

MARK

READ MARK 8:27-38

Pursue

- In our text this week Jesus makes plain and clear what was fuzzy for the disciples and the crowds. He asks, "Who do people say that I am?" and "Who do you say that I am?" They see Him as a prophet or as the triumphant Christ come to save His people through worldly power. Neither group fully understand the true identity of Jesus, as Lord, nor do they understand the necessary response to His true identity, surrender to Him.
 - Who do you say Jesus is? Does your life reflect the Lordship of Christ?
 - **There can be a gap between what we say we believe and our functional beliefs - what we actually believe. (We ALL have those gaps, by God's grace they are getting smaller over time.)
- Jesus explains the call and cost of following Him to the disciples and crowds (v.34-38). Those who would come to Him must deny themselves, pick up their cross and follow Him. They must surrender their lives to Him as Lord and in doing so will also suffer. Denying self, dying to self, and choosing to suffer is not easy or painless but it gains us Christ.
 - Have a group member read Matthew 26:36-46 and Hebrews 4:14-16. How does knowing that Jesus understands surrender and suffering impact your understanding of submission, surrender, and suffering?

Practice

Confession & Prayer

- Spend 3-5 minutes in quiet prayer & reflection over the following two points:
 - Jesus makes sure that his disciples understand that the way of victory over satan, sin, and death is by way of His suffering, rejection, death, and resurrection (v.31). He must suffer, be rejected, be killed, and rise again for His people and His creation to be restored in right relationship with God again. The cost of our salvation is truly great. We can often forget this truth, or it can lose its magnificence to us. Meditate on God's work of salvation on your specific behalf.
 - In what spaces is God calling you to surrender to Him? Maybe you have surrendered it in the past but picked it back up because it is hard to trust Him, or control feels better.
 - Do you need to surrender your job to him, your children, your finances, marital status, your home, etc.
 - Perhaps you are not a Christian, and the call to you is to finally your surrender your life to him.
 - Is there a relationship in which you need to practice self-denial? (Parenting, friendship spouse, etc.)
- After a time of reflection, create prayer partners or smaller groups to confess and pray for one another about these things. Discuss any ways the group can support their repentance & obedience to surrender these things to the Lord.

Proclaim

Jesus calls a few of his disciples in our text this week to follow Him. As we will see, while they have surrendered to him and are following Him, they don't fully understand who He is and how He will work, especially how he will accomplish the deliverance they long for. We don't have to wait to disciple or share the beauty of Christ with others until they fully understand. What is something you learned, was convicted of, or encouraged by that you will share this week with someone who doesn't have faith in Jesus?