

Mark Bible Study #8

Mark 10: 32-52 - The Kingdom of God and the True Nature of Discipleship

Leader's Preparation

Read the passage over at least three times (perhaps in The Message or NASB versions). As you are reading the passage - mark down questions that you might have regarding the text, words you might not understand, concepts that seem foreign to you or may be foreign to your group. Write them down and look to some commentaries to help understand the passage more deeply. Pay attention to what the main point of the passage is.

Some time this week, read the parallel passage in the other Gospels:

- Mt. 20: 17-34
- Luke 18: 31-42

Try reading a good commentary by: N.T. Wright or William Lane or David Garland.

Who might be the two for whom the places beside Christ have been prepared?

As Jesus just finished talking about where the road to Jerusalem will end - with his suffering and his death. It is likely that Jesus is, in part, referring to the two criminals who were crucified on his left and on his right (15:27). Actually, these are the only two places where Mark used this phrasing in the book.

Why does Bartimaeus call Jesus the "Son of David"?

This title carried strong messianic overtones, a title that identifies Jesus as the Messiah, as the King - the King that Israel had been waiting for. Jesus accepts this title and shows that as the Son of David he will show his royal authority in works of healing and mercy for the despised outcast. This Son of David hears the cries of the oppressed, gives sight to the blind and brings blessing and peace.

The Key to understanding this Passage

The disciples have displayed a delight in power, glorious achievements, and personal ambition; they want a Messiah who is beyond suffering and death and will then offer them all of their heart's desires. But according to Mark, one can never understand who Jesus is without understanding the necessity of his final destiny of suffering. Suffering distinguishes his role as Messiah and ours as disciples. To know and understand Jesus, therefore, requires us to accept his destiny as a Messiah who dies for others and accept that same destiny for ourselves. All followers must share his self-giving love and service and his fate of suffering before they can share his glory. The images of baptism and cup recall baptism and the Lord's Supper. All disciples who accept baptism and drink Jesus' cup also pledge themselves to live and die by the pattern of the cross.

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Introduction

Now that we have spent the last few weeks pondering the question of who Jesus is, and what the Kingdom of God looks like.

To open up your study, perhaps **ask the group to say what was highlighted to them from these past studies about who Jesus is and what the kingdom of God is like.**

Encourage your group members to look back at old studies, since they might not remember all of what has been looked at.

We are moving into a study that looks at what the response should be when faced with the truth of who Jesus is, and what that realization calls us to.

Discussion Questions (Read the passage)

1. Given what Jesus has just said about his impending death, what is ironic about James and John's request (vs. 35-37)?
2. What is the motivation for their request? How is that shown by the way they asked their request?
3. Compare James and John's answer to Jesus' question of "What do you want me to do for you?" to Bartimaeus' answer to the same question.

The disciples have shown themselves to be spiritually blind and Jesus attempts to open their eyes to the truth that they must give up their lives, take up their cross, and follow him. The contrast between the two is startling and have amazing implications for discipleship. While James and John want to sit on thrones with Jesus and reign with him in triumph. Bartimaeus sits in the dust, makes no demand for glory, but cries out from his wretched poverty: He only wants to see.

4. What has Bartimaeus seen in Jesus that the disciples have not seen? Why does he call him "Son of David"? (Look at leaders prep)

The disciples see Jesus as a Messiah who will bring them mastery and glory; Bartimaeus sees him as the Son of David who brings him healing and sight.

5. Look closely at Bartimaeus' actions - what can we learn from this poor, blind, homeless man about what it truly means to be a disciple of Christ?

When he heard that Jesus was coming he began to shout for mercy. He recognized his need for a Savior and he recognized who that Savior was. He was persistent, even when others rebuked him and told him to be quiet, he shouted "all the more". He threw his cloak aside...a seemingly innocent gesture. But his cloak would have been the most valuable thing that he owned, the thing that he would lay before him and people would put money on, as well as the thing that kept him warm at night. By

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casting it aside, he is showing that he is not encumbered with anything in following Jesus. Finally he asked to see - what every disciple should want, to see spiritual healing and show that discipleship is identifying with Jesus in faith and not just confined to Jesus' specific call to follow.

6. Why is it so significant that once Bartimaeus received sight from Jesus - he then followed Jesus along the road? What does it mean for Bartimaeus to be on this road with Jesus?

Think about where Jesus is headed, what he is going into. Jesus is going into Jerusalem to be crucified and Bartimaeus follows. The picture of true discipleship.

Application

7. As we can see from Bartimaeus, following Christ means sacrifice (in the aspects of leaving all his possessions behind, and following Christ on the road to the cross) as well as incredible hope and life. In your discipleship journey with Christ, what has been or will be a sacrifice? How has this journey brought life and hope into your life?

Take time to pray with each other, to support and encourage one another in the cost of following Jesus, but also to give thanks and praise the one who infuses our life with healing, just as he did with Bartimaeus.