suffer.

What joy that should've brought everyone standing there! The Messiah has come! The One promised from eternity! All things are being accomplished so that I can stand sinless before God! But to the ears of those standing there that day, they were hearing 'no'.

“And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him.” In what Jesus had to say, Peter heard 'no'. Peter pulled Jesus aside to try and persuade Jesus to do the exact opposite of what Jesus told them He came to do. In rebuking Jesus, Peter was charging Jesus as the one being at fault.

Jesus stated that He wasn't the earthly king the Jews were so hoping to have in their Messiah. Instead of a strong king, a military mind who would raise up an army against Rome: here stood the Son of God stating that He was going to forgo Himself and willingly be put to death on the cross.

All the hopes of Peter and the disciples being part of this great King's cabinet were dashed. All the fame of being associated with their hopes of an earthly king was fading away. **“But when He had turned around and looked at His disciples, He rebuked Peter, saying, “Get behind Me, Satan! For you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.”**

It seems as though not only did Peter have this idea and hope but so did the rest of the disciples. Jesus turned and addressed them all. In rebuking Peter Jesus was in fact addressing Peter, the rest of the disciples and ourselves when we try and make Jesus' work secondary to anything in our lives. **“Get behind Me, Satan!”** Are there any other words that could've made it more clear what Jesus thought about the attitude of Peter and the disciples? Could Jesus make it any clearer when we want to change His plan of our salvation?

"Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?" Do not take your sinful thoughts and desire and try and transpose them upon Me Jesus is saying. **"Deny yourself, not the cross!"**

And the reason we need to deny ourselves and not the cross is of the utmost importance. If we choose to say to God your ways are not good for me, we will lose our life to an eternity in hell. But for those who are granted faith to lose and forsake their lives will save it. And how my dear friends is this accomplished? Jesus reminded all those who were there that day. For My sake and the gospels.

Jesus said, **"I Myself and the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."** Jesus' sole and express purpose was to come and save sinners! To reveal the way to heaven in His blood. The one and only Truth which is able to save souls. The life which you now have in your faith in His death.

Jesus asked the crowd, **"For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?"** Don't we naturally look out for our own good? Jesus here is trying to show us that He is in fact looking out for our good. Jesus is saying, 'OK, I'll become your earthly king but you will suffer forever in hell.' 'OK, I'll make you rich, but you will suffer forever in hell.' 'OK, I'll make you popular, but you will suffer forever in hell because you did not want to **"Deny yourself, not the cross."** Our God knows all things. He knows what's best for us. He knows that His coming and dying was the best thing for you.

And if Jesus would've granted the nation of Israel to be free from Rome, or our wealth, or popularity, He asks them and us, **"Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"** If I grant you these things Jesus says, who or what is going to save you from your sins? Who will make the payment? What exchange can you make with God that's going to appease Him? We have to admit that there's nothing that we can exchange for our sinful lives.

But that is the beauty of the Gospel! We don't do anything! Everything has been done for us. Jesus exchanged His life for ours so that this wouldn't happen.

"For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."

God forsook Himself so that we could stand victorious on the day of judgment. So that we would not be ashamed of Him in this life nor in the life to come.

He has given us the faith to believe on His name and be children of God. Not part of this adulterous and sinful generation but instead living along side it. Preaching this word, **"Deny yourself, not the cross"** that all might stand with us on the last day and be victorious in Christ Jesus who counted Himself as nothing. Denying Himself for our sake. Amen.