

A Journey

Mark 8:27-38

- INTRO

Our lives as Christians are lives on a Journey with Jesus. This Journey is called, “**discipleship.**” **Do we always know where this journey will lead us?** No. **Do we know everything about Jesus?** No. As we live into this journey, more and more of Jesus is revealed to us along the way.

- ME

I remember times when I got frustrated with my discipleship. The usual tools I would use to grow, seems boring and like they were not helping. So I gave up on this thing called discipleship, joined a basket-weaving cult, and here we are today!

I did not do that, I just kept **trying**, I just kept **walking** with Jesus. I also switched up my tools, as most things are helpful for a season and then it time to revise and refine.

- YOU

Have you ever felt like giving up on all this? Do you have any idea what I am even talking about? Do you have questions about those journey of discipleship? Let’s see what Jesus can do to answer these questions in Mark’s Gospel.

Let begin with some pray...

- GOD

Mark 8:27 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 answered him, "John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets." 29 He asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Messiah." 30 And he sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him.

31 Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. 32 He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. 33 But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."

34 He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. 35 For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. 36 For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? 37 Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? 38 Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

- WE

Mark is the creator of the Gospel form of communicating the truth of Jesus. Mark organizes the story of Jesus around the image of a journey. In all of the Gospels, except John, when people are invited by Jesus to come and follow him, they are invited to a . . . **journey**.

Today we see a monument along the way of this journey with Jesus. In this moment, Jesus *pauses* . . . to ask the disciples, “**Who do people say that I am?**”

Some say this is a test. And as a usual, in Mark’s Gospel, the disciples fail the test. Peter confesses that Jesus is the long awaited Messiah. Good so far, **right?** Then Jesus predicts his own death and Peter decides to instruct the Messiah, the anointed one of Israel, in how this is going to go down. *Or perhaps how this is* NOT **going to go down! How this will NEVER happen! Jesus rebukes Peter by calling him “Satan!”**

Wow. You try to let the Messiah know you have his back . . . **and this is what you get?!** It may seem like this 2,000 years later, but Jesus realized at the time it was a matter of **priorities**. It is really one of many examples of the way in which the real identity of Jesus is a gradually *revealed* and *realized* and *understood* by the disciples. In this Gospel they must learn as they watch Jesus day after day. They watch what he does in daily situations, they listen to his words and they learn who Jesus is, who he really is. But in Mark, they don’t seem to learn all that much, **do they?** They con-

stantly give the wrong answer, as Peter does here right after giving the right answer. He correctly identified Jesus, but then he shows that he doesn't really know what that means.

We should be encouraged by this! We struggle without the direct contact with Jesus that the disciples experienced. Sometimes we don't get the point of who Jesus really is ether, but it is okay. Remember, we are on a **journey** with Jesus. Like the disciples experienced, he will keep revealing more of himself to us and we will grow as we keep on the journey.

There are a lot of people who think when they were "**saved**," when they "**accepted Christ**," or when they "**decided to be a Christian**," that was the end of their journey.

There goal was met, they got their ticket to Heaven!

That is, was, and will always be the beginning of the journey with Jesus!

To be a good journeyer with Jesus, to be a good disciple, we must be willing to **learn**. There will be *twists* and there will be *turns* on this journey of discipleship. There will be *surprises* too. That's how we see it was for the first disciples, **why would we think it would be any different for us?**
What is that keeps us going when the journey gets tough?

Jesus is always on the way to somewhere else in Mark. *Immediately* Jesus goes when he gets there. *Immediately, immediately, immediately...* **Do you know what Mark's favorite word is?**

I need your answer . . . immediately!

We get the idea that the disciples are always out of breath as they try to keep up with Jesus. *And they are always trying to catch up because they are always one step behind Jesus as he has already moved on to somewhere else!*

It starts right away in Mark's Gospel. A couple men are at work one day bent over their nets, working on them.

Tony Campolo says they seem to be the worst fisherman in the world, since they are always mending their nets!

Anyhow, they hear from someone up the road calling to them to *follow him and become fishers of people!* *And they did!* They dropped their meandering nest and followed him . . . **immediately!** *They did not even ask if there were benefits offered!* They did not even ask, **“Ok, maybe, but who are you and where are you going??”**

They just followed him. That is what **discipleship** is, following Jesus on a journey without really knowing exactly who he is or where he is going.

Remember that time in Mark the disciples are not mending their nets, but are in a boat on the sea? A storm comes on and things get ugly and

it looks like they are gonna die! Then who comes strolling along the sea and walks right by them? Jesus! He was always going somewhere and then immediately he was going somewhere else!

I even read that this happens at the end of Mark. The women come to the tomb on Easter morning and are told by a young man in white that they *just missed Jesus! They are told he is already out in Galilee! Go!*

That is just like Jesus. *Just when we are about to catch up to him, he is in the way somewhere else!* This is an adventure, the journey of a lifetime of faith.

We should notice four things about this Journey:

1. This journey is not just an adventure, but a **relationship** with Jesus. Christianity is more a relationship than it is a set of intellectual propositions that you must affirm.
2. This journey has **movement** from here to here. If discipleship is a journey, then it is a long process of *growth* and *surprise!*
3. There will be times when we wonder if the journey is working. There will be setbacks, and boredom. Don't worry about it though. There will be peaks followed by valleys followed by **guess what? Peaks!**
Just . . . keep . . . walking . . .

4. The journey of discipleship involves some **disciplines** for **growth** and **progress**. These include worship, prayer, reading, silence. **Can you think of other disciplines that have helped you on this journey?**

There is an ancient saying that should inspire us:

The journey is the reward.

What do you think that means? What does that mean to you?

- THE SERMON IN A SENTENCE

We are on a journey with Jesus, when it does not make sense, just keep walking.

- YOU

How is your journey going? Does it make sense to you? if not, **what are you going to do?** Just keep walking, just keep trying, just keep breathing with Jesus. When we begin it is not the end. When we begin it is the . . . **Beginning.**

- CLOSE

I read about an old pastor who once lamented about the presence of so many “**stillborn Christians.**” That means there are many people who have been “**born again,**” as Christians sometimes say; they have taken the first step on the journey but they never get around to taking the second step or the third . . . They don’t seem to grow past birth.

When we start walking with Christ we don't experience only the gift of **justification**, or that grace of God that make us right with God. We also receive the folding gift of **sanctification**. Remember this is the grace of God that helps us to grow up in Christ. So keep walking, keep growing, keep following Jesus.

Let us pray to Jesus now...