

# Mark 8 Commentary

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John Mark

**MARK: THE SERVANT JESUS**

Click chart to enlarge  
Chart from [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission  
[Another Chart](#) from Charles Swindoll-right side of page

**THE LIFE OF CHRIST SHOWING COVERAGE BY MARK (SHADED AREA)**

**Mark 8:1 In those days, when there was again a large crowd and they had nothing to eat, Jesus called His disciples and said to them,**

Wuest In those days again, there being a great crowd, and they not having anything to eat, having called His disciples to Him, He says to them, ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#))

NET Mark 8:1 In those days there was another large crowd with nothing to eat. So Jesus called his disciples and said to them,

NLT Mark 8:1 About this time another large crowd had gathered, and the people ran out of food again. Jesus called his disciples and told them,

ESV Mark 8:1 In those days, when again a great crowd had gathered, and they had nothing to eat, he called his disciples to him and said to them,

NIV Mark 8:1 During those days another large crowd gathered. Since they had nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples to him and said,

GNT Mark 8:1 ν κε ναις τα ς μ ραις π λιν πολλο χλου ντος κα μ χ ντων τ φ γωσιν, προσκαλεσ μενος το ς μαθητ ς λ γει α το ς,

KJV Mark 8:1 In those days the multitude being very great, and having nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples unto him, and saith unto them,

YLT Mark 8:1 In those days the multitude being very great, and not having what they may eat, Jesus having called near his disciples, saith to them,

ASV Mark 8:1 In those days, when there was again a great multitude, and they had nothing to eat, he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them,

CSB Mark 8:1 In those days there was again a large crowd, and they had nothing to eat. He summoned the disciples and said to them,

- Mt 15:32-39
- **Mark 8 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Related Passages:**

Matthew 15:29-31 Departing from there, Jesus went along by the Sea of Galilee, and having gone up on the mountain, He was sitting there. 30 And large crowds came to Him, bringing with them those who were lame, crippled, blind, mute, and many others, and they laid them down at His feet; and He healed them. 31 So the crowd marveled as they saw the mute speaking, the crippled restored, and the lame walking, and the blind seeing; and they glorified the God of Israel.



DECAPOLIS = 10 Cities

**In those days** - What **days**? The days when Jesus was ministering in [Decapolis](#) (see map above, cf Mk 7:31-37+) but otherwise chronologically indefinite. The point is that this miracle was taking place in predominantly Gentile territory in contrast to the feeding of the 5000 which was predominantly Jewish territory.

**Mark Akin** - "In those days" is an indefinite time marker, but it also informs us that the miracle of the feeding of the 4,000 probably took place 1) in the region of Decapolis (7:31) and therefore 2) is an extension of His mission to the Gentiles. Jews may also have been present on this occasion, but it is almost certain the majority who had followed Him for 3 days were Gentiles.

**When there was again a large crowd** - Why does Mark say **again**? He is emphasizing that we have a second large crowd that had nothing to eat like the crowd of 5000. Matthew 15:30-31+ explains the **large crowd**. While they were predominantly Gentiles, they too "marveled as they saw the mute speaking, the crippled restored, and the lame walking, and the blind seeing; and they glorified the God of Israel." (Mt 15:31). Matthew 15:38 says there were "four thousand men, besides women and children." So they were undoubtedly more than 10,000 people in this large crowd. Jesus' popularity is at its peak (see the diagram "[Public Ministry](#)" at the top of this page - last four months of Galilean ministry). Opposition is rising against Jesus and will culminate in His crucifixion.

Don't miss the response of these Gentiles who "marveled as they saw the mute speaking, the crippled restored, and the lame walking, and the blind seeing; and **they glorified the God of Israel.**" (Mt 15:31)

**Hiebert** - Mark's reference to the zealous publicizing of the healing of the deaf stammerer (Mk 7:36) offers an adequate explanation for this great multitude. Again draws special attention to the fact that this is another instance of a similar event. It seems to look back to the feeding of the five thousand (Mk 6:34-44). ([Gospel of Mark - An Expository Commentary](#))

**And they had nothing to eat** - Jesus explains that they had apparently had nothing to eat for three days! They would have been famished.

**Jesus called His disciples and said to them** - In the Miracle of the 5000, it was the disciples who called Jesus' attention to the multitudes' need of food, but here Jesus takes the initiative. Jesus sense the urgency of the need in this situation. It is surprising that His disciples did not seem to be as concerned (as far as we can tell from the text here and in Matthew).

**Hiebert** points out that "Since Jesus was intent on training the Twelve, He would not perform such a miracle of feeding without first calling the attention of the disciples to the need and getting their reaction. Such miracles were not performed by Him as a matter of course, whether needed or not. ([Gospel of Mark - An Expository Commentary](#))

**John MacArthur** notes that "The event recorded in Mark 8:1-10 culminates Jesus' journey through those Gentile areas. This passage can be divided into four segments: the merciful compassion of the Lord (Mk 8:1-3), the myopic consternation of the disciples (Mk 8:4-5), the miraculous creation of a meal (Mk 8:6-9), and the ministry cultivation of the Twelve (Mk 8:10) The first feeding of thousands (Mark 6:35-44) took place on the northeast side of the Sea of Galilee, near the time of the feast of Passover (John 6:4), when the hills around the lake were lush with grass (cf. Matt. 14:19; John 6:10). Several months had likely passed since that miraculous event, a point suggested by the description of the hillsides as mere "ground" on this occasion (Matt. 15:35; Mark 8:6). Under the intense heat of summer, the green grass of spring would begin to wither away and die. ([MNTC-Mark 1-8](#))

## Comparison of Mark 6:30-7:37 and Mark 8:1-30

1	Feeding of a great multitude.	Mk 6:30-44 → Mk 8:1-9
2	A boat trip	Mk 6:45-56 → Mk 8:10
3	Confrontation with the Pharisees	Mk 7:1-23 → Mk 8:11-13
4	A conversation about bread	Mk 7:24-30 → Mk 8:14-21
5	A miraculous healing	Mk 7:31-36 → Mk 8:22-26
6	A significant confession	Mk 7:37 → Mk 8:27

## Comparing and Contrasting Feeding of the Multitudes Mark 6:30-44 and Mark 8:1-10

Feeding 5000 was recorded in all 4 Gospels, but the feeding of 4000 was recorded only in Mark and Matthew.

### Similarities:

- Both miracles involved huge crowds who were hungry
- Jesus used a small amount of bread and fish to feed a lot of people
- The disciples doubted the Lord's ability to provide but were also involved in distributing the food
- In both miracles, Jesus took the little they had, gave thanks, and multiplied it
- The crowds ate and were completely satisfied and a large amount of food was left over

### Differences:

- The first miracle involved feeding 5,000 compared to 4,000 here
- The amount of bread is different – 5 loaves versus 7 loaves
- The leftovers from the first miracle go in 12 small baskets and in the second, 7 large baskets are used
- There are two different Greek words - smaller baskets = [kophinos](#) and larger baskets = [spuris](#)
- The first meal came after a day of teaching and this one follows three days of teaching
- One prayer in the feeding of 5000, two prayers in feeding of 4000
- The first miracle took place among Jewish people and this one happens in the Decapolis, a Gentile community

Critics say they are the same, but not only do the points above differentiate the feedings.

Jesus Himself clearly distinguishes two feedings in Mark 8:19-20 ([see below](#)).

**NET Note** - Many commentators, on the basis of similarities between this account of the feeding of the multitude (Mk 8:1–10) and that in Mk 6:30–44, have argued that there is only one event referred to in both passages. While there are similarities in language and in the response of the disciples, there are also noticeable differences, including the different number present on each occasion (i.e., 5,000 in chap. 6 and 4,000 here). In the final analysis, the fact that Jesus refers to two distinct feedings in Mk 8:18–20 settles the issue; this passage represents another very similar incident to that recorded in 6:30–44.

**Hiebert** - Nineham asserts, "It is now generally accepted that we are dealing with alternative, and somewhat divergent accounts of a single incident." This critical conclusion of the liberal scholars is urged from the general similarities of the two accounts but especially from the dullness of the disciples as seen in Mk 8:4. The latter argument has some weight but is not insuperable. The obvious similarities are more than outweighed by the striking differences between the two events....The critical assumption is the concomitant of a low view of inspiration. ([Gospel of Mark - An Expository Commentary](#))

**Brooks** quips, "One might think that Mark and Matthew were in a better position than modern interpreters to know whether there was one or two. (PNTC-Mk)

**Mark 8:2 "I feel compassion for the people because they have remained with Me now three days and have nothing to eat.**

Wuest My heart goes out to the crowd, because now for three days they are staying with Me and they do not have anything to eat. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#))

NET Mark 8:2 "I have compassion on the crowd, because they have already been here with me three days, and they have nothing to eat.

NLT Mark 8:2 "I feel sorry for these people. They have been here with me for three days, and they have nothing left to eat.

ESV Mark 8:2 "I have compassion on the crowd, because they have been with me now three days and have nothing to eat.

NIV Mark 8:2 "I have compassion for these people; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat.

GNT Mark 8:2 Σπλαγχν ζομαι π τ ν χλον, τι δη μ ραι τρε ς προσμ νουσ ν μοι κα ο κ χουσιν τ φ γωσιν·

KJV Mark 8:2 I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat:

YLT Mark 8:2 'I have compassion upon the multitude, because now three days they do continue with me, and they have not what they may eat;

ASV Mark 8:2 I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat:

CSB Mark 8:2 "I have compassion on the crowd, because they've already stayed with Me three days and have nothing to eat.

NKJ Mark 8:2 "I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have nothing to eat.

NRS Mark 8:2 "I have compassion for the crowd, because they have been with me now for three days and have nothing to eat.

NAB Mark 8:2 "My heart is moved with pity for the crowd, because they have been with me now for three days and have nothing to eat.

NJB Mark 8:2 'I feel sorry for all these people; they have been with me for three days now and have nothing to eat.

- **compassion:** Mk 1:41 5:19 6:34 9:22 Ps 103:13 145:8,15 Mic 7:19 Mt 9:36 14:14 Mt 20:34 Lu 7:13 15:20 Heb 2:17 4:15 5:2
- **have:** Mt 4:2-4 6:32,33 Joh 4:6-8,30-34
- **Mark 8 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### Parallel Passages:

Mt 15:32+ And Jesus called His disciples to Him, and said, "I feel compassion for the people, because they have remained with Me now three days and have nothing to eat; and I do not want to send them away hungry, for they might faint on the way."

Mark 6:34 When Jesus went ashore, He saw a large crowd, and He felt compassion for them because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and He began to teach them many things.

**I feel compassion for the people** - Notice in Mk 6:34 Mark says Jesus "felt compassion," but here Jesus Himself states "I feel compassion." We would today say, "My heart goes out to them." **Feel compassion** is in the [present tense](#), expresses the Savior's heart as continuing to have a deep feeling toward the crowds. In view of the fact that the miracle of 4000 was in Decapolis, the people here almost certainly consists of large numbers of Gentiles. So we see Jesus' compassion for the Jews (Feeding 5000) and the Gentiles (Feeding 4000).

**MacArthur** adds that "The idea was similar to modern expressions like a "gut-wrenching" emotion or a feeling "in the pit of one's stomach." The English word compassion comes from a Latin word meaning, "to suffer with," and conveys feelings of deep sympathy, pity, and kindness toward those who are hurting." ([MNTC-Mark 1-8](#))

**Feel compassion** (4697) ([splanchnizomai](#) from [splagchnon](#) = bowel, viscera - see [splagchnon](#) note below) means to experience a deep visceral feeling for someone, to feel compassion for, to feel [sympathy](#), to take [pity](#) on someone. [Compassion](#) is the sympathetic consciousness of others' distress together with a desire to alleviate it. This verb expresses an outward flow of one's life in contrast to our natural tendency toward self centeredness. It is notable that 8/12 NT uses describe this deep seated emotion in Jesus. It follows that if we desire to imitate Jesus, we need to be men and women of deep compassion! 12x in NT - Matt. 9:36; Matt. 14:14; Matt. 15:32; Matt. 18:27; Matt. 20:34; Mk. 1:41; Mk. 6:34; Mk. 8:2; Mk. 9:22; Lk. 7:13; Lk. 10:33; Lk. 15:20

**THOUGHT** - Obviously the multitudes greatest need was spiritual food, but we see Jesus' compassion

specifically directed to their physical needs. This is a good lesson for us to remember, for compassionate deeds may open doors for giving out the Gospel to address spiritual needs.

**because** - Term of explanation. Explains Jesus' emotions for the people's physical needs (although undoubtedly always on His holy mind was their desperate spiritual need for regeneration). "He who had Himself felt the pangs of hunger (Matt. 4:2+) empathized deeply with the hungry and was constrained to meet their need." (Hiebert)

**They have remained with Me now three days and have nothing to eat** - **Nothing to eat** is repeated from Mk 8:1. The Greek negative (**nothing**) signifies absolutely nothing! Note that in the feeding of the 5000, the multitude was with Him for only that day, not three days as in this different account.

**Wuest** on the verb **remained** - The verb speaks of more than merely position. It is *prosmenō*, **menō** "to continue with, to abide with," and **pros** "facing," speaking of fellowship." ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmans Publishing Company Volume 1](#), [Volume 2](#), [Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

**Hiebert** adds that "the people were in an eager, receptive mood and had continued to maintain a close, face-to-face (see prefix "pros") relationship with Him for three days." ([Gospel of Mark - An Expository Commentary](#))

**MacArthur** adds "In their eagerness to hear Jesus' teaching and witness His miracles, the people refused to go home—even if it meant sleeping outside and missing a few meals. Overwhelmed with the Lord Jesus, they put hunger aside. He recognized what perhaps they themselves did not even realize." ([MNTC-Mark 1-8](#))

**Remained** (4357) (**prosmeno** from **pros** = + **meno** = abide, remain) means to stay on, remain, "to stay on at a place beyond some point of time" (BDAG) (Acts 18:18, 1 Ti 1:3), to stay with someone, "to be steadfast in association" (BDAG) (Mt 15:32, Mk 8:2), figuratively to remain loyal to (Acts 11:23), to continue in, persevere in, keep on doing (1 Ti 5:5).

**Mark 8:3 If I send them away hungry to their homes, they will faint on the way; and some of them have come from a great distance."**

Wuest And if I send them off fasting to their homes, they will faint along the road. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#))

NET Mark 8:3 If I send them home hungry, they will faint on the way, and some of them have come from a great distance."

NLT Mark 8:3 If I send them home hungry, they will faint along the way. For some of them have come a long distance."

ESV Mark 8:3 And if I send them away hungry to their homes, they will faint on the way. And some of them have come from far away."

NIV Mark 8:3 If I send them home hungry, they will collapse on the way, because some of them have come a long distance."

GNT Mark 8:3 καὶ ἂν ἀποσταλέωσι ἄρουρα ἰσχυροὶ ἐξ ὁδοῦ, κλυθσονται ἐν τῷ ὁδοῦ· καὶ οἱ τινες ἀπὸ μακροῦ ἐκαστοῦ.

KJV Mark 8:3 And if I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint by the way: for divers of them came from far.

YLT Mark 8:3 and if I shall let them away fasting to their home, they will faint in the way, for certain of them are come from far.'

ASV Mark 8:3 and if I send them away fasting to their home, they will faint on the way; and some of them are come from far.

CSB Mark 8:3 If I send them home hungry, they will collapse on the way, and some of them have come a long distance."

NKJ Mark 8:3 "And if I send them away hungry to their own houses, they will faint on the way; for some of them have come from afar."

- Jdg 8:4-6 1Sa 14:28-31 30:10-12 Isa 40:31
- **Mark 8 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## JESUS SAW EVERYONE'S NEED

### Parallel Passages:

Mt 15:32+ And Jesus called His disciples to Him, and said, "I feel compassion for the people, because they have remained with Me now three days and have nothing to eat; and I do not want to send them away hungry, for they might faint on the way." 3

**If I send them away hungry (fasting) to their homes, they will faint on the way-** NIV = " they will collapse on the way" Jesus "diagnosis" of their degree of hunger is that it is extreme to they point that the trip back home would be so exhausting that they would faint from exhaustion (cf Jdg 8:15, Lam 2:19). **Hungry** is **nestis** used only here and Mt 15:32 and meaning not eating. In other words they were fasting.

**Faint** (1590)(**ekluo** from **ek** = out or intensifier + **luo** = to loose) means literally to loosen out and so to be unstrung (secular use = to unstring a bow) and so to collapse," like a bowstring that goes limp when unstrung." "To have one's strength relaxed" (Thayer). To relax effort. To be without strength, extremely weary, exhausted in strength, ready to give out. **Ekluo** was used to describe reapers who had been overcome by heat and toil. Used 5x in NT - Mt. 15:32; Mk. 8:3; Gal. 6:9; Heb. 12:3; Heb. 12:5

**Hiebert** adds that in this context **ekluo** "literally means to be completely unloosed; it suggests that the strength of the hungry people will relax, like an unstrung bow, and they will be unable to continue homeward. They would collapse physically before reaching their homes." ([Gospel of Mark - An Expository Commentary](#))

**and some of them have come from a great distance** - NLT - "some of them have come from far away." Jesus knew that some of the people had come from a great distance to be with Him. The cities in Decapolis were not nearly as close as the more densely populated region of Galilee.

**THOUGHT** - The omniscient Jesus still sees everyone's need! Rest in that truth regarding the need you might be currently experiencing. He sees. He is still compassionate. He cares.

**Mark 8:4 And His disciples answered Him, "Where will anyone be able to find enough bread here in this desolate place to satisfy these people?"**

Wuest And His disciples answered Him, How can it be that anyone will be able to satisfy these with loaves of bread here in the uninhabited region?([Wuest](#))

NET Mark 8:4 His disciples answered him, "Where can someone get enough bread in this desolate place to satisfy these people?"

NLT Mark 8:4 His disciples replied, "How are we supposed to find enough food to feed them out here in the wilderness?"

ESV Mark 8:4 And his disciples answered him, "How can one feed these people with bread here in this desolate place?"

NIV Mark 8:4 His disciples answered, "But where in this remote place can anyone get enough bread to feed them?"

GNT Mark 8:4 κα περ θησαν ατ ο μαθητα ατο τι Πθεν το τους δυν σετα τις δε χορτσαι ρτων π ρημ ας;

KJV Mark 8:4 And his disciples answered him, From whence can a man satisfy these men with bread here in the wilderness?

YLT Mark 8:4 And his disciples answered him, 'Whence shall any one be able these here to feed with bread in a wilderness?'

ASV Mark 8:4 And his disciples answered him, Whence shall one be able to fill these men with bread here in

a desert place?

CSB Mark 8:4 His disciples answered Him, "Where can anyone get enough bread here in this desolate place to fill these people?"

NKJ Mark 8:4 Then His disciples answered Him, "How can one satisfy these people with bread here in the wilderness?"

NRS Mark 8:4 His disciples replied, "How can one feed these people with bread here in the desert?"

NAB Mark 8:4 His disciples answered him, "Where can anyone get enough bread to satisfy them here in this deserted place?"

- Mk 6:36,37,52 Nu 11:21-23 2Ki 4:42-44 7:2 Ps 78:19,20 Mt 15:33 Joh 6:7-9
- **Mark 8 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Parallel Passages:

Mt 15:33+ The disciples \*said to Him, "Where would we get so many loaves in this desolate place to satisfy such a large crowd?"

### THE DISCIPLES' DULLNESS

**And His disciples answered Him, "Where will anyone be able to find enough bread here in this desolate place to satisfy these people?"** - This is an incredible passage for the disciples clearly had not learned from the previous feeding of 5000. **Desolate place** is *erēmia* "a solitude, an uninhabited region.

**Robertson** - Of all places, in this desert region in the mountains. The disciples feel as helpless as when the five thousand were fed. They do not rise to faith in the unlimited power of Jesus after all that they have seen.

**Hiebert** has an in dept discussion of the disciple's question - This reply by the disciples is admittedly the main problem when this incident is accepted as a separate occurrence of the feeding of the multitude. That the disciples showed themselves dull of apprehension is obvious. But even more so is their dullness manifested in 8:14–21. The Gospels do not conceal the deficiencies of the disciples. Nevertheless, some feel that the reply here is incredible. Gould asserts, "The stupid repetition of the question is psychologically impossible." In reply, Swete points out that "the question is not repeated exactly"; in the first instance, it was a matter of the lack of means to buy the needed bread, but here it is a question of the scarcity of food in this thinly populated area. He adds, "Such stupidity as it shews is in accordance with all that we know of the condition of the Apostles at this time."<sup>23</sup> Alexander observed, "Even those who now reject the statement as incredible would probably have done the same if similarly situated." It is a common observation that believers frequently forget God's amazing dealings with them in the past when confronted with some new crisis. To view their reply simply as an expression of hopelessness seems to misread the situation. Plummer suggests that in their reply the disciples simply "confess their own powerlessness and leave the solution to Him." McKenna insists that "there is a world of difference between this question and the one they asked at the first feeding. Now, with faith in Jesus, they ask, 'How can we feed them?' " It may be noted that when the amount of bread available was indicated, none of the disciples now said, "But what are these among so many?" (John 6:9). We conclude that the difficulty found in the disciples' reply is best viewed not as placing the accuracy of the record in question but as vindicating the faithlessness of the reporters. ([Gospel of Mark - An Expositional Commentary](#))

**Mark 8:5 And He was asking them, "How many loaves do you have?" And they said, "Seven."**

Wuest And He went to asking them, How many loaves of bread do you have? And they said, Seven. ([Wuest](#))

NET Mark 8:5 He asked them, "How many loaves do you have?" They replied, "Seven."

NLT Mark 8:5 Jesus asked, "How much bread do you have?" "Seven loaves," they replied.

ESV Mark 8:5 And he asked them, "How many loaves do you have?" They said, "Seven."

NIV Mark 8:5 "How many loaves do you have?" Jesus asked. "Seven," they replied.

GNT Mark 8:5 καὶ ῥητὰ αὐτοῦ, Πῶσους ἄρτους ἔχετε; οὗ δέπαν, ἑπτὰ.

KJV Mark 8:5 And he asked them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven.

YLT Mark 8:5 And he was questioning them, 'How many loaves have ye?' and they said, 'Seven.'

ASV Mark 8:5 And he asked them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven.

CSB Mark 8:5 "How many loaves do you have?" He asked them. "Seven," they said.

NKJ Mark 8:5 He asked them, "How many loaves do you have?" And they said, "Seven."

NRS Mark 8:5 He asked them, "How many loaves do you have?" They said, "Seven."

- How: Mk 6:38 Mt 14:15-17 15:34 Lu 9:13
- **Mark 8 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Parallel Passages:

Mt 15:34+ And Jesus said to them, "How many loaves do you have?" And they said, "Seven, and a few small fish."

## JESUS CUTS TO THE CHASE!

**And He was asking them, "How many loaves do you have?" And they said, "Seven."** - Little is much in the hands of our Creator. Do we gratefully give Him our little? Or do we have little and hold it tightly. Contrast the feeding of the 5000 with 5 loaves and 2 fish (Mk 6:41).

**Mark 8:6 And He directed the people to sit down on the ground; and taking the seven loaves, He gave thanks and broke them, and started giving them to His disciples to serve to them, and they served them to the people.**

Wuest And He commands the crowd to recline on the ground. And having taken the seven loaves of bread, having given thanks, He broke, and kept on giving them to His disciples in order that they might keep on setting them forth. And they served the crowd. ([Wuest](#))

NET Mark 8:6 Then he directed the crowd to sit down on the ground. After he took the seven loaves and gave thanks, he broke them and began giving them to the disciples to serve. So they served the crowd.

NLT Mark 8:6 So Jesus told all the people to sit down on the ground. Then he took the seven loaves, thanked God for them, and broke them into pieces. He gave them to his disciples, who distributed the bread to the crowd.

ESV Mark 8:6 And he directed the crowd to sit down on the ground. And he took the seven loaves, and having given thanks, he broke them and gave them to his disciples to set before the people; and they set them before the crowd.

NIV Mark 8:6 He told the crowd to sit down on the ground. When he had taken the seven loaves and given thanks, he broke them and gave them to his disciples to set before the people, and they did so.

GNT Mark 8:6 κα παραγγ λλει τ χλ ναπεσε ν π τ ς γ ς· κα λαβ ν το ς πτ ρτους ε χαριστ σας κλασεν κα δ δου το ς μαθητα ς α το να παραπιθ σιν, κα παρ θηκαν τ χλ .

KJV Mark 8:6 And he commanded the people to sit down on the ground: and he took the seven loaves, and gave thanks, and brake, and gave to his disciples to set before them; and they did set them before the people.

YLT Mark 8:6 And he commanded the multitude to sit down upon the ground, and having taken the seven loaves, having given thanks, he brake, and was giving to his disciples that they may set before them; and they did set before the multitude.

ASV Mark 8:6 And he commandeth the multitude to sit down on the ground: and he took the seven loaves, and having given thanks, he brake, and gave to his disciples, to set before them; and they set them before the multitude.

CSB Mark 8:6 Then He commanded the crowd to sit down on the ground. Taking the seven loaves, He gave thanks, broke the loaves, and kept on giving them to His disciples to set before the people. So they served the

loaves to the crowd.

NKJ Mark 8:6 So He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. And He took the seven loaves and gave thanks, broke them and gave them to His disciples to set before them; and they set them before the multitude.

- **to sit:** Mk 6:39,40 Mt 14:18,19 15:35,36 Lu 9:14,15 12:37 Joh 2:5 6:10
- **gave thanks:** Mk 6:41-44 1Sa 9:13 Mt 15:36 26:26 Lu 24:30 Joh 6:11,23 Ro 14:6 1Co 10:30,31 Col 3:17 1Ti 4:3-5
- **Mark 8 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Parallel Passages:

Mt 15:35+ And He directed the people to sit down on the ground; 36 and He took the seven loaves and the fish; and giving thanks, He broke them and started giving them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people.

**And He directed** ([paraggello](#) - commanded, ordered) **the people to sit down on the ground-** (cf Mk 6:40). It is fascinating that they clearly obeyed Him. Note ground here and not green grass (Mk 6:39), which is my many think this even was several months after a spring feeding of the 5000.

**and taking the seven loaves** - He took it all.

**THOUGHT** - How much of what the disciples had did He take? How much that we have must we put in His hands if we wish Him to bless, multiply and use it?

**He gave thanks** - This is the repeated pattern in the NT - Ro. 14:6; 1 Cor. 10:30, 31; Col. 3:17; 1 Tim. 4:3–5; Acts 27:35. Jesus in essence was showing the crowd that the power behind this miracle would be God.

**THOUGHT** - True confession time! I wonder how seldom I really do this? O, I do it in a restaurant as a witness, but it is almost hypocritical as I seldom do it when I eat my cereal at breakfast! Why not? I do not have a good excuse. I need to start thanking God, and that would be at least three times a day I give Him thanks!

**and broke them, and started giving them to His disciples to serve to them, and they served them to the people-** **Broke** is [aorist tense](#) signifying a definite act and then giving is [imperfect tense](#) signifying again and again, first to one disciple, then the next, and so on from the Creator of the world (cf. John 1:3; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:3). The miracle was happening before their very eyes!

How different was the reaction of the crowd compared with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus described by Luke...

Luke 24:30; 31; 35+ When He had reclined at the table with them, He took the bread and blessed it, and breaking it, He began giving it to them. 31 Then **their eyes were opened** and **they recognized Him**; and He vanished from their sight....35 They began to relate their experiences on the road and **how He was recognized by them in the breaking of the bread.**

**Mark 8:7 They also had a few small fish; and after He had blessed them, He ordered these to be served as well.**

Wuest And they had a few little fish. And having prayed that God might bless them to their intended use, He said to set these before them also. ([Wuest](#))

NET Mark 8:7 They also had a few small fish. After giving thanks for these, he told them to serve these as well.

NLT Mark 8:7 A few small fish were found, too, so Jesus also blessed these and told the disciples to distribute them.

ESV Mark 8:7 And they had a few small fish. And having blessed them, he said that these also should be set before them.

NIV Mark 8:7 They had a few small fish as well; he gave thanks for them also and told the disciples to distribute them.

GNT Mark 8:7 κα ε χον χθ δια λ γα· κα ε λογ σας α τ ε πεν κα τα τα παραπιθ ναι.

KJV Mark 8:7 And they had a few small fishes: and he blessed, and commanded to set them also before

them.

YLT Mark 8:7 And they had a few small fishes, and having blessed, he said to set them also before them;

ASV Mark 8:7 And they had a few small fishes: and having blessed them, he commanded to set these also before them.

CSB Mark 8:7 They also had a few small fish, and when He had blessed them, He said these were to be served as well.

NKJ Mark 8:7 They also had a few small fish; and having blessed them, He said to set them also before them.

NRS Mark 8:7 They had also a few small fish; and after blessing them, he ordered that these too should be distributed.

- **fishes:** Lu 24:41,42 Joh 21:5,8,9
- **blessed:** Lu 6:41 Mt 14:19
- **Mark 8 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**They also had a few small fish; and after He had blessed them** - This suggests that the loaves were passed out first, with the fish as a separate serving. Again Jesus teaches it is good to give thanks for our provisions for ultimately God is the sole, sufficient resource for our needs. When we offer the blessing at the table before meals, we do what our Lord did.

**Blessed** (2127) (**eulogeo** from **eu** = good + **lógos** = word; see cognates **eulogetos** and **eulogia**) means speak good or well. When eulogeo is used by men toward men it means to speak well of with praise and thanksgiving (English "**Eulogy**" = an address in praise for one deceased). To say good or positive things. **Eulogeo** can be from men to God, from men to men, and from God to men. When God blesses men He grants them favor and confers happiness upon them. All uses in Mark - Mk. 6:41; Mk. 8:7; Mk. 11:9; Mk. 11:10; Mk. 14:22;

**He ordered these to be served as well** - **Served** is placed beside or placed before as in Mk 6:41 and in the [present tense](#) describes a continuous process.

### **Mark 8:8 All were satisfied; and they picked up seven large baskets full of what was left over of the broken pieces.**

Wuest And they ate and were satisfied. And they took up that which was left over, of broken pieces, seven baskets. ([Wuest](#))

NET Mark 8:8 Everyone ate and was satisfied, and they picked up the broken pieces left over, seven baskets full.

NLT Mark 8:8 They ate as much as they wanted. Afterward, the disciples picked up seven large baskets of leftover food.

ESV Mark 8:8 And they ate and were satisfied. And they took up the broken pieces left over, seven baskets full.

NIV Mark 8:8 The people ate and were satisfied. Afterward the disciples picked up seven basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over.

GNT Mark 8:8 καὶ φάγον καὶ χορτίσθησαν, καὶ ῥᾶν περισσεύματα κλάσμάτων ἑπτὰ σπυροῦ δας.

KJV Mark 8:8 So they did eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets.

YLT Mark 8:8 and they did eat and were filled, and they took up that which was over of broken pieces -- seven baskets;

ASV Mark 8:8 And they ate, and were filled: and they took up, of broken pieces that remained over, seven baskets.

CSB Mark 8:8 They ate and were filled. Then they collected seven large baskets of leftover pieces.

NKJ Mark 8:8 So they ate and were filled, and they took up seven large baskets of leftover fragments.

NRS Mark 8:8 They ate and were filled; and they took up the broken pieces left over, seven baskets full.

NAB Mark 8:8 They ate and were satisfied. They picked up the fragments left over-- seven baskets.

NJB Mark 8:8 They ate as much as they wanted, and they collected seven basketfuls of the scraps left over.

- **were:** Mk 8:19,20 Ps 107:8,9 145:16 Mt 16:10 Lu 1:53 Joh 6:11-13,27,32-35,47-58 Rev 7:16,17
- **they took:** 1Ki 17:14-16 2Ki 4:2-7,42-44
- **Mark 8 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Parallel Passages:

Mt 15:37+ And they all ate and were satisfied, and they picked up what was left over of the broken pieces, seven large baskets full.

### WHEN JESUS PROVIDES SATISFACTION GUARANTEED!

**A were satisfied** - Same word [chortazo](#) used in Mark 8:4. Does anyone ever go away hungry from the Lord's table? That is a rhetorical question.

**and they picked up seven large baskets full of what was left over of the broken pieces** - Contrast these baskets with those in the miracle of the 5000 (kophinos) for the latter baskets were smaller and more akin to our lunch baskets. A little is always a lot (and more than enough) in the hands of the Creator!

"When God is in it, you will notice, there is always a surplus," McGee comments.

**Large baskets** ([4711](#))(**spuris**) refers to large flexible baskets, large enough to hold a man (which they did in Acts 9:25!). All except Acts 9:25 describe the 7 baskets of left-over bread in feeding the 4000. Contrast the 12 baskets left over from feeding the 5000 in Mark 6:43, a different Greek word **kophinos**. In both Matthew and Mark when Jesus describes the feeding of 5000 and 4000, He uses these two words with the same distinction (Mark 8:19-20<sup>+</sup>; Matt. 16:9-10<sup>+</sup>). The two terms are always kept distinct in reference to the two miracles, evidence that different kinds of baskets were used.

**Spuris** - Matt. 15:37; Matt. 16:10; Mk. 8:8; Mk. 8:20; Acts 9:25. Not found in the Septuagint.

#### Mark 8:9 About four thousand were there; and He sent them away.

Wuest And there were about four thousand. And He sent them away. ([Wuest](#))

NET Mark 8:9 There were about four thousand who ate. Then he dismissed them.

NLT Mark 8:9 There were about 4,000 people in the crowd that day, and Jesus sent them home after they had eaten.

ESV Mark 8:9 And there were about four thousand people. And he sent them away.

NIV Mark 8:9 About four thousand men were present. And having sent them away,

GNT Mark 8:9 σαν ὄ ρ τετρακισχ λιοι. κα π λυσεν α το ρ.

KJV Mark 8:9 And they that had eaten were about four thousand: and he sent them away.

YLT Mark 8:9 and those eating were about four thousand. And he let them away,

ASV Mark 8:9 And they were about four thousand: and he sent them away.

CSB Mark 8:9 About 4,000 men were there. He dismissed them

NKJ Mark 8:9 Now those who had eaten were about four thousand. And He sent them away,

NRS Mark 8:9 Now there were about four thousand people. And he sent them away.

NAB Mark 8:9 There were about four thousand people. He dismissed them

NJB Mark 8:9 Now there had been about four thousand people. He sent them away

GWN Mark 8:9 About four thousand people were there. Then he sent the people on their way.

- **Mark 8 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Parallel Passages:

Mt 15:38+ And those who ate were four thousand men, besides women and children. 39 And sending away the crowds, Jesus got into the boat and came to the region of Magadan.

### FOUR THOUSAND PLUS WOMEN AND CHILDREN

**About four thousand were there; and He sent them away** - As noted earlier Matthew's version adds **women and children** which is clearly more than 10,000 people. Neither Mark or Matthew record any effect of the miracle on the people.

**Hiebert** points out that "'He sent them away"—only the act of dismissal is recorded. No hint of the effect of the miracle on the crowd is given. Obviously, there was now no plot to crown Jesus as King as before (John 6:14–15+). This crowd, apparently largely Gentile, simply acted in mute astonishment (THIS IS SUPPOSITION - THE TEXT IS SILENT). ([Gospel of Mark - An Expository Commentary](#))

**Morris** - four thousand. The feeding of the five thousand is reported in all four gospels; the subsequent similar feeding of four thousand on another occasion is recorded only by Matthew and Mark (see notes on Matthew 14:20 and Mt 15:38). ([Mark 8](#))

**Alfred Edersheim** observed that "the Lord ended each phase of His ministry with a feeding. He ended the ministry in Galilee with the feeding of the five thousand. He ended the ministry in the Gentile area with the feeding of the four thousand. And He ended the Judean ministry before His death on the cross with the feeding of His own in the upper room."

**Click for John MacArthur's excellent summary** of 9 important lessons we can learn from the feeding of the 4000 in Gentile territory.

**James Edwards** comments on Jesus' ministry to the Gentiles - From the church fathers onward the church has rightly perceived that in the feeding of the four thousand Jesus brings saving bread to the Gentiles, as he brought it earlier to the Jews in the feeding of the five thousand. The journey to the Gentiles in Mk 7:24–8:9 has evinced that they are neither beyond the reach of salvation nor inured to it. Like the book of Jonah, the three vignettes in Mark 7:24–8:9 reveal that supposed Gentile outsiders are in fact surprisingly receptive to the word of God in Jesus. The journey of Jesus to Tyre, Sidon, and the Decapolis proves that although the Gentiles are ostracized by the Jews, they are not ostracized by God. Jewish invective against the Gentiles does not reflect a divine invective. There is a lesson here for the people of God in every age, that its enemies are neither forsaken by God nor beyond the compassion of Jesus. ([PNTC-Mark](#))

**Mark 8:10 And immediately He entered the boat with His disciples and came to the district of Dalmanutha.**

Wuest And immediately, having gone on board the boat with His disciples, He came into the region of Dalmanoutha. A ([Wuest](#))

NET Mark 8:10 Immediately he got into a boat with his disciples and went to the district of Dalmanutha.

NLT Mark 8:10 Immediately after this, he got into a boat with his disciples and crossed over to the region of Dalmanutha.

ESV Mark 8:10 And immediately he got into the boat with his disciples and went to the district of Dalmanutha.

NIV Mark 8:10 he got into the boat with his disciples and went to the region of Dalmanutha.

GNT Mark 8:10 Κα εθς μβ ε ε ς τ πλο ον μετ τ ν μαθητ ν α το λθεν ε ς τ μ ρη Δαλμανουθ .

KJV Mark 8:10 And straightway he entered into a ship with his disciples, and came into the parts of Dalmanutha.

YLT Mark 8:10 and immediately having entered into the boat with his disciples, he came to the parts of Dalmanutha,

ASV Mark 8:10 And straightway he entered into the boat with his disciples, and came into the parts of Dalmanutha.

CSB Mark 8:10 and immediately got into the boat with His disciples and went to the district of Dalmanutha.

NKJ Mark 8:10 immediately got into the boat with His disciples, and came to the region of Dalmanutha.

NRS Mark 8:10 And immediately he got into the boat with his disciples and went to the district of Dalmanutha.

NAB Mark 8:10 and got into the boat with his disciples and came to the region of Dalmanutha.

NJB Mark 8:10 and at once, getting into the boat with his disciples, went to the region of Dalmanutha.

GWN Mark 8:10 After that, Jesus and his disciples got into a boat and went into the region of Dalmanutha.

- **immediately** : Mt 15:39
- **Mark 8 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

Matthew 15:39+ And sending away the crowds, Jesus got into the boat and came to the region of Magadan.

#### Magadan on Western Side of Sea of Galilee

**And immediately He entered the boat with His disciples and came to the district of Dalmanutha** - Jesus had been in Gentile territory (Tyre in Mk 7:24-30, Sidon Mk 7:31, Decapolis - Mk 7:31-8:9) and now returns to Jewish territory in Galilee. The location of **Dalmanutha** is not known but comparing with Mt 15:39, it is reasonable to locate **Dalmanutha** near **Magadan** (see above for Magadan's or Magdala's probable location). So while the scene shifts the issue of bread is still on the table so to speak for He will pick back up on bread in Mk 8:14.

#### **Mark 8:11 The Pharisees came out and began to argue with Him, seeking from Him a sign from heaven, to test Him.**

Wuest And there came out the Pharisees, and began to dispute with Him, seeking from Him an attesting miracle from heaven, putting Him to the test. ([Wuest](#))

NET Mark 8:11 Then the Pharisees came and began to argue with Jesus, asking for a sign from heaven to test him.

NLT Mark 8:11 When the Pharisees heard that Jesus had arrived, they came and started to argue with him. Testing him, they demanded that he show them a miraculous sign from heaven to prove his authority.

ESV Mark 8:11 The Pharisees came and began to argue with him, seeking from him a sign from heaven to test him.

NIV Mark 8:11 The Pharisees came and began to question Jesus. To test him, they asked him for a sign from heaven.

GNT Mark 8:11 Κα ξ λθον ο Φαρισαοι κα ρξαντο συζητε ν α τ , ζητο ντες παρ α το σημε ο ν π το ο ρανο , πειρ ζοντες α τ ν.

KJV Mark 8:11 And the Pharisees came forth, and began to question with him, seeking of him a sign from heaven, tempting him.

YLT Mark 8:11 and the Pharisees came forth, and began to dispute with him, seeking from him a sign from the heaven, tempting him;

ASV Mark 8:11 And the Pharisees came forth, and began to question with him, seeking of him a sign from heaven, trying him.

CSB Mark 8:11 The Pharisees came out and began to argue with Him, demanding of Him a sign from heaven to test Him.

NKJ Mark 8:11 Then the Pharisees came out and began to dispute with Him, seeking from Him a sign from heaven, testing Him.

- **Pharisees:** Mk 2:16 Mk 7:1,2 Mt 12:38 Mt 16:1-4 Mt 19:3 Mt 21:23 Mt 22:15,18,23,34,35 Lu 11:53,54 Joh 7:48
- **seeking:** Lu 11:16 12:54-57 Joh 4:48 6:30 1Co 1:22,23
- **testing:** Mk 12:15 Ex 17:2,7 De 6:16 Mal 3:15 Lu 10:25 Ac 5:9 1Co 10:9
- **Mark 8 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 16:1-4+ The Pharisees and Sadducees came up, and testing Jesus, they asked Him to show them a **sign** from heaven. 2 But He replied to them, "When it is evening, you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.' 3 'And in the morning, 'There will be a storm today, for the sky is red and threatening.' Do you know how to discern the appearance of the sky, but cannot discern the signs of the times? 4 'An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign; and a sign will not be given it, except the sign of Jonah.'" And He left them and went away.

John 2:18+ The Jews then said to Him, "What **sign** do You show us as your authority for doing these things?"

Matthew 12:38-42+ Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to Him, "Teacher, we want to see **a sign** from You." 39 But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation craves for **a sign**; and yet no **sign** will be given to it but the **sign** of Jonah the prophet; 40 for just as JONAH WAS THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS IN THE BELLY OF THE SEA MONSTER, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. 41 "The men of Nineveh will stand up with this generation at the judgment, and will condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here. 42" The Queen of the South will rise up with this generation at the judgment and will condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.

Luke 11:16+ Others, to test Him, were demanding of Him **a sign** from heaven.

John 4:48+ So Jesus said to him, "Unless you people see **signs** and wonders, you simply will not believe."

1 Corinthians 1:22 For indeed Jews ask for **signs** and Greeks search for wisdom;

### SEEK TO DISCREDIT ASKING FOR A "CELESTIAL CONFIRMATION"

Note that Matthew's parallel (Matthew 16 seems to be the parallel, although Matthew 12 has some similarities - see above) gives more detail than Mark's account. They had come out to test Jesus (Mt 16:1+)

**The Pharisees came out** - Matthew says "**the Pharisees** ([pharisaios](#)) and **Sadducees** ([saddoukaios](#))" (Mt 16:1+) which is significant because these two sects were normally hostile to one another. Here they see Jesus as their common "enemy" and thus become "friends" (see note on "[enemy of my enemy](#)"). Riddle put it this way "Extremes of error combined from hatred of the truth." Matthew's parallel account of the Sadducees joining the Pharisees was the first time they had gained up to attack Jesus. Recall that in Mk 3:22+ they had concluded His authority was from Satan declaring "'He is possessed by Beelzebul," and "He casts out the demons by the ruler of the demons." They cannot dispute the supernatural works He has done, but these miracles did not convince them but only made them more recalcitrant and hardened to the Truth.

**J D Jones** - "Pharisees and Sadducees were, as a rule, at daggers drawn. They were separated from one another by deep religious and political differences." ([Mark 8 Commentary](#))

**Wuest** - The Pharisees were the ritualists, the Sadducees, the rationalists. ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdman Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

**James Edwards** - Several Greek words in v. 11 are more antagonistic than the NIV ("The Pharisees came and began to question Jesus.") indicates, leaving no doubt of the Pharisees' opposition. For "**came**," Mark reads "**came out**" (Gk. [exēlthon](#)), as if in military rank. They not only "**question**" him, but they "dispute" or "oppose" him, according to the Gk. [suzeteo](#), a staple in the Markan narrative (Mk 1:27; 8:11; 9:10, 14, 16; 12:28). The word for "**asked**" (Gk. [zētein](#)), another regular of Markan vocabulary, means to attempt to gain control of (see the discussion of term at 1:37). Likewise, the word for "test" (Gk. [peirazein](#)) does not mean an objective test to discover the merit of something, but an obstacle or stumbling block to discredit. It occurs only four times in Mark, once of Satan's temptation of Jesus in the wilderness (Mk 1:13) and three times of the opposition of the Pharisees (Mk 8:11; 10:2; 12:15). It is thus apparent in v. 11 that the Pharisees represent a challenge and confrontation of Jesus. ([PNTC-Mark](#))

**And began to argue with Him** - Note they did not come to learn but to argue! **Argue** is in the [present tense](#) expressing

the continual hostility of the religious leaders toward Jesus.

**THOUGHT** - If you are a teacher or preacher and someone is constantly wanting to argue, then there is a definite possibility they are not interested in learning! Been there, done that in my teaching life!

**Argue** (debate)(4802)(**suzeteo** from **sun** = together + **zeteo** = to seek, inquire) means to carry on a discussion (Mk 9:10), to inquire together and evolved to a negative meaning - to dispute, debate or argue (Mk 1:27, etc). BDAG = "to contend with persistence for a point of view." Of Pharisees arguing with Jesus (Mk 8:11), of Scribes arguing with Jesus' disciples (Mk 9:14), of Jews arguing with Stephen (Acts 6:9), of Paul (Saul at the time) arguing with the Hellenistic Jews (Acts 9:29). Not in the Septuagint. Frequently used in Gospel of Mark = Mk. 1:27 = "they debated among themselves"; Mk. 8:11; Mk. 9:10; Mk. 9:14 = "scribes arguing"; Mk. 9:16 ; Mk. 12:28 = "scribes came and heard them arguing," ; Lk. 22:23; Lk. 24:15; Acts 6:9; Acts 9:29

**Seeking from Him a sign from heaven** - As Paul said "Jews ask for **signs**" (1 Cor 1:22) This was not the only time they sought a "**sign**" (see **Related Passages** above) **Seeing** is in the **present tense** (continually seeking) making investigation in the sense of examining Jesus. The irony of the verb **zeteo** is that it is used elsewhere to describe man's quest for God in Acts 17:27+ ("that they should seek God..."), and here these blind guides had the very "Sign" Himself, the God-Man who came from Heaven, standing before them. Unbelief blinded their spiritual eyes!

Recall the Jews had seen "heavenly signs" already as in Mk 1:9-11+ when Jesus was baptized and heaven was opened up "and the Spirit like a dove descending upon Him; and a voice came out of the heavens: "You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased." You can't get much more of a **sign** from heaven than that one! Admittedly the Pharisees were probably not there but it is still **asign**.

As an aside, God would give a "**sign**" from Heaven when Jesus was crucified Mk 15:33 recording "When the sixth hour (High Noon) came, darkness fell over the whole land until the ninth hour." (3PM, the time of the sacrifice of the lambs in the Temple!) This **sign** from heaven would be followed by a sign on earth when He gave up His spirit, Mark recording that "the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom." (Mk 15:38) This "sign" signified the end of the Old Covenant and beginning of the New Covenant which provided access to God's Holy Place (cf Heb 10:19-20+).

Also of note is the Pharisee Nicodemus who "came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; **for no one can do these signs** that You do unless God is with him." (John 3:2+)

**James Edwards** - Even in the OT, however, signs were not regarded as proof positive of God's will. A prophet who commanded something contrary to the Torah but performed a miraculous sign was still a false prophet, for example (Deut 13:1-5). On the other hand, true prophecy was corroborated by the fulfillment of what a prophet predicted (Deut 18:22) (**PNTC-Mark**)

**Utley** - They could not deny His authority, power, or popularity, so they tried to trick Him into answering questions which would alienate part of His audience. (**Mark 8 Commentary**)

**MacArthur** has an interesting note - A popular Jewish superstition alleged that demons could mimic earthly miracles (like the signs performed by the magicians in Pharaoh's court; Ex. 7:11-12, 22), but only God could work wonders in the sky....The religious leaders clearly did not need to receive more proof by seeing another miracle; even if Jesus accommodated their request, their unbelief would have remained unchanged (cf. John 12:37-40). (**MNTC-Mark 1-8**)

**Hiebert** - They desired a **sign from heaven**, coming from the realm of the sky, as distinguished from His healings, which were confined to things here on earth. The source of His miracles, they implied, was dubious, and they wanted a sign that would unmistakably establish His messianic authority. "They do not specify what precise sign they want; 'that He should stop the sun or rein in the moon, or hurl down thunder or the like.' says Chrysostom." They wanted some startling celestial phenomenon, some audible or visible sign in the sky, which would incontrovertibly establish His claims. **But for Jesus to have yielded to this passion for sensational display would have made faith impossible; it would have precluded a free, personal acceptance of His messianic character.**<sup>34</sup> **Their demand was demonstration of their spiritual blindness.** They failed to recognize the messianic signs already being given, while demanding a sign of their own choosing. (**Gospel of Mark - An Expositional Commentary**)

**NET Note** - What exactly this sign would have been, given what Jesus was already doing, is not clear. But here is where the fence-sitters reside, refusing to commit to him.

**Seeking** (2212)(**zeteo**) implies giving attention and priority to and deliberately pursuing after.

**Sign** (4592)(**semeion** akin to **semaino** = to give a sign; **sema** = a sign) is a distinguishing mark or symbol that carries a special meaning or like a simple sign points to something else, something that gives a true indication of something else. Think of a road sign that accurately describes what lies ahead (e.g., a curve, a bump, etc). In ancient Greece, lightning was thought to indicate the will of Zeus, and thunder was a foreboding indication

that he was about to speak through a "sign." For the Jews, a "sign" was a visual confirmation that a prophet was authentically from God. In Scripture when **semeion** used of God's miraculous works (that which is contrary to the usual course of nature) it points to spiritual truth. A **sign** directs attention away from its unusual nature to the meaning and the significance it points to. It speaks of outward compelling proof of divine authority. Twice in Matthew Jesus answered the Jews request for signs declaring "An evil and adulterous generation craves for a **sign**; and yet no **sign** will be given to it but the **sign** of Jonah the prophet." (Mt 12:39, Mt 16:4) He was referring of course to His resurrection as the **sign** of Jonah. In the uses of **semeion** by His disciples in Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21 there of course was no rebuke for they were not asking out of a heart of unbelief but of belief. Ancient peoples often viewed **signs** in the sky, such as lightning or eclipses, as omens of terrible things to come (Mt. 16:3).

**Wiersbe** says that a **sign** is "Something that points beyond itself to something greater. It was not enough for people to believe in Jesus' works; they had to believe in Him and in the Father who sent Him (John 5:14-24). This explains why Jesus often added a sermon to the miracle and in that sermon interpreted the sign. In John 5, the healing of the paralytic on the Sabbath opened the way for a message on His deity, "the Lord of the Sabbath." The feeding of the 5,000 (John 6) led naturally into a sermon on the Bread of Life." (BEC)

**Trench** on **sign** - "It is involved and declared in the very word that the prime object and end of the miracle is to lead us to something out of and beyond itself: that, so to speak, it is a kind of finger-post of God, pointing for us to this: valuable, not so much for what it is, as for what it indicates of the grace and power of the doer, or of his immediate connection with a higher spiritual world"

The irony is that they would one day in the future see a **'sign from heaven'** when the Son returned and they would then know Jesus was God's Son, but tragically for them this "sign" would be too late and would signal their eternal punishment away from His glorious presence!

"And then the **sign of the Son of Man** will appear in the sky, and then **all the tribes of the earth will mourn**, and **they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY** with power and great glory. (Mt 24:30+)

BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS, and **every eye will see Him**, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen. (Rev 1:7<sup>+</sup>)

**To test Him** - Here is the purpose of their serpentine seeking of a sign! It was to test Jesus. Their heart was evil and their motives were corrupt for they were not seeking a sign so that they might believe in Him.

**Hiebert** explains **to test Him** - they aimed to put His power to perform such a sign to an open test. It was an attempt to catch Jesus in a dilemma: if He tried to perform such a miracle, they were confident He would fail, stamping Him as an imposter; if He refused, it would be regarded as an admission that He was not the Messiah, causing Him to lose popular support, since there was an expectation that the Messiah would perform such celestial signs. ([Gospel of Mark - An Expositional Commentary](#))

**Constable** on **test** by asking for a **sign from heaven** - They did this to subject Jesus to a trial (Gr. peirazo) that would reveal His true character. They hoped to expose Him as a phony.

**Broadus** on **testing Him** in Mt 16:1 - (cf. on Mt 4:1,7), with the hope that he will not stand the test, will not be able to show the sign; comp. Matthew 19:3, Mt 22:18,35. The Scribes and Pharisees had asked a sign from him in Matthew 12:38, and were refused. Now the Pharisees and Sadducees make a similar demand specifically for a 'sign from heaven' (so also Mark 8:11), and get (Matthew 16:4) exactly the same refusal as before. (Matthew 12:39) They might be thinking of such signs as when Moses gave bread from heaven, (Ps 78:23-25.; John 6:30-33) Joshua made the sun and moon stand still (Josh 10:12,13), Samuel brought thunder and rain in time of harvest (1 Sa 12:17, 18), Elijah repeatedly called down fire from heaven (2 Kings 1:10-12), and at Isaiah's word the shadow went back on the dial (Isaiah 38:8); comp. Joel 2:30ff. Origen conjectures that they regarded signs on earth as wrought in Beelzebul. (Matthew 12:24) Probably some Jews really expected celestial signs of Messiah's approach; but the present request was made from bad motives. Jesus promised "great signs from heaven" in connection with his second coming, (Matthew 24:29,30.; Luke 21:11,25; cp. Rev. 15:1) and predicted that the false Christs would show great signs. (Matthew 24:24) (Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew)

**Jensen** remarks that they wanted a sign as "proof that Jesus was the Messiah, the Pharisees were demanding signs from heaven, such as solar or lunar phenomena. They had evil motives, as the phrase "to test Him" (8:11) indicates. They really wanted to disprove Jesus' claims to be the Messiah-God. Could it be that they were convinced that Jesus couldn't bring on a celestial sign, and by failing such a test would be exposed as a false prophet? Actually, a great many signs were being given to these men—the many miracles Jesus was performing in public. But they did not want to recognize Him for who He truly was. (Compare Matthew

16:1–4 for the other things Jesus said at this time about signs. Also read Matthew 12:39–40, about Jonah.)

Mark 12:13-15 Then they \*sent some of the Pharisees and Herodians to Him in order to **trap Him in a statement**. 14 They came and said to Him, “Teacher, we know that You are truthful and defer to no one; for You are not partial to any, but teach the way of God in truth. Is it lawful to pay a poll-tax to Caesar, or not? 15 “Shall we pay or shall we not pay?” But He, knowing their hypocrisy, said to them, “Why are you **testing Me**? Bring Me a denarius to look at.”

#### Related Resource:

- [What does it mean to test God? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**Mark 8:12 Sighing deeply in His spirit, He said, "Why does this generation seek for a sign? Truly I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation."**

Wuest And having groaned deeply in His spirit, He says, Why is this stock seeking an attesting miracle? Positively I am saying to you, There shall no attesting miracle be given to this stock. ([Wuest](#))

NET Mark 8:12 Sighing deeply in his spirit he said, "Why does this generation look for a sign? I tell you the truth, no sign will be given to this generation."

NLT Mark 8:12 When he heard this, he sighed deeply in his spirit and said, "Why do these people keep demanding a miraculous sign? I tell you the truth, I will not give this generation any such sign."

ESV Mark 8:12 And he sighed deeply in his spirit and said, "Why does this generation seek a sign? Truly, I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation."

NIV Mark 8:12 He sighed deeply and said, "Why does this generation ask for a miraculous sign? I tell you the truth, no sign will be given to it."

GNT Mark 8:12 καὶ νάστεν ξας τ πνε ματι α το λ γει, Τ γενε α τη ζητε σημε ον; μ ν λ γω μ ν, ε δοθ σεται τ γενε τα τ σημε ον.

KJV Mark 8:12 And he sighed deeply in his spirit, and saith, Why doth this generation seek after a sign? verily I say unto you, There shall no sign be given unto this generation.

YLT Mark 8:12 and having sighed deeply in his spirit, he saith, 'Why doth this generation seek after a sign? Verily I say to you, no sign shall be given to this generation.'

ASV Mark 8:12 And he sighed deeply in his spirit, and saith, Why doth this generation seek a sign? verily I say unto you, There shall no sign be given unto this generation.

CSB Mark 8:12 But sighing deeply in His spirit, He said, "Why does this generation demand a sign? I assure you: No sign will be given to this generation!"

NKJ Mark 8:12 But He sighed deeply in His spirit, and said, "Why does this generation seek a sign? Assuredly, I say to you, no sign shall be given to this generation."

NRS Mark 8:12 And he sighed deeply in his spirit and said, "Why does this generation ask for a sign? Truly I tell you, no sign will be given to this generation."

- **he sighed:** Mk 3:5 7:34 9:19 Isa 53:3 Lu 19:41 Joh 11:33-38
- **Why:** Mk 6:6 Lu 16:29-31 22:67-70 Joh 12:37-43
- **There:** Mt 12:39,40 16:4 Lu 11:29,30
- **Mark 8 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 16:2+ But He replied to them, “When it is evening, you say, ‘It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.’ 3 “And in the morning, ‘There will be a storm today, for the sky is red and threatening.’ Do you know how to discern the appearance of the sky, but cannot discern the signs of the times? 4 “An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign; and a sign will not be given it, except the sign of Jonah.” And He left them and went away.

Luke 16:31 "But he said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.'"

**Sighing deeply in His spirit** - This emotional response is not found in Matthew's account. **Sighing deeply** is the Greek word **anastenazo** (**ana** - again, intensifies meaning + **stenazo** - to groan used in Mk 7:34 where Jesus sighed over suffering of the deaf man) and is used only here in the Bible and Thayer says means "to draw sighs up from the bottom of the breast." The picture using this stronger verb for sighing indicates He gave a deep groan because of the "spiritual deafness" (and blindness) of the religious leaders. "The willful blindness of the religious leaders broke the Lord's heart, later causing Him to weep over the people of Jerusalem (Luke 19:41+)." ([MNTC-Mark 1-8](#))

**Swete** - "The sigh seemed to come, as we say, from the bottom of His heart; the Lord's human spirit was stirred to its depths."

**Wuest** - Jesus groaned because of the apostate rejection of His ministry. Here was no simple, hard-hearted rejection as from an ordinary sinner. This rejection came from the religious leaders of Israel, who, entrenched in their ecclesiasticism, later crucified the Lord of Glory, having recognized Him as such and having seen the attesting miracles He had performed, even attempting to break the force of these attesting miracles by attributing them to Satan (Matthew 21:37–39, 12:22–24). Expositors says: "The sigh physical, its source spiritual—a sense of irreconcilable enmity, invincible unbelief, and coming doom." ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmann Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

**Utley on in His spirit** (not the Holy Spirit but His human spirit) - This refers to Jesus' personhood (cf. 2:8). It has the same connotation in 14:38 in respect to human beings. The term "spirit" is used in Mark for the Holy Spirit (Mk 1:10, 12), unclean spirits (i.e. demons, Mk 1:23, 26, 27; 3:11, 30; 5:2, 8, 13; 6:7; 7:25; 9:17, 20, 25), the human spirit (Mk 2:8; 8:12; 14:38) ([Mark 8 Commentary](#))

**James Edwards on sighed deeply** - Although it is not entirely apparent in the NIV, this verse records a nadir of dismay in the Gospel of Mark. The original Greek reads that Jesus "groaned in his spirit." The word for "groaned" (Gk. anastenein) is a rare word, occurring only here in the NT, and fewer than thirty times in all of Greek literature. A survey of its uses reveals that it is not an expression of anger or indignation so much as of dismay or despair. Anastenein is used to describe persons who find themselves in situations where they are pushed to the limit of faithfulness. The antagonism of the Pharisees parallels the antagonism of the Israelites to Moses in the wilderness—and Jesus' groaning in dismay seems to reflect God's disgust with the bent and recalcitrant Israelites (Exod 33:5!). ([PNTC-Mark](#))

**Swindoll on sighed deeply** - He lamented two difficulties among the Jews: the inability to see the truth on the part of some (most notably His own disciples), and the unwillingness to see the truth on the part of others. We might separate them into these two categories: those who did not see and those who would not see. The fact that the Pharisees asked for a sign follows the pattern set by the disciples in Mark 8:1-9. When confronted with the challenge of feeding the four thousand, the Twelve failed to connect the dots. The feeding of the five thousand should have prepared them to respond positively to this new, almost identical challenge. The disciples wanted to see, but they had—as it were—scales over their eyes. They were hindered by a spiritual dullness. (- Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary – Mark.)

**Wessel on Sighing deeply** - "It describes Jesus' grief and disappointment when faced with the unbelief of those who, because of their spiritual privileges, ought to have been more responsive to him."

**He said, "Why does this generation seek for a sign?"** - NLT = "Why do these people keep demanding a miraculous sign? This is not a simple question but is in fact a rebuke of not just the apostate religious leaders but was also directed at the entire **generation** of Jews who followed their false teaching! **Seek** is [present tense](#) indicating they keep seeking a sign.

**James Edwards** - The reference to "**this generation**" signals the Pharisees' alienation from Jesus and recalls the disbelieving generation of Noah's day (Gen 7:1) and the stubbornness of the Exodus generation in the wilderness (Ps 95:10–11). The latter was a generation that turned its back on God, "in whom is no faithfulness" (Deut 32:20). ([PNTC-Mark](#))

**Generation** recalls the words of Deuteronomy 32:5, 20.

5 "They have acted corruptly toward Him, They are not His children, because of their defect; But are a perverse and crooked **generation**.

20 "Then He said, 'I will hide My face from them, I will see what their end shall be; For they are a perverse **generation**, Sons in whom is no faithfulness.

One also recalls the words in Ps 95

Psalm 95:10-11± "For forty years I loathed that **generation**, And said they are a people who err in their heart, And they do not know My ways. 11 "Therefore I swore in My anger, Truly they shall not enter into My rest."

**Truly I say to you - Truly** is [amen](#) which seals the import of the following statement. The first of truly I say was also related to the Pharisees (Mk 3:28+).

**Truly I say** - 13 times in the Gospel of Mark - Mk. 3:28; Mk. 8:12; Mk. 9:1; Mk. 9:41; Mk. 10:15; Mk. 10:29; Mk. 11:23; Mk. 12:43; Mk. 13:30; Mk. 14:9; Mk. 14:18; Mk. 14:25; Mk. 14:30;

**No sign will be given to this generation** - Jesus' response is an agonizing negative that "No sign shall be given." Why? Because He had performed innumerable signs and yet the unbelieving religious leaders remained unconvinced that God was working through Jesus. It follows that a sign from heaven, like a comet blazing across the sky or a sudden total eclipse of the Sun would not convince the hard hearted Pharisees.

If we compare with Matthew's parallel, we see in Mt 16:4+ Jesus added an exception declaring "a sign will not be given it, except the sign of Jonah." In other words, the resurrection of Jesus would be the supreme sign that He was indeed the long expected Messiah!

**Wuest on No sign will be given to this generation** - The statement is literally "If a sign shall be given." It is a Hebrew idiom, and is really at bottom, a form of imprecation. The idea is "If I do not thus and so, may I die, or may God punish me." In Mark, we have an absolute refusal of a sign. In Matthew, the refusal is qualified by the offer of the miracle of the resurrection (the sign of Jonah). But the latter was an absolute refusal of a sign in the sense that the Pharisees and Sadducees conceived of a sign. They later refused to be convinced after He had arisen from the dead (Acts 3–5). We must be careful to note that the primary purpose of our Lord's miracles was that of attesting His Messianic claims to be true, and of proving that His message was from God (Matthew 11:2–5). That was Matthew's purpose in gathering together some of the miracles of our Lord in what we know as chapters eight and nine of his Gospel. But when it came to the performing of attesting miracles at the demands of apostates who He knew would not accept their attesting value, He refused. ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmann Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

**Swindoll** adds an interesting note that "both Jesus and the Pharisees knew that false prophets traffic in the sensational. More miraculous signs would only begin to undermine His credibility. (Ibid)

### Mark 8:13 Leaving them, He again embarked and went away to the other side.

Wuest And having sent them away, again having embarked, He went off to the other side. ([Wuest](#))

NET Mark 8:13 Then he left them, got back into the boat, and went to the other side.

NLT Mark 8:13 So he got back into the boat and left them, and he crossed to the other side of the lake.

ESV Mark 8:13 And he left them, got into the boat again, and went to the other side.

NIV Mark 8:13 Then he left them, got back into the boat and crossed to the other side.

GNT Mark 8:13 κα φε ς α το ς π λι ν μ β ς π λθεν ε ς τ π ρα ν.

KJV Mark 8:13 And he left them, and entering into the ship again departed to the other side.

YLT Mark 8:13 And having left them, having entered again into the boat, he went away to the other side;

ASV Mark 8:13 And he left them, and again entering into the boat departed to the other side.

CSB Mark 8:13 Then He left them, got on board the boat again, and went to the other side.

NKJ Mark 8:13 And He left them, and getting into the boat again, departed to the other side.

NRS Mark 8:13 And he left them, and getting into the boat again, he went across to the other side.

NAB Mark 8:13 Then he left them, got into the boat again, and went off to the other shore.

NJB Mark 8:13 And, leaving them again, he re-embarked and went away to the other side.

GWN Mark 8:13 Then he left them there. He got into a boat again and crossed to the other side of the Sea of Galilee.

- Ps 81:12 Jer 23:33 Ho 4:17 9:12 Zec 11:8,9 Mt 7:6 15:14 Lu 8:37 Joh 8:21 12:36 Ac 13:45,46 18:6
- **Mark 8 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Related Passages:**

Matthew 16:4+ An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign; and a sign will not be given it, except the sign of Jonah." And He left them and went away.

## JESUS ABANDONS THE SPIRITUALLY BLIND LEADERS

**Leaving them - Leaving** ([aphiemi](#)) is in the aorist tense, describing a definite moving away or departing. It was used in some context to describe a divorce, not a bad picture of what Jesus was doing! In the parallel Matthew the word **left** is [kataleipo](#) meant He left them behind using a verb which also carried the idea of forsaking or abandoning. One recalls Jesus' words in His Sermon on the Mount...

Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces. (Mt 7:6+).

**Edwards** points out that leaving "is a physical description of Jesus departing from one place to another, but it also appears to symbolize Jesus' parting ways with the Pharisees....In the Synoptic Gospels the demand for "signs" is itself a sign of attempting to gain by empirical means what can only be gained by faith and trust. It is the false prophet who seeks to deceive by signs and wonders (13:22). Jesus forsakes signs, for "to force the evidence upon one would make a faith response by its very nature impossible." Faith that depends on proof is not faith, but only veiled doubt. If a man hires a private eye to spy on his wife while he is away in order to "prove" her faithfulness, the detective's "proofs" will scarcely guarantee the husband's faith. Faith, like love itself, cannot be proven; it can only be demonstrated by trust and active commitment. The Pharisees turn and walk away; the disciples follow Jesus into the boat. Eduard Schweizer draws an insightful conclusion from this closing description: "faith comes when one steps into the boat with Jesus and does not prefer to remain in safety on the shore." (PNTC-Mark)

**Wuest on Leaving** ([aphiemi](#)) - The verb is [aphiēmi](#) ( φημι), "to send away, to send from one's self, to bid go away." It is used of teachers, speakers, writers, in the sense of "to let go, let alone, disregard, to leave, not to discuss now," when about to terminate a discussion. Our Lord brought the dispute to an abrupt end by His statement in which He refused an attesting miracle to that stock or breed of men He had before Him, namely, apostates. ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdman Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

**He again embarked and went away to the other side** - Back in the boat again they sailed for the northeastern shore of the Sea of Galilee (Bethsaida in Mk 8:22).

**John MacArthur** summarizes this important section - Knowing the Pharisees and Sadducees would not believe, He abandoned them to their own self-righteous delusions (cf. Rom. 1:24, 26, 28). They were blind men (Mt. 23:17, 19) and blind guides (Mt 23:24) leading their followers to hell by knowingly refusing to believe (cf. Mt. 23:15). The consequences of their terminal blindness were forever irreversible. They had long since rejected the Messiah (cf. Mk 3:6, 22), and He had consequently rejected them. The Bible appropriately describes hell as "outer darkness" (Mt. 8:12; 22:13; 25:30) because it is a place of everlasting spiritual blindness. The tragic reality is that the whole world is filled with people who, like these apostate religious leaders, have rejected the light. Because they love the darkness of their sin (John 3:19), they will one day be cast into the darkness of everlasting punishment. That Jesus left the Pharisees and Sadducees signified more than a temporary separation. This exchange constituted Jesus' final conflict with the religious leaders in Galilee. Once again, they tried to put Him to a test He would fail (cf. Dt. 6:16). And once again, they failed and He rebuked them for their hard-hearted unbelief. **From this point forward, the Lord's miracles, like His parables, would primarily be intended for His disciples, and not for the religious leaders or even the crowds.** Moreover, His public ministry in Galilee had come to its end. When He later made a trip through the region, He did so secretly (cf. Mk 9:30). The populace of Galilee had been given ample opportunity to repent and believe, but they did not (cf. Matt. 11:20-24). Having been finally rejected by them, Jesus shifted His focus to Judea and Jerusalem, and ultimately the cross. ([MNTC-Mark 1-8](#))

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**D Edmond Hiebert** points out that this next section represents **Jesus' fourth withdrawal from Galilee.**

Here is Hiebert's outline to help with the context...

### **Withdrawals from Galilee (Mk 4:35-9:50)**

#### **1. First withdrawal and return (Mk 4:35-6:29)**

- a. Stilling of the tempest (Mk 4:35-41)
- b. Cure of the Gerasene demoniac (Mk 5:1-20)
- c. Two miracles upon returning (Mk 5:21-43)
  - 1) Plea of Jairus (Mk 5:21-24)

- 2) Woman with the flow of blood (Mk 5:25–34)
- 3) Raising of Jairus' daughter (Mk 5:35–43)
- d. Rejection of Jesus at Nazareth (Mk 6:1–6)
- e. Mission of the Twelve (Mk 6:7–13)
- f. Reaction of Antipas to the reports about Jesus (Mk 6:14–29)
  - 1) Excited reaction of Herod Antipas (Mk 6:14–16)
  - 2) Explanatory account of John's death (Mk 6:17–29)

## 2. Second withdrawal and return (Mk Mk 6:30–7:23)

- a. Feeding of the five thousand (Mk 6:30–44)
- b. Walking on the water (Mk 6:45–52)
- c. Ministry of healing among the people (Mk 6:53–56)
- d. Controversy concerning defilement (Mk 7:1–23)
  - 1) Condemnation of human tradition (Mk 7:1–13)
  - 2) Source of true defilement (Mk vv. 14–23)

## 3. Third withdrawal and return (Mk Mk 7:24–8:13)

- a. Appeal of the Syrophenician woman (Mk 7:24–30)
- b. Cure of the deaf stammerer (Mk 7:31–37)
- c. Feeding of the four thousand (Mk 8:1–10)
- d. Request for a sign from heaven (Mk 8:11–13)

## 4. Fourth withdrawal and return (Mk Mk 8:14–9:50)

- a. Warning concerning leaven (Mk 8:14–21)
- b. Blind man at Bethsaida (Mk 8:22–26)
- c. Confession of Peter (Mk 8:27–30)
- d. Announcement concerning the cross (Mk 8:31–9:1)
  - 1) Coming passion foretold (Mk 8:31–32a)
  - 2) Rebuke to Peter (Mk 8:32b–33)
  - 3) Teaching about cross bearing (Mk 8:34–9:1)
- e. Transfiguration on the mount (Mk 9:2–8)
- f. Discussion concerning Elijah (Mk 9:9–13)
- g. Cure of the demoniac boy (Mk 9:14–29)
- h. Renewed teaching about the cross (Mk 9:30–32)
- i. Teaching in Capernaum to the disciples (Mk 9:33–50)
  - 1) Question of greatness (Mk 9:33–37)
  - 2) Mistaken zeal of John (Mk 9:38–41)
  - 3) Seriousness of sin (Mk 9:42–50)

### Mark 8:14 And they had forgotten to take bread, and did not have more than one loaf in the boat with them.

Wuest And they had completely forgotten to take loaves of bread. And except for one loaf, they did not have any with them in the boat. ([Wuest](#))

NET Mark 8:14 Now they had forgotten to take bread, except for one loaf they had with them in the boat.

NLT Mark 8:14 But the disciples had forgotten to bring any food. They had only one loaf of bread with them in the boat.

ESV Mark 8:14 Now they had forgotten to bring bread, and they had only one loaf with them in the boat.

NIV Mark 8:14 The disciples had forgotten to bring bread, except for one loaf they had with them in the boat.

GNT Mark 8:14 Καὶ πᾶσι ἔειπεν ὁ ἰησοῦς ὅτι ὅτι οὐκ ἔχετε μεθ' ἑαυτῶν ἄρτους ἕνα.

KJV Mark 8:14 Now the disciples had forgotten to take bread, neither had they in the ship with them more than one loaf.

YLT Mark 8:14 and they forgot to take loaves, and except one loaf they had nothing with them in the boat,

ASV Mark 8:14 And they forgot to take bread; and they had not in the boat with them more than one loaf.

CSB Mark 8:14 They had forgotten to take bread and had only one loaf with them in the boat.

NKJ Mark 8:14 Now the disciples had forgotten to take bread, and they did not have more than one loaf with them in the boat.

NRS Mark 8:14 Now the disciples had forgotten to bring any bread; and they had only one loaf with them in the boat.

NAB Mark 8:14 They had forgotten to bring bread, and they had only one loaf with them in the boat.

NJB Mark 8:14 The disciples had forgotten to take any bread and they had only one loaf with them in the boat.

GWN Mark 8:14 The disciples had forgotten to take any bread along and had only one loaf with them in the boat.

- **had forgotten:** Mt 16:5
- **Mark 8 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 16:5+ And the disciples came to the other side of the sea, but they had forgotten to bring any bread.

### BACK TO THE PROBLEM OF NOT ENOUGH BREAD

**Hiebert** points out that it the **fourth withdrawal and return** (Mk 8:14–9:50) (see [above](#)). He goes on to point out that "The fourth withdrawal from Galilee, following immediately after the return from the third withdrawal, was devoted almost entirely to the private training of the Twelve. It marked the termination of Jesus' public ministry in Galilee. Only two of the events during this withdrawal, as recorded by Mark, did not specifically center on Christ's personal dealings with His disciples." ([Gospel of Mark - An Expository Commentary](#))

**Constable** has an interesting analysis - This pericope parallels and recalls Jesus' teaching about bread when He cast the demon out of the Phoenician girl (Mk 7:24–30). In both cases leavened bread metaphorically represented teaching. The Gentile woman wanted Jesus' teaching and so presented a positive example for the disciples. The Jewish religious leaders rejected Jesus' teaching and advanced false teaching, which Jesus warned His disciples to avoid.

**And** (kai) marks continuation of preceding section Mk 8:11-13.

**they had forgotten to take bread** - Don't miss the context. The disciples had just witnessed a striking confrontation between Jesus and the religious leaders and this is what they should have been discussing. Instead they are worried about bread!!! The disciples are still more governed by their stomach than by their heart! What had they forgotten? They had forgotten to take some from the 7 baskets from the feeding of the 4000. They had also forgotten about the miracle "Bread Maker!"

**And did not have more than one loaf in the boat with them** - But what would one loaf be in the hands of Jesus? While the disciples focused on literal bread, Jesus would use their need to focus on a greater need, their spiritual need as described below. The one loaf, a thin, hard bread cake which kept well, was the sole remainder of their previous store of food.

**Mark 8:15 And He was giving orders to them, saying, "Watch out! Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod."**

Wuest And He repeatedly charged them, saying, Constantly be keeping a discerning mind's eye upon, and ever be on the lookout for the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Herodians. ([Wuest](#))

NET Mark 8:15 And Jesus ordered them, "Watch out! Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and the yeast of Herod!"

NLT Mark 8:15 As they were crossing the lake, Jesus warned them, "Watch out! Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and of Herod."

ESV Mark 8:15 And he cautioned them, saying, "Watch out; beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod."

NIV Mark 8:15 "Be careful," Jesus warned them. "Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and that of Herod."

GNT Mark 8:15 κᾱ διεστ̄ λλετο̄ ᾱ το̄ ς̄ λ̄ γων, ρ̄ τε, βλ̄ πετε̄ π̄ τ̄ ς̄ ζ̄ μης̄ τ̄ ν̄ Φαρισᾱ ων̄ κᾱ τ̄ ς̄ ζ̄ μης̄ ρ̄ δου.

KJV Mark 8:15 And he charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod.

YLT Mark 8:15 and he was charging them, saying, 'Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod,'

ASV Mark 8:15 And he charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.

CSB Mark 8:15 Then He commanded them: "Watch out! Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and the yeast of Herod."

NKJ Mark 8:15 Then He charged them, saying, "Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod."

NRS Mark 8:15 And he cautioned them, saying, "Watch out-- beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and the yeast of Herod."

- **giving orders** Nu 27:19-23 1Ch 28:9,10,20 1Ti 5:21 6:13 2Ti 2:14
- **Watch out! Beware:** Pr 19:27 Mt 16:6,11,12 Lu 12:1,2,15
- **the leaven of the:** Ex 12:18-20 Lev 2:11 1Co 5:6-8
- **of Herod:** Mk 12:13 Mt 22:15-18
- **Mark 8 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Verses

1 Corinthians 5:8 Therefore let us celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the **leaven** of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Matthew 16:6+ And Jesus said to them, **Watch out!** and **Beware** of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees."

### THE SUBTLE, CORRUPTING INFLUENCE OF "RELIGIOUS LEAVEN"

**And He was giving orders to them** - Giving (strict) orders ([diastello](#) - commanding with authority) is in the [imperfect tense](#) indicating that Jesus was repeating these emphatic commands! The repeated warning was needed. Obviously avoidance of the leavening influence of the false teachers was absolutely crucial to maintain the integrity of the Gospel! It was then and is still crucial today!

Jesus used the leaven in the loaf the disciples had brought to spin off into a spiritual conversation with His men.

**Saying "Watch out! Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod** - Both commands are in the [present imperative](#) calling for the disciples to continually be vigilant and on alert for the leaven of the legalists, for their "leaven" could be very subtle and even appear "spiritual." In Luke Jesus warned His disciples "**Beware** of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy." (Lk 12:1+) **Herod** presumably stands for the party of the [Herodians](#). So here Jesus presents what is in essence a riddle using the picture of leaven (which was used to make bread) and the disciples totally missed Jesus' point as seen in Mark 8:16. Jesus' warning in Matthew included the "**leaven of the...Sadducees**."

In context **leaven** speaks of the evil influence of these men for it was a symbol of corruption. The poison of these snakes was like a little piece of leaven which could permeate all the dough with dramatic negative effects. Matthew's account did not mention the **leaven of Herod**, which probably refers to his immoral conduct, etc. Utley adds "The Herods represented the opposite problem—the worldliness, the status quo at any cost!" ([Mark 8 Commentary](#))

**Hiebert** on **Watch out! Beware** - The first verb calls for mental alertness, while the second demands that one look attentively at the object called to one's attention in order to avoid the danger that it presents. The two verbs underscore the intensity of the warning. ([Gospel of Mark - An Expository Commentary](#))

**Wuest** on **-Watch out! Beware** - The first verb is *horaō* "to see, to become acquainted with by experience." This word gives

prominence to the discerning mind. The disciples were to use their heads. They were to put the teachings of the Pharisees and the Herodians to the acid test of experience, not in the actual doing of the things taught, but with the mind's eye following out the ultimate conclusion of the act of practicing what they taught. The verb is [present imperative](#), commanding the beginning of an action and its habitual continuance. The second verb is **blepō** "to perceive by the use of the eyes." It is used in a metaphorical sense, "to see with the mind's eye, to discern mentally, understand, to turn the thoughts or direct the mind to a thing, to consider, to take heed." It is also [present imperative](#), "Be constantly keeping a watchful eye open to consider and take heed of." [Wuest Word Studies - Eerdman Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#)

**Hiebert on leaven** - As producing a process of fermentation, leaven or yeast pictures a pervasive corrupting tendency that works invisibly. Christ's warning was thus "a pithy one-word parable for unseen pervasive influence." Mark did not give an interpretation of Christ's meaning, but Matthew (Mt 16:12+) noted that His reference was to "**the teaching**" of those warned against. ([Gospel of Mark - An Expositional Commentary](#))

**MacArthur** sums up that "Jesus' admonition provided a somber warning against the ever-present temptations of legalism, hypocrisy, rationalism, materialism, immorality, and worldliness." (See [MacArthur's sermon for more discussion of the specific negative effects](#))

**Note on Herodians**, - The Herodians held political power, and most scholars believe that they were a political party that supported King Herod Antipas, the Roman Empire's ruler over much of the land of the Jews from 4 B.C. to A.D. 39. The Herodians favored submitting to the Herods, and therefore to Rome, for political expediency. This support of Herod compromised Jewish independence in the minds of the Pharisees, making it difficult for the Herodians and Pharisees to unite and agree on anything. But one thing did unite them—opposing Jesus. Herod himself wanted Jesus dead (Luke 13:31), and the Pharisees had already hatched plots against Him (John 11:53), so they joined efforts to achieve their common goal.

**THOUGHT** - Jesus wants us to beware of legalism. What forms of legalism do you need to guard against?

**Beware** (take care, take heed) [\(991\)](#) ([blepo](#)) basically means to have sight, to see, to look at, then to observe, to discern, to perceive with the eye, and frequently implies special contemplation (e.g., often in the sense of "keep your eyes open," or "beware"). **Blepo** indicates greater vividness than **horao**, (**Watch out**) a similar verb meaning "to see." W E Vine says **blepo** expresses "a more intentional, earnest contemplation. **TDNT** says that like **horao** "**blepo** in this context speaks of spiritual perception. **Other uses in Mark** - Mk. 4:12; Mk. 4:24; Mk. 5:31; Mk. 8:15; Mk. 8:18; Mk. 8:23; Mk. 8:24; Mk. 12:14; Mk. 12:38; Mk. 13:2; Mk. 13:5; Mk. 13:9; Mk. 13:23; Mk. 13:33;

**Leaven** (yeast) [\(2219\)](#) ([zume](#)) probably from **zeo** = to heat, as occurs in fermentation of dough when leaven is mixed in) was literally a small portion of dough that was retained in order to start a new batch of dough (literal uses - Mt 16:12; Lk 13:21; 1 Cor 5:6; Gal 5:9). In ancient times, when bread was about to be baked, a small piece of dough was pulled off and saved. That **leaven** or yeast would then be allowed to ferment in water, and later kneaded into the next batch of fresh dough to make it rise. **Leaven** throughout Scripture was used figuratively to describe permeating power or influence, usually the influence of evil and clearly the influence of the evil of the Pharisees and Herod in the present passage.

**Zume** is used figuratively to depict corruption of thought and conduct, which Jesus termed hypocrisy in Lk 12:1. **Zume** was used figuratively to describe teachings based on unspiritual value systems (Mt 16:12). Finally, **zume** was a metaphor for sin within a believing community, and was identified as wicked ways (1Cor 5:8). The first use of **zume** in the Septuagint (Ex. 12:15; 12:19) is associated with the Passover, where the Jews were instructed to eat bread without leaven for seven days. (See [What is the significance of unleavened bread?](#))

**Wuest on Zume** -The word is *zumē*. It is used in the LXX (Ex. 12:15) of beer-yeast. The principle of fermentation which inheres in it makes it the symbol of corruption, for fermentation is the result of the divine curse upon the material universe because of sin. Always in the Bible, it speaks of evil in some form, Matthew 13:33 being no exception, for the kingdom of heaven here refers to Christendom, in which are the true and the false, the evil and the good. Leaven in I Corinthians 5:6–8, speaks of malice and wickedness as contrasted to sincerity and truth. In Matthew 16:12, it speaks of evil doctrine in its three-fold form of Pharisaism, externalism in religion, of Sadduceeism, scepticism as to the supernatural and as to the Scriptures, of Herodianism, worldliness. ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdman Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

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Wuest And they kept on discussing among themselves, saying, Because we do not have loaves of bread.

NET Mark 8:16 So they began to discuss with one another about having no bread.

NLT Mark 8:16 At this they began to argue with each other because they hadn't brought any bread.

ESV Mark 8:16 And they began discussing with one another the fact that they had no bread.

NIV Mark 8:16 They discussed this with one another and said, "It is because we have no bread."

GNT Mark 8:16 κα̅ διελογ̅ ζοντο̅ πρ̅ς̅ ἀλλ̅λους̅ τι̅ ρτους̅ ο̅κ̅ χουσι̅ν.

KJV Mark 8:16 And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have no bread.

YLT Mark 8:16 and they were reasoning with one another, saying -- 'Because we have no loaves.'

ASV Mark 8:16 And they reasoned one with another, saying, We have no bread.

CSB Mark 8:16 They were discussing among themselves that they did not have any bread.

NKJ Mark 8:16 And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "It is because we have no bread."

NRS Mark 8:16 They said to one another, "It is because we have no bread."

NAB Mark 8:16 They concluded among themselves that it was because they had no bread.

NJB Mark 8:16 And they said to one another, 'It is because we have no bread.'

- Mt 16:7,8 Lu 9:46 20:5
- **Mark 8 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 16:7+ They began to discuss this among themselves, saying, "He said that because we did not bring any bread."

**They began to discuss with one another the fact that they had no bread** - **Discuss** is in the [imperfect tense](#) indicating that they were repeating this over and over. They had just received a strong double command about leaven and yet they are turned to their deficiency of bread. Amazing! Perhaps their stomachs were growling! And so once again they were more focused on the physical need than on the spiritual truths Jesus had just served them. The upshot is that they totally missed Jesus' figurative use of leaven and thought He was speaking of yeast which brought to their minds their "bread problem." "Jesus is talking about corrupting influences and they think He's talking about food!" (Utlely [Mark 8 Commentary](#))

**Constable** - The disciples' interest in the problem of lack of food contrasts with Jesus' fervent concern over unbelief (cf. Mk 8:12, 15). Spiritual truth failed to impress them because they had minds that were not open to it (Mk 8:17).

**Guerlich** notes that "Here, we find the climax of the repeated Markan theme about the disciples' lack of understanding (Mk 8:17b, 21; cf. Mk 4:13, 41; 6:37, 52; 7:18; 8:4)." (WBC)

**MacArthur** - Though the cross was less than a year away, Jesus' followers were still more concerned about physical realities than spiritual truths. Consequently, they completely missed the significance of the Lord's instruction. As on other occasions, their response demonstrated the weakness of their faith (cf. Matt. 6:30; 8:26; 14:31). Though their eyes had been opened to embrace the truth of the gospel, some elements of spiritual dullness clearly remained. ([MNTC-Mark 1-8](#))

**Swindoll** - During His object lesson, someone evidently thought, Leaven. That makes bread rise. Speaking of bread, I'm getting hungry, and there's only one loaf of bread on board. While Jesus was driving home a crucial spiritual lesson, the disciples began to discuss lunch plans. They became especially concerned with the fact that one loaf of bread couldn't possibly satisfy the appetites of thirteen men. (Ibid)

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**Mark 8:17 And Jesus, aware of this, said to them, "Why do you discuss the fact that you have no bread? Do you not yet see or understand? Do you have a hardened heart?"**

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Wuest And having come to know, He says to them. Why are you reasoning as follows? Because you do not

have loaves of bread. Not yet are you perceiving, nor even understanding? In a settled state of hardness do you have your hearts? ([Wuest](#))

NET Mark 8:17 When he learned of this, Jesus said to them, "Why are you arguing about having no bread? Do you still not see or understand? Have your hearts been hardened?"

NLT Mark 8:17 Jesus knew what they were saying, so he said, "Why are you arguing about having no bread? Don't you know or understand even yet? Are your hearts too hard to take it in?"

ESV Mark 8:17 And Jesus, aware of this, said to them, "Why are you discussing the fact that you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive or understand? Are your hearts hardened?"

NIV Mark 8:17 Aware of their discussion, Jesus asked them: "Why are you talking about having no bread? Do you still not see or understand? Are your hearts hardened?"

GNT Mark 8:17 κα γνο ς λ γει α το ς, τ διαλογ ζεσθε τι ρτους ο κ χετε; ο πω νοε τε ο δ συν ετε; πεπωρωμ νην χετε τ ν καρδ αν μ ν;

KJV Mark 8:17 And when Jesus knew it, he saith unto them, Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? perceive ye not yet, neither understand? have ye your heart yet hardened?

YLT Mark 8:17 And Jesus having known, saith to them, 'Why do ye reason, because ye have no loaves? do ye not yet perceive, nor understand, yet have ye your heart hardened?'

ASV Mark 8:17 And Jesus perceiving it saith unto them, Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? do ye not yet perceive, neither understand? have ye your heart hardened?

CSB Mark 8:17 Aware of this, He said to them, "Why are you discussing that you do not have any bread? Don't you understand or comprehend? Is your heart hardened?"

- **aware of this:** Mk 2:8 Jn 2:24,25 Jn 16:30 Jn 21:17 Heb 4:12,13 Rev 2:23
- **see or understand:** Mk 3:5 Mk 6:52 Mk 16:14 Isa 63:17 Mt 15:17 16:8,9 Lu 24:25 Heb 5:11,12
- **Mark 8 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 16:8+ But Jesus, aware of this, said, "You men of little faith, why do you discuss among yourselves that you have no bread? 9 "Do you not yet understand or remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets full you picked up? 10 "Or the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many large baskets full you picked up? 11 "How is it that you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread? But beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees."

## JESUS REBUKES DISCIPLES' MISUNDERSTANDING LEAVEN LESSON

**And Jesus, aware of this** - While He may have overheard them, the idea seems to be that in His omniscience He knew what they were thinking (cf His awareness in Mk 2:8+). "It is not always obvious as to how Jesus knew things. Sometimes it is supernatural knowledge and other times knowing peoples' behavior and characteristics." (Utley)

**Wuest** on Mk 8:17-21 - Jesus asks six keen questions that show His disappointment at the intellectual and spiritual dullness of His pupils (the Greek word mathētēs (μαθητης) "disciples," meaning learners or pupils). ([Wuest Word Studies - Erdman Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

**Utley** - This is the first in a series of six or seven questions in which Jesus expresses His disappointment that His own disciples do not yet understand! This entire context of Mark reveals how hard it was for "friend and foe" to comprehend Jesus' radically new message. His disciples, His family, His hometown, the crowds, and the religious leaders all did not have spiritual eyes or ears! ([Mark 8 Commentary](#))

**A T Robertson** - Mark here gives six keen questions of Jesus while Matt. 16:8–11 gives as four that really include the six of Mark running some together. The questions reveal the disappointment of Jesus at the intellectual dullness of his pupils. The questions concern the intellect (νοεῖτε [noeite], from νοῦς, συνιετε [nous, suniete], comprehend), the heart in a hardened state (πεπωρωμένην [pepōrōmenēn], perfect passive predicate participle as in Mark 6:52, which see), the eyes, the ears, the memory of both the feeding of the five thousand and the four thousand here sharply distinguished even to the two kinds of baskets ([kophinous, sphuridōn]). The

disciples did recall the number of baskets left over in each instance, twelve and seven. Jesus "administers a sharp rebuke for their preoccupation with mere temporalities, as if there were nothing higher to be thought of than bread" (Bruce). "For the time the Twelve are way-side hearers, with hearts like a beaten path, into which the higher truths cannot sink so as to germinate" (Bruce).

**Swindoll** quips this was "another "face-palm moment" for Jesus....I would paraphrase Jesus this way: "Don't you get it? Can't you connect the dots? The clues make the conclusion self-evident; how can you fail to see it?" (Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary – Mark)

**Said to them, "Why do you discuss the fact that you have no bread?"** - Notice that Jesus frequently taught by asking questions, and here asks three questions.

**Discuss** (present tense - continually) (1260) **dialogizomai** from **dia** = intensifies meaning + **logizomai** - to reason, reckon, consider. Related to our English word "**dialogue**" a conversation between two or more people) means to consider, reason or reckon thoroughly, to think through, to **deliberate** by reflection. "To bring together different reasons." (Vine) To hold a discussion. Uses in Mark - Mk. 2:6; Mk. 2:8; Mk. 8:16; Mk. 8:17; Mk. 9:33; Mk. 11:31. Note especially similar uses described antagonists of Jesus in Mk. 2:6, 8+

**MacArthur** - The disciples were not in the same category as the unbelieving crowds. They had been given spiritual understanding and their hearts were not hard (LIKE THE PERSISTENT UNBELIEF IN THE CROWDS AND THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS). Thus there was no excuse for their utter lack of perception. ([MNTC-Mark 1-8](#))

**Do you not yet see or understand?** - Clearly they did not yet see or apprehend with their mind's eye (**noeo**) nor **understand**, a picturesque Greek word (**suniami**) which means to put the pieces of the puzzle together and make sense out of the parts. The disciples still saw only "puzzle pieces" but had so far failed to see the full picture.

**Uteley on not yet see or understand** - This is a recurrent theme (cf. Mk 8:21; 6:52). Jesus' family, hometown, own disciples, townspeople, and religious leaders do not understand Him. Possibly this is a way to show the spiritual climate before the fullness of the Spirit comes at Pentecost (or the Messianic Secret is revealed in the crucified, risen Lord). ([Mark 8 Commentary](#))

**See** (3539)(**noeo** from **nous** = mind, seat of moral reflection) has the basic meaning of direct one's mind to something and thus means more than just take a glance at. It means to perceive with the mind, to apprehend, to ponder (= weigh in one's mind, think especially quietly, soberly and deeply). The idea is to ponder or examine attentively or deliberately, considering well, to reflecting with insight, thinking over a matter carefully which would allow one to grasp or comprehend something. This mindset was something the disciples had failed to practice despite having had two lessons on making miracle bread from the "Bread of Life!" Jesus used **noeo** to describe the disciples after they asked Him about a parable, saying "Are you so lacking in understanding also? Do you not understand (**noeo**) that whatever goes into the man from outside cannot defile him." (Mk. 7:18+) All NT uses of noeo - Mt. 15:17; Mt. 16:9; Mt. 16:11; Mt. 24:15; Mk. 7:18; Mk. 8:17; Mk. 13:14; Jn. 12:40; Ro 1:20; Eph. 3:4; Eph. 3:20; 1 Ti 1:7; 2 Ti 2:7; Heb. 11:3

**Understand** (4920)(**suniami** from **sun/syn** = with + **hiemi** = send) ([Click](#) study of related noun **sunesis**) literally means to send together or bring together. The idea is to put together "pieces of the puzzle" (so to speak) and to exhibit quick comprehension. **Suniami** is describes the ability to understand concepts and see relationships between them. **Suniami** means to put together, grasp or exhibit quick comprehension. **Suniami** is the manifestation of the ability to understand concepts and see relationships between them and thus describes the exercise of the faculty of comprehension, intelligence, acuteness, shrewdness. **Uses in Mark** - Mk. 4:12; Mk. 6:52; Mk. 7:14; Mk. 8:17; Mk. 8:21;

**Do you have a hardened** (dull, insensible) **heart** - **NLT** - "Are your hearts too hard to take it in?" Mark had previously recorded "they had not gained any insight from the incident of the loaves, but their heart was hardened." (Mk 6:52+) The **heart** of their problem of failing to gain understanding was the problem in their **heart**. **Hardened** in the [perfect tense](#), emphasizes the disciples' settled state of spiritual dullness, and lack of understanding! They had just seen Jesus supply a great need for 4000+ people in an unexpected way, but now with a new "test" (forgotten to take bread) they quickly forget how He had met that great need! Memory is a horrible thing to lose, especially when it comes to the remembrances of the great and marvelous works which God has already wrought in each of our lives! It would be good for all of us to set up many "**Ebenizers**" ("stones of help")! ([What does Ebenezer mean?](#)) to aid our feeble memories of His good hand on us in our lives! We all do well to rehearse the times when the good hand of the Lord was clearly on us and bestowing grace upon grace in our times of need!

**Wuest on hardened heart** - The verbal form is a [perfect](#) participle. This tense speaks of a process that went on in past time which reached its state of completion, and whose results exist in present time. The hardening process in the disciple's hearts had progressed to the state of completeness, and the present results constituted them as men who were in a state of settled hardness.

**These are the kind of men Jesus had to train as His disciples who would preach the gospel after He had ascended.** One can understand the desire of our Lord for seclusion at times so that He could properly train them before it was necessary for Him to leave this earth for heaven. And in spite of all this training, the ringleader deserted Him and went back to his fishing business, taking with him six other disciples. ([Wuest Word Studies - Erdman Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

**Edwards** - The hardened heart is a particular problem for religious and moral people (e.g., Rom 2:5). An ignorant heart cannot harden itself. Only a knowing heart can harden itself, and that is why those closest to Jesus—the Pharisees (Mk 3:5–6) and the disciples (Mk 6:52; 8:17)—stand in the gravest danger. The disciples mirror humanity-at-large, which is so stuck in its own world and cares that it is blind and deaf to God. The disciples are anxious about lack of bread, but Jesus is anxious about their lack of faith. ([PNTC-Mark](#))

**Hiebert** - “Have ye your heart yet hardened?”—instead of becoming spiritually enlightened, have they allowed their heart, their inner moral being, to reach a state of being hardened? The perfect tense denotes a present state of insensitivity as the result of a past process. ([Gospel of Mark - An Expository Commentary](#))

**Utley** - This is a PERFECT PASSIVE PARTICIPLE implying a settled spiritual condition brought about by an outside agent (cf. Mk 4:13, 40; 6:52; 7:18; 8:17, 21, 33; 9:10, 32). This is exactly what will happen to Judas Iscariot. ([Mark 8 Commentary](#))

**Heart (2588) (kardia)** does not refer to the physical organ but is always used figuratively in Scripture to refer to the seat and center of human life. The heart is the center of the personality, and it controls the intellect, emotions, and will. No outward obedience is of the slightest value unless the heart turns to God.

**Hardened (4456) (poroo)** from **poros** = small piece of stone, kind of marble, used of a callus or fracture; related word **porosis**) means to make hard as stone and figuratively to describe hearts which have become callous or insensitive to spiritual realities. The effect is to cause the person to have difficulty understanding or comprehending spiritual truth in the Word and spiritual significance of surrounding circumstances (everything that happens to us in our life HAS SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE!). In the NT, **poroo** is used only in the spiritual sense to describe a closed mind, mental obtuseness, intellectual blindness. In Mark 8:17 **poroo** is in the [perfect tense](#) describing the state of the disciples' hearts and the [passive voice](#) indicates the hardening is the effect of an "outside agent."

**THOUGHT** - Their hearts were hardened, too often they had seen the power of God and they now were hardened against what was spectacular. So much had been revealed to them, yet so often they missed the spiritual significance of the event, and instead relied on their own natural ability with the result that "scar tissue" had begun to "encase" their hearts, thankfully not a state that was irreversible, but still enough so that they missed the deeper points of Jesus' teaching..Are we as His disciples not just like the 12 and too often Jesus and His Spirit is at work right in our life and we have a "veil" over our eyes and fail to see what He is doing. May we frequently pray Paul's great prayer in Ephesians 1:18-19a+ begging that "the eyes of our heart may be enlightened, so that we will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe." In Jesus' Mighty Name. Amen

Hard hearts and painful unbeliefs spring up in the waste places where we bury our forgotten mercies.

The miracles of our Lord Jesus Christ ought to be considered.

-- C H Spurgeon

**Mark 8:18 "HAVING EYES, DO YOU NOT SEE? AND HAVING EARS, DO YOU NOT HEAR? And do you not remember,**

Wuest Having eyes, you are not seeing, and having ears, you are not hearing, and you are not remembering. ([Wuest](#))

NET Mark 8:18 Though you have eyes, don't you see? And though you have ears, can't you hear? Don't you remember?

NLT Mark 8:18 'You have eyes-- can't you see? You have ears-- can't you hear?' Don't you remember anything at all?

ESV Mark 8:18 Having eyes do you not see, and having ears do you not hear? And do you not remember?

NIV Mark 8:18 Do you have eyes but fail to see, and ears but fail to hear? And don't you remember?

GNT Mark 8:18 φθαλμο ς χοντες ο βλ πετε κα τα χοντες ο κ κο ετε; κα ο μνημονε ετε,

KJV Mark 8:18 Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember?

YLT Mark 8:18 Having eyes, do ye not see? and having ears, do ye not hear? and do ye not remember?

ASV Mark 8:18 Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember?

CSB Mark 8:18 Do you have eyes, and not see, and do you have ears, and not hear? And do you not remember?

NKJ Mark 8:18 "Having eyes, do you not see? And having ears, do you not hear? And do you not remember?

NRS Mark 8:18 Do you have eyes, and fail to see? Do you have ears, and fail to hear? And do you not remember?

NAB Mark 8:18 Do you have eyes and not see, ears and not hear? And do you not remember,

NJB Mark 8:18 Have you eyes and do not see, ears and do not hear? Or do you not remember?

- **see:** Mk 4:12 De 29:4 Ps 69:23 Ps 115:5-8 Isa 6:9-10 42:18-20 44:18 Jer 5:21 Mt 13:14-15 Joh 12:40 Ac 28:26-27 Ro 11:8
- **do:** 2Pe 1:12
- **Mark 8 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Ezekiel 12:2 "Son of man, you live in the midst of the rebellious house, **who have eyes to see but do not see, ears to hear but do not hear**; for they are a rebellious house.

Jeremiah 5:21 'Now hear this, O foolish and senseless people, **Who have eyes but do not see; Who have ears but do not hear.**

### BLIND EYES, DEAF EARS, FEEBLE MEMORIES

**Utley** - This is an OT quote from Ezekiel 12:2 (cf. Jer. 5:21), which theologically parallels Isa. 6:9–10 (cf. Mark 4:12). The OT prophets spoke the word of God, but were misunderstood because of the spiritual condition of their hearers. These OT quotes are in a grammatical form which expects a "yes" answer. ([Mark 8 Commentary](#))

This OT quotation is not found in Matthew's parallel account.

**Edwards** comments that "The disciples' wholesale misunderstanding of Jesus' reference to "yeast" indicates that Jesus has not left the opposition behind with the Pharisees on the lakeshore. It is with him in the boat, if not in outright opposition at least in the bewildering misunderstanding of his own disciples. Jesus is moved to exasperation. Like the prophet Ezekiel, he is an exile among his own people. " 'Son of man, you are living among a rebellious people. They have eyes to see but do not see and ears to hear but do not hear' " (Ezek 12:2)." ([PNTC-Mark](#))

**Having eyes, do you not see? And having ears, do you not hear?** - This description is the same given to the second generation of Israel prior to entering the promised land Moses declaring "Yet to this day the LORD has not given you a heart to know, nor eyes to see, nor ears to hear." (De 29:4+)

Isaiah 6:9-10+ He said, "Go, and tell this people: 'Keep on listening, but do not perceive; Keep on looking, but do not understand.' 10"Render the hearts of this people insensitive, Their ears dull, And their eyes dim, Otherwise they might see with their eyes, Hear with their ears, Understand with their hearts, And return and be healed."

Matthew 13:14-15+ "In their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, 'YOU WILL KEEP ON HEARING, BUT WILL NOT UNDERSTAND; YOU WILL KEEP ON SEEING, BUT WILL NOT PERCEIVE; 15 FOR THE HEART OF THIS PEOPLE HAS BECOME DULL, WITH THEIR EARS THEY SCARCELY HEAR, AND THEY HAVE CLOSED THEIR EYES, OTHERWISE THEY WOULD SEE WITH THEIR EYES, HEAR WITH THEIR EARS, AND UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEART AND RETURN, AND I WOULD HEAL THEM.'

John 12:40 "HE HAS BLINDED THEIR EYES AND HE HARDENED THEIR HEART, SO THAT THEY WOULD NOT SEE WITH THEIR EYES AND PERCEIVE WITH THEIR HEART, AND BE CONVERTED AND I HEAL THEM."

Acts 28:26-27+ saying, 'GO TO THIS PEOPLE AND SAY, "YOU WILL KEEP ON HEARING, BUT WILL NOT UNDERSTAND; AND YOU WILL KEEP ON SEEING, BUT WILL NOT PERCEIVE; 27 FOR THE HEART OF THIS PEOPLE HAS BECOME DULL, AND WITH THEIR EARS THEY SCARCELY HEAR, AND THEY HAVE CLOSED THEIR EYES; OTHERWISE THEY MIGHT SEE WITH THEIR EYES, AND HEAR WITH THEIR EARS, AND UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEART AND RETURN, AND I WOULD HEAL THEM."

Romans 11:8+ just as it is written, "GOD GAVE THEM A SPIRIT OF STUPOR, EYES TO SEE NOT AND EARS TO HEAR NOT, DOWN TO THIS VERY DAY."

**Hiebert** comments that we have " three further questions probing the extent and cause of the hardness of their heart. Is their heart really so dull and unperceptive that they cannot use their eyes, their ears, and their memory to penetrate into the meaning of His word? Have they become like those "outside" (4:11–12) to whom the mysteries of the kingdom could not be revealed? Has their memory failed them concerning the things they had seen Him do? ([Gospel of Mark - An Expository Commentary](#))

**And do you not remember - Remember** what? Certainly one answer is the amazing miracles they had seen. In context Jesus goes on to remind them of two feeding miracles they had just recently seen.

**Utley** - "Jesus is chiding them for their lack of spiritual understanding related to the miraculous feedings (cf. Mk 8:17–21). This phrase also has an OT orientation (cf. Deut. 4:9–10; 8:11, 19). God's people must retain and act on God's truths." ([Mark 8 Commentary](#))

**Mark 8:19 when I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces you picked up?" They said to Him, "Twelve."**

Wuest When the five loaves I broke among the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up? They say to Him, Twelve. ([Wuest](#))

NET Mark 8:19 When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of pieces did you pick up?" They replied, "Twelve."

NLT Mark 8:19 When I fed the 5,000 with five loaves of bread, how many baskets of leftovers did you pick up afterward?" "Twelve," they said.

ESV Mark 8:19 When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?" They said to him, "Twelve."

NIV Mark 8:19 When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up?" "Twelve," they replied.

GNT Mark 8:19 τε το ς π ντε ρτους κλασα ε ς το ς πεντακισχιλ ους, π σους κοφ νους κλασμ των πλ ρεις ρατε; λ γουσιν α τ , Δ δεκα.

KJV Mark 8:19 When I brake the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They say unto him, Twelve.

YLT Mark 8:19 When the five loaves I did brake to the five thousand, how many hand-baskets full of broken pieces took ye up? they say to him, 'Twelve.'

ASV Mark 8:19 When I brake the five loaves among the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces took ye up? They say unto him, Twelve.

CSB Mark 8:19 When I broke the five loaves for the 5,000, how many baskets full of pieces of bread did you collect?" "Twelve," they told Him.

NKJ Mark 8:19 "When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments did you take up?" They said to Him, "Twelve."

NRS Mark 8:19 When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you collect?" They said to him, "Twelve."

- five: Mk 6:38-44 Mt 14:17-21 Lu 9:12-17 Joh 6:5-13
- **Mark 8 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### Related Passages:

Matthew 16:9+ "Do you not yet understand or remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets full you picked up?"

Keep the context in mind as you read these next two passages. In Mk 8:16 they were worried because they had no bread (which was in itself not reality because they had one loaf - Mk 8:14). So Jesus proceeds to review the previous 2 no bread situations, to put their present "no bread" situation in context.

**When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces you picked up?"** - Jesus continues teaching by asking questions. Can you imagine the men shirking, especially the one holding the one loaf? This must have been at least a bit embarrassing to these men!

**They said to Him, "Twelve"** - What is sad is that they remembered the facts but they failed to deduce spiritual truth from those facts. Notice that Jesus clearly distinguished two miraculous feedings, here of the 5000 and in the following passage the feeding of the 4000. His words should shut the mouths of any liberal critic who says the two feedings were really only one feeding.

**Hiebert** adds "The memory of the disciples was clear and accurate concerning the historical facts, but they had failed to deduce the appropriate spiritual truth from those facts. They yet failed to grasp the true significance of His Person." ([Gospel of Mark - An Expository Commentary](#))

**Mark 8:20 "When I broke the seven for the four thousand, how many large baskets full of broken pieces did you pick up?" And they said to Him, "Seven."**

Wuest When the seven among four thousand, how many baskets of broken pieces did you take up? And they say, Seven. ([Wuest](#))

NET Mark 8:20 "When I broke the seven loaves for the four thousand, how many baskets full of pieces did you pick up?" They replied, "Seven."

NLT Mark 8:20 "And when I fed the 4,000 with seven loaves, how many large baskets of leftovers did you pick up?" "Seven," they said.

ESV Mark 8:20 "And the seven for the four thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?" And they said to him, "Seven."

NIV Mark 8:20 "And when I broke the seven loaves for the four thousand, how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up?" They answered, "Seven."

GNT Mark 8:20 τε το ς πτ ε ς το ς τετρακισχιλ ους, π σων σπυρ δων πληρ ματα κλασμ των ρατε; κα λ γουσιβ [α τ], πτ .

KJV Mark 8:20 And when the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? And they said, Seven.

YLT Mark 8:20 'And when the seven to the four thousand, how many hand-baskets full of broken pieces took ye up?' and they said, 'Seven.'

ASV Mark 8:20 And when the seven among the four thousand, how many basketfuls of broken pieces took ye up? And they say unto him, Seven.

CSB Mark 8:20 "When I broke the seven loaves for the 4,000, how many large baskets full of pieces of bread did you collect?" "Seven," they said.

NKJ Mark 8:20 "Also, when I broke the seven for the four thousand, how many large baskets full of fragments did you take up?" And they said, "Seven."

NRS Mark 8:20 "And the seven for the four thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you collect?" And they said to him, "Seven."

- Mk 8:1-9 Mt 15:34-38
- **Mark 8 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Related Passages:**

Matthew 16:10+ “Or the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many large baskets full you picked up?”

**When I broke the seven for the four thousand, how many large baskets full of broken pieces did you pick up?”**- Jesus again teaches by asking questions.

**And they said to Him, "Seven** - Clearly they remember this miraculous abundance of bread.

They had one loaf and the Man who had brought forth 12 baskets and 7 baskets sitting in the boat with them!

**Mark 8:21 And He was saying to them, "Do you not yet understand?"**

Wuest And He kept on repeating to them, Not yet are you understanding? ([Wuest](#))

NET Mark 8:21 Then he said to them, "Do you still not understand?"

NLT Mark 8:21 "Don't you understand yet?" he asked them.

ESV Mark 8:21 And he said to them, "Do you not yet understand?"

NIV Mark 8:21 He said to them, "Do you still not understand?"

GNT Mark 8:21 κα λέγειν α το ς, Ο πω συν ετε;

KJV Mark 8:21 And he said unto them, How is it that ye do not understand?

YLT Mark 8:21 And he said to them, 'How do ye not understand?'

ASV Mark 8:21 And he said unto them, Do ye not yet understand?

CSB Mark 8:21 And He said to them, "Don't you understand yet?"

NKJ Mark 8:21 So He said to them, "How is it you do not understand?"

NRS Mark 8:21 Then he said to them, "Do you not yet understand?"

NAB Mark 8:21 He said to them, "Do you still not understand?"

NJB Mark 8:21 Then he said to them, 'Do you still not realise?'

GWN Mark 8:21 He asked them, "Don't you catch on yet?"

BBE Mark 8:21 And he said to them, Is it still not clear to you?

- How: Mk 8:12,17 6:52 9:19 Ps 94:8 Mt 16:11,12 Joh 14:9 1Co 6:5 15:34
- **Mark 8 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Related Passages:**

Matthew 16:11+ “How is it that you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread? But beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” 12 Then they understood that He did not say to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

**THE SLOW TO UNDERSTAND DISCIPLES**

**A T Robertson - Do ye not yet understand?** ([oupō suniete?]). After all this rebuke and explanation. The greatest of all teachers had the greatest of all classes, but he struck a snag here. Matt. 16:12+ gives the result: “**Then they understood how that he bade them not beware of the loaves of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.**” They had once said that they understood the parables of Jesus (Matt. 13:51+). But that was a long time ago. The teacher must have patience if his pupils are to understand. Note the **not yet** which implies we have not come to the end of the story regarding the faith of the disciples. As Guelich says “not yet” holds out “the real possibility that they, to whom the ‘mystery of the Kingdom’ has been given, will know and

understand." (WBC-Mk)

**And He was saying to them, Do you not yet understand?** - The disciples are still slow to put together the pieces of the puzzle so that they can see the full picture of Jesus and His enemies! Matthew's passage adds details, for there Jesus clearly tells the disciples what He was not speaking of literal bread, but of the leaven-like influence of the religious leaders. Mark does not tell us they understood, but Matthew's account says that finally they "**understood that He did not say to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.**" (Mt 16:12) They finally saw the spiritual lesson that Jesus had been trying to teach them.

**Saying** is [imperfect tense](#) - Expositors says: "If we may emphasize the imperfect tense of elegen (λεγειν), He said this over and over again, half speaking to them, half to Himself." There was agony of soul back of this questioning, in view of the tremendous issues at stake. Matthew in reporting this happening gives us the information that Jesus finally had to explain to them that He was talking about the doctrines of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

**Edwards** - The plea for understanding is a reminder that faith is not separate from understanding, but possible only through understanding. ([PNTC-Mark](#))

**THOUGHT** - Are we not so much like these 12? We read a passage over and over, but one day the Spirit opens our eyes and we see the spiritual lesson it has for our life!

**NET Note** - Do you still not understand? The disciples in Mark's Gospel often misunderstood the miracles of Jesus as well as his teaching. Between Matthew, Mark, and Luke, Mark paints the most revealing portrait of the shortcomings of the Twelve (cf. Mk 6:51–52; 7:17–19; 8:1–10, 14–21, 27–30, 33; 9:5, 10, 33; 10:28, 35–45; 14:19, 29–31, 32–37, 50, 66–72).

**Understand** ([4920](#)) see note above on [suniemi](#)

**Mark 8:22 And they came to Bethsaida. And they brought a blind man to Jesus and implored Him to touch him.**

Wuest And they come into Bethsaida. And they bring to Him a blind man. And they beg Him to touch him. ([Wuest](#))

NET Mark 8:22 Then they came to Bethsaida. They brought a blind man to Jesus and asked him to touch him.

NLT Mark 8:22 When they arrived at Bethsaida, some people brought a blind man to Jesus, and they begged him to touch the man and heal him.

ESV Mark 8:22 And they came to Bethsaida. And some people brought to him a blind man and begged him to touch him.

NIV Mark 8:22 They came to Bethsaida, and some people brought a blind man and begged Jesus to touch him.

GNT Mark 8:22 Κα ρχονται ε ς Βηθσαιδ v. κα φ ρουσιν α τ τυφλ v κα παρακαλο σιν α τ v να α το ψηται.

KJV Mark 8:22 And he cometh to Bethsaida; and they bring a blind man unto him, and besought him to touch him.

YLT Mark 8:22 And he cometh to Bethsaida, and they bring to him one blind, and call upon him that he may touch him,

ASV Mark 8:22 And they come unto Bethsaida. And they bring to him a blind man, and beseech him to touch him.

CSB Mark 8:22 Then they came to Bethsaida. They brought a blind man to Him and begged Him to touch him.

NKJ Mark 8:22 Then He came to Bethsaida; and they brought a blind man to Him, and begged Him to touch him.

NRS Mark 8:22 They came to Bethsaida. Some people brought a blind man to him and begged him to touch him.

NAB Mark 8:22 When they arrived at Bethsaida, they brought to him a blind man and begged him to touch him.

NJB Mark 8:22 They came to Bethsaida, and some people brought to him a blind man whom they begged him to touch.

- **Bethsaida:** Mk 6:45 Mt 11:21 Lu 9:10 Lk 10:13 Joh 1:44 12:21
- **they bring:** Mk 2:3 Mk 6:55,56
- **to touch:** Mk 5:27-29 Mt 8:3,15 9:29
- **Mark 8 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



Bethsaida  
([Article](#))

This miracle is only recorded by Mark. Edwards adds that "This miracle and the miracle of healing of the deaf-mute in Mk 7:31–37 are similar to one another and are the only two miracles in Mark that are omitted by Matthew and Luke." ([PNTC-Mark](#))

**And they came to Bethsaida** (house of the fisher") - This town is probably Bethsaida Julius on the eastern bank of the Jordan above its entrance into the lake. And remember that this is outside of Galilee. They had just departed from Magdala and sailed northeast toward Bethsaida the hometown of Peter, Andrew, Philip, and possibly Nathanael (cf. John 1:44–45). The town of Bethsaida was near the place where Jesus fed the five thousand men plus women and children (Mark 6:41–44),

**And they brought a blind man to Jesus** - We see others bringing people to Jesus several times in Mark (Mk 2:3 Mk 6:55,56 ) This is the first mention in Mark's Gospel of a blind man being brought to Jesus for healing, the second being in Mk 10:46.

Recall that healing of blindness is one of the signs of that the Messiah had come as Jesus relayed to John the Baptist...

Matthew 11:5+ the **BLIND RECEIVE SIGHT** and the lame walk, the **lepers are cleansed** and the **deaf hear**, the **dead are raised up**, and the **POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM.**

Luke 7:22+ And He answered and said to them, "Go and report to John what you have seen and heard: the **BLIND RECEIVE SIGHT**, the **lame walk**, the **lepers are cleansed**, and the **deaf hear**, the **dead are raised up**, the **POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM.**

Compare this passage from Isaiah describing the Messianic Age...

Isaiah 35:5-6+ (cf. Isa 29:18) Then the **eyes of the blind will be opened** And the **ears of the deaf will be unstopped.** 6 Then the **lame will leap** like a deer, And the **tongue of the mute will shout for joy.** For waters will break forth in the wilderness And streams in the Arabah.

**Utley** adds that "One of Isaiah's prophecies about the Messiah was that He would bring sight to the blind (cf. Isa. 29:18–35:5; 42:7, 16, 18, 19). Physical blindness is an OT metaphor for spiritual blindness (cf. Isa. 56:10; 59:10). This same play on physical and spiritual blindness is graphically seen in John 9. This is obviously related to the disciples' blindness in 8:15, 18." ([Mark 8 Commentary](#))

Jesus healed a number of blind men throughout His ministry (Matt. 9:27–31; 11:5; 12:22; 15:30–31; 20:30–34; 21:14; Mark 10:46–52; Luke 4:18; 18:35–42; John 9:1–12; cf. Isa. 42:7)

**MacArthur**- Those who suffered from blindness were helpless and reduced to begging (cf. Mark 10:46). Additionally, like others with disabilities or debilitating diseases, they were considered cursed by God (cf. John 9:1–2). That kind of stigma made living with blindness doubly painful. ([MNTC-Mark 1-8](#))

**and implored Him to touch him** - Implored is [parakaleo](#) in the [present tense](#) - they were continually imploring Him.

**Edwards** has an interesting thought - The juxtaposition of the two stories is a clue that the lingering blindness of the disciples may also be relieved, as is the blindness of the man at Bethsaida, by the continued touch of Jesus. ([PNTC-Mark](#))

**Constable** adds "Sight is a common metaphor for understanding. The disciples should have seen the deaf man as a picture of themselves unable to comprehend what Jesus said. This blind man also represented them in their inability to understand what Jesus showed them. Jesus could and would make them whole as He healed these two physically limited men."

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## **C H Spurgeon - Sermon Notes on - Mark 8:22–25**

Men arrive at Christ by different processes: one is found by Christ himself, another comes to him, another is borne of four, and this blind man is led. This matters little, so long as we do come to him.

The act of bringing men to Jesus is most commendable.

It proves kindly feeling.

It shows practical faith in the power of Jesus.

It is thus an act of true wisdom.

It is exceedingly acceptable to the Lord; and is sure to prove effectual when the person himself willingly comes.

In this case there was something faulty in the bringing, since there was a measure of dictation as to the method in which the Lord should operate.

I. IT IS A COMMON WEAKNESS OF FAITH TO EXPECT THE BLESSING IN A CERTAIN FIXED WAY. "They besought him to touch him."

The Lord has his usual ways, but he is not bound to them.

Yet too often we think and act as if he were so.

1. We dream that deliverance from trouble must come in one way.
2. We look for sanctification either by afflictions or by ecstasies.
3. We hope for salvation only by one form of experience.
4. We look to see others converted in one fashion of feeling only, or by some one favourite ministry.
5. We expect a revival to take the stereotyped shape.

II. WHILE OUR LORD HONOURS FAITH, HE DOES NOT DEFER TO ITS WEAKNESS.

He did not consent to work in the prescribed manner.

He touched, but no healing came; and thus he proved that the miracle was not attached to that special form of operation.

He did nothing to the blind man before their eyes; but led him out of the town. He would not indulge their observation, or curiosity.

He did not heal him instantly, as they expected.

He used a means never suggested by them—"spit on his eyes," etc.

When he did put his hands on him, he did it twice, so that, even in compliance with their wish, he vindicated his own freedom.

1. Thus he refused to foster the superstition which limited his power.
2. Thus he used a method more suited to the case.
3. Thus he gave to the people larger instruction.
4. Thus he displayed to the individual a more personal care.

The like happens in each distinct conversion: its speciality is justified in a multitude of ways.

III. WHILE OUR LORD REBUKES THE WEAKNESS OF FAITH, HE HONOURS FAITH ITSELF.

1. The blind man had consented to be led to Jesus, and Jesus leads him further. He refuses none because their coming to him has been less their own spontaneous act than yielding to the persuasion of others.

2. His friends had asked for sight, and the Lord gave sight. If we have praying faith, he will keep pace with it.

3. The man and his friends had exhibited confidence in him, and he gave them even more than they expected. If we can confide, we shall receive.

4. The cure was perfect, and the method used displayed the completeness of it. Jesus gives perfect gifts to imperfect faith.

Faith ever honours the Lord, and therefore the Lord honours it.

If faith were not thus rewarded, Jesus himself would suffer dishonour.

He who has faith shall surely see; he who demands signs shall not be satisfied.

Let us for ever have done with prescribing methods to our Lord.

Jesus will surely heal those who believe in him; he knows the best method; and he is to be trusted without reserve.

## **EXAMPLES**

This case, and that of the deaf and stammering man brought to Christ in Decapolis, have many points of resemblance. In both, those who brought the diseased to Jesus prescribed to him the mode of cure. Was it for the purpose of reproving and counteracting the prejudice which connected the cure with a certain kind of manipulation, on the part of the curer, that Jesus, in both instances, went

so far out of his usual course, varying the manner of his action so singularly that, out of all his miracles of healing, these two stand distinguished by the unique mode of their performance? It is certain that, had Jesus observed one uniform method of healing, the spirit of formalism and superstition, which lies so deep in our nature, would have seized upon it, and linked it, inseparably, with the divine virtue that went out of him, confounding the channel with the blessing it conveyed. As we ponder the life of our Redeemer, dwelling particularly on those parts of it—such as his institution of the sacraments—in which food might have been furnished upon which the spirit of formalism might have fed, more and more do we admire the pains evidently taken to give to that strong tendency of our nature as little material as possible to fasten on.—Dr. Hanna.

Is the sick man the doctor, that he should choose the remedy?  
Madame Swetchine.

John Newton's hymn is a case in point. We quote a verse or two:—

I asked the Lord that I might grow  
In faith, and love, and every grace;  
Might more of His salvation know,  
And seek, more earnestly, His face.  
I hoped that in some favoured hour,  
At once He'd answer my request;  
And, by His love's constraining power,  
Subdue my sins, and give me rest.  
Instead of this He made me feel  
The hidden evils of my heart,  
And let the angry powers of hell  
Assault my soul in every part.

Thus did infinite wisdom answer his prayer in a way which he had never dreamed of, and yet it was the right way, as he confessed.

So apt are people, as in the case of Naaman, to settle in their own minds the method of the work of grace, that it is hard to overcome their preconceptions. I met with one young woman, before whom I set the way of salvation by faith alone. She was long in accepting, or even understanding it; and when she did grasp it, and the joy of it filled her heart, she exclaimed, with surprise, "I never thought that people could find peace in this way." "Why not?" I asked her, and she replied very energetically, "I always believed that one must almost go to hell to get to heaven. My father was so full of despair that they locked him up in the asylum for six months, and then at last he got religion."—C. H. S.

**Mark 8:23 Taking the blind man by the hand, He brought him out of the village; and after spitting on his eyes and laying His hands on him, He asked him, "Do you see anything?"**

Wuest And having taken the hand of the blind man, He brought him outside of the village, and having spit upon his ey ([Wuest](#)) es, having placed His hands upon him, He kept on asking him, Do you, possibly, see anything?

NET Mark 8:23 He took the blind man by the hand and brought him outside of the village. Then he spit on his eyes, placed his hands on his eyes and asked, "Do you see anything?"

NLT Mark 8:23 Jesus took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village. Then, spitting on the man's eyes, he laid his hands on him and asked, "Can you see anything now?"

ESV Mark 8:23 And he took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village, and when he had spit on his eyes and laid his hands on him, he asked him, "Do you see anything?"

NIV Mark 8:23 He took the blind man by the hand and led him outside the village. When he had spit on the man's eyes and put his hands on him, Jesus asked, "Do you see anything?"

GNT Mark 8:23 κα̅πιλαβ̅μενος τ̅ς χειρ̅ς το̅ τυφλο̅ ξ̅νεγκεν̅ α̅τ̅ν̅ ξ̅ω̅ τ̅ς κ̅μ̅ης κα̅ π̅τ̅σας ε̅ς τ̅ μ̅ματ̅α α̅το̅, πιθε̅ς τ̅ς χ̅ε̅ρας α̅τ̅ π̅ηρ̅τα α̅τ̅ν̅, Ε̅πιβ̅λ̅πεις;

KJV Mark 8:23 And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw ought.

YLT Mark 8:23 and having taken the hand of the blind man, he led him forth without the village, and having

spit on his eyes, having put his hands on him, he was questioning him if he doth behold anything:

ASV Mark 8:23 And he took hold of the blind man by the hand, and brought him out of the village; and when he had spit on his eyes, and laid his hands upon him, he asked him, Seest thou aught?

CSB Mark 8:23 He took the blind man by the hand and brought him out of the village. Spitting on his eyes and laying His hands on him, He asked him, "Do you see anything?"

NKJ Mark 8:23 So He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the town. And when He had spit on his eyes and put His hands on him, He asked him if he saw anything.

NRS Mark 8:23 He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village; and when he had put saliva on his eyes and laid his hands on him, he asked him, "Can you see anything?"

- **by the:** Isa 51:18 Jer 31:32 Ac 9:8 Heb 8:9
- **out:** Mk 7:33 Isa 44:2
- **spit:** Joh 9:6,7 Rev 3:18
- **Mark 8 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Taking the blind man by the hand, He brought him out of the village-** He probably **brought him out of the village** to avoid stirring up publicity. "Although someone had conducted the man to Jesus, He now acted as guide to the man personally. Only here is this graphic action used in any of His miracles. The blind man confidently accepted the leadership of Jesus." (Hiebert)

**Wuest** - Jesus Himself becomes the conductor of the blind man. He leads him out of the village in order that He might perform the cure in secret, and this, in order that He might not have a stampede of sick folk. Our Lord's compassionate heart went out to the sick, but He always kept His chief mission in mind, the cure of souls, not bodies. ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdman Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

**Hiebert** - This healing has the unique distinction of being the only recorded miracle which Jesus performed in distinct stages. This is remarkable, since it occurs in a Gospel that repeatedly stressed the immediacy of Christ's miracles (cf. Mk 1:42; 2:12; 5:29, 42; 10:52). ([Gospel of Mark - An Expository Commentary](#))

**and after spitting on his eyes and laying His hands on him, He asked him, "Do you see anything?"-** Note this miracle is not instantaneous but gradual. Why Jesus chose to heal the man in stages can only be conjectured.

**Robertson** - As in the case of the deaf and dumb demoniac given also alone by Mark (Mk 7:31-37), so here Jesus observes the utmost secrecy in performing the miracle for reasons not given by Mark. It was the season of retirement and Jesus is making the fourth withdrawal from Galilee. That fact may explain it. The various touches here are of interest also. Jesus led him out by the hand, put spittle on his eyes (using the poetical and Koiné papyri word *μυατα* [ommata] instead of the usual *πθαλμους* [ophthalmous]), and laid his hands upon him, perhaps all this to help the man's faith.

**Hiebert** - The spitting on his sightless eyes was a symbolic act which the man could feel, assuring him that Jesus would deal with those eyes. The accompanying touch of His hands gave the man further assurance. For a blind man, touch means more than sound. ([Gospel of Mark - An Expository Commentary](#))

**Mark 8:24 And he looked up and said, "I see men, for I see them like trees, walking around."**

Wuest And having looked up, he kept on saying, I see the men; as trees I see them walking around. ([Wuest](#))

NET Mark 8:24 Regaining his sight he said, "I see people, but they look like trees walking."

NLT Mark 8:24 The man looked around. "Yes," he said, "I see people, but I can't see them very clearly. They look like trees walking around."

ESV Mark 8:24 And he looked up and said, "I see people, but they look like trees, walking."

NIV Mark 8:24 He looked up and said, "I see people; they look like trees walking around."

GNT Mark 8:24 καὶ ἀβλῶν λέγει, Ἐπιβλέπων τοὺς ἄνθρωποις τὰς ὁδοὺς περιπατοῦντας.

KJV Mark 8:24 And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking.

YLT Mark 8:24 and he, having looked up, said, 'I behold men, as I see trees, walking.'

ASV Mark 8:24 And he looked up, and said, I see men; for I behold them as trees, walking.

CSB Mark 8:24 He looked up and said, "I see people-- they look to me like trees walking."

NKJ Mark 8:24 And he looked up and said, "I see men like trees, walking."

NRS Mark 8:24 And the man looked up and said, "I can see people, but they look like trees, walking."

NAB Mark 8:24 Looking up he replied, "I see people looking like trees and walking."

NJB Mark 8:24 The man, who was beginning to see, replied, 'I can see people; they look like trees as they walk around.'

- I see: Jdg 9:36 Isa 29:18 32:3 1Co 13:9-12
- **Mark 8 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**And he looked up and said, "I see men, for I see them like trees, walking around-** The fact that he saw trees and recognized them as such indicates he had seen trees before so this was not congenital blindness. In the Middle East [Chlamydia Trachomatis](#) is a common cause of scarring of the eyes and blindness.

**MacArthur** - The verb translated looked up (from the Greek anablepō) is the same verb used elsewhere to describe those whom Jesus healed of blindness (cf. Mark 10:51–52; John 9:11, 15). ([MNTC-Mark 1-8](#))

**NET Note** on **looked up** - The verb anablepo, though normally meaning "look up," when used in conjunction with blindness means "regain sight."

**Mark 8:25 Then again He laid His hands on his eyes; and he looked intently and was restored, and began to see everything clearly.**

Wuest Then again He placed His hands upon his eyes; and he looked steadfastly; and he was restored to his former state; and he was seeing all things at a distance and clearly. ([Wuest](#))

NET Mark 8:25 Then Jesus placed his hands on the man's eyes again. And he opened his eyes, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly.

NLT Mark 8:25 Then Jesus placed his hands on the man's eyes again, and his eyes were opened. His sight was completely restored, and he could see everything clearly.

ESV Mark 8:25 Then Jesus laid his hands on his eyes again; and he opened his eyes, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly.

NIV Mark 8:25 Once more Jesus put his hands on the man's eyes. Then his eyes were opened, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly.

GNT Mark 8:25 ετα π λιν πθηκεν τς χερας π το ς φθαλμο ς ατο , κα δι βλεψεν κα πεκατ στη κα ν βλεπεν τηλαυ ς παντα.

KJV Mark 8:25 After that he put his hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly.

YLT Mark 8:25 Afterwards again he put his hands on his eyes, and made him look up, and he was restored, and discerned all things clearly,

ASV Mark 8:25 Then again he laid his hands upon his eyes; and he looked stedfastly, and was restored, and saw all things clearly.

CSB Mark 8:25 Again Jesus placed His hands on the man's eyes, and he saw distinctly. He was cured and could see everything clearly.

NKJ Mark 8:25 Then He put His hands on his eyes again and made him look up. And he was restored and saw everyone clearly.

NRS Mark 8:25 Then Jesus laid his hands on his eyes again; and he looked intently and his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly.

- saw: Pr 4:18 Mt 13:12 Php 1:6 1Pe 2:9 2Pe 3:18
- **Mark 8 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Then again He laid His hands on his eyes** - For a second time, Jesus touched the man's eyes.

**And he looked intently** - This verb is **diablepo** (only 3x - Mt 7:5, Mk 8:25, Lk 6:42) which means literally "to see through," and so to look intently or steadily, to see with a penetrating gaze.. **BDAG** says " to stare w. eyes wide open, or opened one's eyes wide." **Thayer** has "to look through, penetrate by vision; a. to look fixedly, stare straight before one." LSJM = "stare with eyes wide open, see clearly."

**And was restored - Restored** (600) ([apokathistemi](#) from **apo** = from + **kathistemi** = to set in order, appoint) means literally to restore to an earlier condition. Meanings include to restore, to give or bring back, to reinstate. To return to a former condition, place or position.

**And began to see everything clearly - Clearly** is **telaugos** only here in the NT strictly shining clearly; hence quite distinctly, very clearly. LS = far-shining, far-beaming, .

**MacArthur** - Modern faith healers sometimes allege that this verse supports the notion of incomplete healings, but it clearly does not. None of the Lord's healings ever resulted in partial, imperfect, or gradual restoration, nor was there ever a period of rehabilitation necessary. This miracle was no exception. In a matter of moments, the blind man went from debilitating blindness to perfect vision. Such is obviously a far cry from the fraudulence and failure that characterizes self-proclaimed healers today. ([MNTC-Mark 1-8](#))

**Expositors** says: "The narrative contains three compounds of blepō (ana, dia, en; the first denotes looking up in the tentative manner of blind men, the second, looking through (a mist as it were) so as to see clearly, the third, looking into so as to see distinctly, as one sees the exact outlines of a near object."

**Utley** comments that "This verse starts with Jesus laying hands on the man's eyes. Then the action switches to the man (cf. NJB). He must focus and look intently (cf. Matt. 7:5). When he cooperates, his sight immediately is restored." ([Mark 8 Commentary](#))

**Expositors** says: "It has been suggested that the gradual restoration of sight in this case was meant to symbolize the slowness of the Twelve in attaining spiritual insight. They got their eyes opened very gradually like the blind man of Bethsaida."

**Wuest** - The word "**clearly**" is **tēlaugōs**, made up of **tēle**, "afar," and **augē**, "radiance," the compound word meaning "far-shining." Thayer gives, "at a distance and clearly."([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdman Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

This miracle at **Bethsaida** reminds me of Jesus' strong warning to those who see miracles but refuse to believe in Him...

"Woe to you, Chorazin! **Woe to you, Bethsaida!** For if the miracles had been performed in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. "But it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the judgment than for you. (Lk 10:13-14+)

## Mark 8:26 And He sent him to his home, saying, "Do not even enter the village."

Wuest - And He sent him off into his home, saying, Neither into the town go. ([Wuest](#))

NET Mark 8:26 Jesus sent him home, saying, "Do not even go into the village."

NLT Mark 8:26 Jesus sent him away, saying, "Don't go back into the village on your way home."

ESV Mark 8:26 And he sent him to his home, saying, "Do not even enter the village."

NIV Mark 8:26 Jesus sent him home, saying, "Don't go into the village. "

GNT Mark 8:26 καὶ πειλεῖν αὐτὸν εἰς τὸ κενὸν ἀγορῶν, μὴ δὲ εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὸν κληρικόν.

KJV Mark 8:26 And he sent him away to his house, saying, Neither go into the town, nor tell it to any in the town.

YLT Mark 8:26 and he sent him away to his house, saying, 'Neither to the village mayest thou go, nor tell it to any in the village.'

ASV Mark 8:26 And he sent him away to his home, saying, Do not even enter into the village.

CSB Mark 8:26 Then He sent him home, saying, "Don't even go into the village."

NKJ Mark 8:26 Then He sent him away to his house, saying, "Neither go into the town, nor tell anyone in the town."

NRS Mark 8:26 Then he sent him away to his home, saying, "Do not even go into the village."

- Neither: Mk 5:43 7:36 Mt 8:4 9:30 12:16
- **Mark 8 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**And He sent him to his home, saying, "Do not even enter the village** - Jesus did not want this miracle published and as best we can tell His order was obeyed. This would therefore be classified as a "Messianic Secret" which is described in more detail in the note on Mark 7. "Jesus was seeking retirement with His disciples and acted "to avoid creating a run on Him for cures." (Hiebert)

**Utley** - Jesus did not want to be known as a healer. He used healing to show the mercy of God, build the disciples' faith, and confirm His teaching ministry. ([Mark 8 Commentary](#))

**MacArthur** - In this case, the Lord's prohibition served as a confirmation of divine judgment. Like the apostate religious leaders, the residents of Bethsaida had no excuse for their unbelief. They had witnessed many miracles, yet they refused to repent (Matt. 11:20–24). Consequently, the Lord would issue a stinging rebuke against them: "Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had been performed in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the judgment than for you." (Luke 10:13–14) By escorting the man outside of the town, and by denying him the opportunity to go back and proclaim what happened, Jesus confirmed the permanence of Bethsaida's unbelief and His own judgment. Like the Pharisees whom Jesus confronted earlier (Mark 8:11–13), the residents of Bethsaida were sentenced to eternal spiritual blindness. The account of this miracle is simple enough for a child to comprehend. Yet, the setting in which it is placed gives it significant meaning. It is no coincidence that the healing of a physically blind man immediately followed the demonstration of permanent spiritual blindness by the religious leaders (8:11–13) and temporary spiritual blindness by the disciples (8:14–21). ([MNTC-Mark 1-8](#))

**MacArthur** explains that "This was a private miracle performed by Jesus for His disciples, and it underscored a number of important truths for them.

First, it served as a confirmation of Jesus' deity, since only divine power could open the eyes of the blind (cf. Ps. 146:8). In the very next section of Mark, perhaps thinking back on this miracle, Peter rightly confessed, "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God" (Matt. 16:16; cf. Mark 8:29).

Second, it provided the disciples with a glimpse of the future messianic kingdom, when Christ will reign from Jerusalem for a thousand years (cf. Rev. 20:1–6). During that time, death and disease will be greatly reduced, including maladies like blindness (cf. Isa. 29:18; 35:5).

Third, it marked a turning point in Jesus' ministry. The Lord's public ministry in Galilee was over, and His focus was on training His disciples. From this point forward, with the cross only months away, Jesus began to speak plainly to the Twelve about His coming death (cf. Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:32).

Finally, this miracle served as an illustration for the disciples of temporary spiritual blindness. Spiritually speaking, they had once been like that blind man. Having been raised in traditional Judaism, they had been taught to follow the guidance of the blind Pharisees and scribes (Matt. 23:16). Even with the light of Old Testament Scripture (cf. Ps. 119:105), and the advantages inherent in being part of God's chosen nation (cf. Rom. 3:2; 9:4–5), their understanding of spiritual truth had been hopelessly blurred by centuries of rabbinic tradition and religious hypocrisy. All of that changed when they met the Savior. His saving touch removed the veil of darkness that once shrouded their unbelieving hearts (cf. 2 Cor. 3:14–15). In an act of infinite compassion, the Lord Jesus miraculously gave them eyes of faith, as He does for every sinner whom He saves, so that they could clearly apprehend truth for the first time. He is, as the apostle John describes Him, "the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man" (John 1:9). (For related discussion see MacArthur's sermon [Mark 8:22-26 Jesus' Power over Blindness](#))

**Mark 8:27 Jesus went out, along with His disciples, to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way He questioned His disciples, saying to them, "Who do people say that I am?"**

Wuest And He went out, Jesus and His disciples into the villages of Caesarea Philippi. And along the road He kept on asking His disciples, saying, Who do men say that I am? ([Wuest](#))

NET Mark 8:27 Then Jesus and his disciples went to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?"

NLT Mark 8:27 Jesus and his disciples left Galilee and went up to the villages near Caesarea Philippi. As they were walking along, he asked them, "Who do people say I am?"

ESV Mark 8:27 And 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?"

NIV Mark 8:27 Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, "Who do people say I am?"

GNT Mark 8:27 Κα ξ λθεν ησο ς κα ο μαθητα ατο ε ς τ ς κ μας Καισαρε ας τ ς Φιλ ππου· κα ν τ δ πηρ τα το ς μαθη ς α το λ γων α το ς, Τ να με λ γουσιν ο νθρωποι ε ναι;

KJV Mark 8:27 And Jesus went out, and his disciples, into the towns of Caesarea Philippi: and by the way he asked his disciples, saying unto them, Whom do men say that I am?

YLT Mark 8:27 And Jesus went forth, and his disciples, to the villages of Caesarea Philippi, and in the way he was questioning his disciples, saying to them, 'Who do men say me to be?'

ASV Mark 8:27 And Jesus went forth, and his disciples, into the villages of Caesarea Philippi: and on the way he asked his disciples, saying unto them, Who do men say that I am?

CSB Mark 8:27 Jesus went out with His disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. And on the road He asked His disciples, "Who do people say that I am?"

NKJ Mark 8:27 Now Jesus and His disciples went out to the towns of Caesarea Philippi; and on the road He asked His disciples, saying to them, "Who do men say that I am?"

NRS 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?"

- **the villages of Caesarea Philippi:** Mt 16:13-20
- **and on:** Lu 9:18,19,20
- **Mark 8 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 16:13-20+ Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?"

Luke 9:18-20+ (The question of WHO IS JESUS - Lk 7:49, Lk 8:25, Lk 9:9) And it happened that while He was praying alone, the disciples were with Him, and He questioned them, saying, "Who do the people say that I am?"

Caesarea Philippi

[Click to Enlarge Reconstruction of Ancient Caesarea Philippi](#)

[Spring of Banias & Cave of Pan](#)  
Modern Remains of Reconstruction Above

## WHO DO YOU SAY JESUS IS?

This is the single most important question in all of time or eternity for one's answer determines one's eternal destiny.

Mark 1:1 The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

John 1:1–3, 14 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being

that has come into being.... And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

John 3:36 "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

John 14:6 Jesus \*said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.

Acts 4:12 "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved."

John 3:18 "He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

1 Corinthians 16:22 If anyone does not love the Lord, he is to be accursed. Maranatha.

**Jesus went out, along with His disciples, to the villages of Caesarea Philippi-** Look at the map above for which the text does not state their route specifically, after the healing of the blind man at Bethsaida, they would have likely followed the Jordan River some 25 miles north to the **villages of Caesarea**. Matthew 16:13+ says they "came into the **district** of Caesarea Philippi." **Caesarea Philippi** is located near the ancient Israelite town of Dan (cf. Jdg. 20:1; 1 Chron. 21:2), about forty to fifty miles southwest of [Damascus](#).

**Background on Caesarea Philippi** - Situated at the foot of Mount Hermon, near a large spring that fed the Jordan River, Caesarea Philippi was originally named Paneas (or [Banias](#)), after the Greek deity [Pan](#) (a mythological half goat, half man famed for his flute-playing). When [Philip the Tetrarch](#) inherited the territory from his father, [Herod the Great](#), he greatly enlarged the city. In A.D. 14, he renamed it Caesarea in honor of [Caesar Augustus](#). To distinguish it from [Caesarea Maritima](#), located west of Jerusalem on the Mediterranean coast, the city became known as Caesarea Paneas or **Caesarea Philippi** (so called in honor of Philip the Tetrarch). The city itself was largely populated by Gentiles and thus filled with pagan idols. By again journeying outside of Galilee (cf. Mark 7:24–8:10), Jesus and the apostles enjoyed a reprieve from the oppressive crowds, the antagonistic religious leaders, and the threat posed by Herod Antipas (cf. Luke 13:31+). Mark explains that it was while they were still on the way to the region surrounding Caesarea Philippi that the conversation recorded in these verses took place. (MNTC-Mk)

So Jesus and His disciples were not in the actual town of **Caesarea Philippi** (see depiction of town above), but in the region where the town was located. Keep the context in mind. Jesus has left the Pharisees (Mark 8:13) and now will focus on His disciples who have traveled with Him for the previous two years (approximate). At the beginning of their time with Jesus they were hoping He was a "political" Messiah Who would defeat the Romans and set up His Messianic Kingdom. Recall the words of Andrew to Peter " "We have found the **Messiah**" (which translated means Christ)." (Jn 1:41+), Nathanael made a similar proclamation "Rabbi, You are the Son of God; You are the **King** of Israel." (John 1:49+). The disciples (at least some) had heard but not totally comprehended John the Baptist's proclamation "The next day he \*saw Jesus coming to him and said, "Behold, **the Lamb of God** Who takes away the sin of the world!" (Jn 1:29+, cf Jn 1:34). Several months earlier when Jesus had walked to them on the water of the Sea of Galilee, they responded with worship and acclamation "You are certainly **God's Son!**" (Mt 14:33+). And even the next day after most of those following Jesus deserted Him (Jn 6:66+) when He taught He was the Bread of Life (Jn 6:35, 48+), Peter declared "We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God." (Jn 6:69+) And so even though they had "hardened hearts," they unlike the Pharisees had recognized the deity and messiahship of Jesus.

**Expositors** says: "Apparently they did not enter the city itself. Jesus seems to have avoided the towns in which the Herodian passion for ambitious architecture was displayed. Besides at this time He desired solitude."

**Wuest** - Robertson suggests that here Jesus was safe from annoyance by Herod Antipas and the Pharisees and Sadducees. Here He is to prepare His disciples for His coming crucifixion just a little over six months ahead. ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmans Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

**And on the way He questioned His disciples, saying to them-** Luke gives some additional background recording "And it happened that **while He was praying alone**, the disciples were with Him, and He questioned them, saying, "Who do the people say that I am?" (Luke 9:18+) **Questioned** is in the [imperfect tense](#) indicating He ask them several times. This was their "final exam" and He had only two questions, in what would be a pass-fail (so to speak) exam).

Jesus was frequently in prayer - Mt. 14:23; 19:13; 26:36, 39, 42, 44; Mk 1:35; 6:46; 14:32, 35, 39; Lk 3:21; 5:16; 6:12; 9:28–29; 11:1; 22:32, 41–45

**Who do people say that I am** (Luke 9:18+) - In Matthew 16:13+ the question is "**Who do people say that the Son of Man is?**" **People** does not include the antagonistic religious leaders! So first Jesus begins by asking the disciples what the public opinion was regarding His identity, for they would have heard various opinions voiced by the crowds to whom Jesus had ministered, teaching and performing miracles to authenticate His authority, divinity and His true identity. Jesus is not asking because He did not know for He did (cf Jn 2:24-25+), but He asked to prepare His disciples for their test question.

The answer is that Jesus is the **Messiah foretold in over 300 passages in the Old Testament** so that He would not be missed! The four Gospels underscore the truth that Jesus is both the **Messiah** (Mt. 1:18; 16:16; 23:10; 26:63–64; Mk 1:1; 14:61–62; Lk 2:11, 26; 4:41; 24:46; Jn 1:17, 41; 4:25–26; 11:27; 17:3) and that He is also the **Son of God** (Mt. 8:29; 27:43, 54; Mk 3:11; 15:39; Lk 1:35; 3:21–22; 4:41; 9:35; 22:70; Jn 1:34, 49; 5:18; 10:30, 36; 11:4; 14:9–10; 19:7).

John summarizes the reason for the his Gospel but also for the synoptic Gospels -

Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written ([perfect tense](#)) so that you may believe that **Jesus is the Christ** (THE MESSIAH), **the Son of God**; and that believing you may have life in His Name. (John 20:30, 31)

In his first epistle John writes

And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life. (1 John 5:20+)

**Utley** - This event is a watershed event in the Gospel of Mark. The miracle stories that affirm the power, authority, and deity of Jesus cease. From this point on the emphasis is the crucifixion. Mark's Gospel changes from a focus on who He is to His great redemptive act (i.e. what He did). ([Mark 8 Commentary](#))

## Caesarea Philippi

About 1,150 feet above sea level, Caesarea Philippi is located on a triangular plain in the upper Jordan Valley along the southwestern slopes of Mt. Hermon. Behind it rise bluffs and rugged mountain peaks. The area is one of the most lush and beautiful in Palestine, with groves of trees and grassy fields abounding. Water is in abundance, for the city is near the spot where the spring Nahr Baniyas, one of the sources of the Jordan, gushes from a cave in the bluffs. The city is also in a strategic location, guarding the plains in the area. The extent of its ruins indicate that it was a city of considerable size. The modern town, which has dwindled drastically, is known as Banyas.

History Caesarea Philippi seems to have been a religious center from its earliest days. The Canaanite god Baal-gad, the god of good fortune, was worshiped here in Old Testament times. Later, in the Greek period, a shrine in the cave was dedicated to the god Pan. In addition, many niches in the cave held statues of the Nymphs. When Herod the Great was king of the Jews, he built a temple out of white marble near the same spot and dedicated it to Emperor Augustus.

The city also has an important place in the history of the area. Paneas, as it was called before its name was changed, was the site of a famous battle (198 B.C.) in which Antiochus the Great defeated the Egyptians and thereby took control of Palestine for the Seleucids. In 20 B.C., the Romans under Augustus, who then controlled the area, gave the territory to Herod the Great. After Herod's death, it passed to his son Philip who ruled there from 4 B.C. until his death in A.D. 34. Philip rebuilt the city into a beautiful place and renamed it Caesarea Philippi in honor of Tiberias Caesar and himself.

When Herod Agrippa II (grandson of Herod the Great) inherited the city, he renamed it Neronias in honor of the emperor Nero. But, after Nero's death the name was dropped. During the Jewish-Roman War of A.D. 66-70, the Roman general Vespasian rested his army here. After the war, Titus, who succeeded his father as general of the Roman armies, held gladiatorial shows here during which a number of Jewish prisoners were put to death. After subduing the Jews, the Romans changed its name back to Paneas.

New Testament Near here Jesus asked His disciples the famous question about His identity. When He asked them who men said He was, they answered that people were identifying Him with Elijah, John the Baptist, or one of the prophets (Mark 8:27-33 ; Matthew 16:13-23 ). Jesus then asked them, "But whom say ye that I am?" (Matthew 16:15 ). Peter, acting as the group's spokesman, replied with his famous statement that Jesus is the Christ. Although in John's gospel Jesus was acknowledged as Christ before this event, in the Synoptic Gospels this is the first time that anyone openly confessed Jesus as the Messiah.

Immediately after Peter's confession, Jesus congratulated him for being receptive to God's revelation, changed his name from

Cephas to Peter, and then pronounced the founding words of the church. This occasion is also important because for the first time Jesus predicted His coming arrest, death, and resurrection in Jerusalem. That Peter and the other disciples did not fully understand the nature of Jesus' messiahship is evidenced by Peter's rebuke of Jesus. This marked the turning point in Jesus' ministry. After this He confined His ministry mostly to the twelve to reinterpret to them the meaning of His messiahship and to prepare them for the events to come.

The transfiguration, which occurred about a week after the confession at Caesarea Philippi, was probably also in the area. Caesarea Philippi, which had been the center for pagan worship, thus became an important site for Christians because of Jesus' association with it. ([Holman Bible Dictionary](#))

#### Related Resources:

- Wikipedia - [Caesarea Philippi](#)
- Bridgeway Bible Dictionary [Caesarea philippi](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Caesarea Philippi](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Caesarea Philippi](#)
- Morrish Bible Dictionary [Caesarea Philippi](#)
- Watson's Theological Dictionary [Caesarea Philippi](#)
- 1911 Encyclopedia Britannica [Caesarea Philippi](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Caesarea](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Caesarea](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Caesarea](#)
- Kitto Biblical Cyclopedia [Caesarea](#)

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#### Question - [Why did Jesus ask the disciples, "Who do you say that I am?"](#)

**Answer:** Jesus asked a lot of questions. **Query** was one of His favorite teaching tools. One of the questions Jesus put to the disciples was "Who do you say that I am?" (Luke 9:20). This question drew out a response that is instructive to all of us.

The context of Jesus' question "Who do you say that I am?" is important:

"Once when Jesus was praying in private and his disciples were with him, he asked them, 'Who do the crowds say I am?'

"They replied, 'Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, that one of the prophets of long ago has come back to life.'

"'But what about you?' he asked. 'Who do you say I am?'

Peter answered, 'God's Messiah'" (Luke 9:18–20).

Parallel accounts are found in Matthew 16 and Mark 8.

Matthew relates that Peter did more than just identify Jesus as the Christ; he also proclaimed Jesus' divine nature: "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16).

Jesus' question "Who do you say I am?" was not a sign of ignorance; He knew all things, including what was on the disciples' minds. The question was also not motivated by some type of self-conceit or vanity; Jesus did not preen, and He had no desire to fish for compliments. Rather, His question was aimed at provoking the disciples to consider their level of faith. The immediate results of His question make it clear why He asked them what He did.

Jesus began the conversation by asking a related question: "Who do the crowds say I am?" (Luke 9:18). In response, the disciples related the various things they had heard: the opinions included several personages come back to life, pointing to the fact that the crowds viewed Jesus as someone special. But the crowds' guesses were all wrong. So Jesus directs the question to the disciples themselves: "Who do you say that I am?" In other words, are you following the crowd? Are you sticking with the conventional wisdom about Me? Or do you have another, more insightful answer? What do you really think?

Peter then speaks up. In answer to the question, Peter affirms his belief that Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah and, more than that, the Son of God. By this time, the disciples had seen many miracles, including the raising of a widow's son in Nain, the calming of a storm, the casting out of many demons from a man in the Gerasenes, and the feeding of 5,000. The disciples knew that Jesus was more than a prophet; He was absolutely unique; He was, in fact, God in the flesh.

In response to Peter's declaration, Jesus expresses the blessedness of his faith: "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was

not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven" (Matthew 16:17). God, in His grace, had opened the disciples' eyes to see Jesus for who He truly was.

So Jesus asks the question "Who do you say that I am?" and He receives the correct (divinely inspired) response from Peter. This marks a turning point in Jesus' teaching ministry with His disciples. Starting then, the Lord gives His disciples additional information, as shocking as it was for them to hear: "From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life" (Matthew 16:21).

Jesus had refrained from telling His disciples about His death and resurrection until they had reached an important milestone: namely, that their faith had grown to the extent that they could express their conviction that Jesus was the Son of God. How the disciples handled the additional information of Jesus' death would depend on who they believed Jesus to be. Knowing that He is the Son of God, they should be able to trust Him—even to the point of accepting His death (and resurrection) without being shaken.

Unfortunately, the disciples had a hard time processing what Jesus was now telling them, as evidenced in Peter's response (Matthew 16:22–23). Even having faith in Jesus as the divine Son of God, the disciples were thrown into confusion at the prediction of Jesus' death and resurrection (see Mark 9:32).

Jesus' question "Who do you say that I am?" is a good example of one of His teaching methods. Asking a question demands engagement, promotes thinking, and draws out a considered response. Jesus' question and subsequent teaching also illustrate the progressive nature of God's revelation and our need for growing in faith. Throughout history, God has revealed His message gradually, starting in Genesis and continuing through the close of the canon. He did not reveal any more than mankind needed or was capable of receiving at any given time. Also, Jesus' delay in introducing the subject of His death and resurrection suggests that the disciples' faith needed to mature to the point that they could hear and understand. All of us are called to grow in our faith. There is always more to know of Christ. "Therefore let us move beyond the elementary teachings about Christ and be taken forward to maturity" (Hebrews 6:1). (Source: [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org))

#### **Mark 8:28 They told Him, saying, "John the Baptist; and others say Elijah; but others, one of the prophets."**

Wuest Who do men say that I am? And they told Him, saying, John the Baptist, and others, Elijah, and others, one of the prophets. ([Wuest](#))

NET Mark 8:28 They said, "John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and still others, one of the prophets."

NLT Mark 8:28 "Well," they replied, "some say John the Baptist, some say Elijah, and others say you are one of the other prophets."

ESV Mark 8:28 And they told him, "John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets."

NIV Mark 8:28 They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets."

GNT Mark 8:28 ο ὁ ε παν α τ λ γοντες [ τι ] ω ννην τ ν βαππιστ ν, κα λλοι, λ αν, λλοι ὁ τι ε ς τ ν προφητ ν.

KJV Mark 8:28 And they answered, John the Baptist: but some say, Elias; and others, One of the prophets.

YLT Mark 8:28 And they answered, 'John the Baptist, and others Elijah, but others one of the prophets.'

ASV Mark 8:28 And they told him, saying, John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but others, One of the prophets.

CSB Mark 8:28 They answered Him, "John the Baptist; others, Elijah; still others, one of the prophets."

NKJ Mark 8:28 So they answered, "John the Baptist; but some say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets."

NRS Mark 8:28 And they answered him, "John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets."

NAB Mark 8:28 They said in reply, "John the Baptist, others Elijah, still others one of the prophets."

NJB Mark 8:28 And they told him, 'John the Baptist, others Elijah, others again, one of the prophets.'

GWN Mark 8:28 They answered him, "Some say you are John the Baptizer, others Elijah, still others one of the prophets."

- **John:** Mk 6:14-16 Mt 14:2 16:14 Lu 9:7-9
- **Elijah:** Mk 9:11-13 Mal 4:5, Joh 1:21
- **Mark 8 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 16:14+ And they said, "Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets."

Luke 9:19+ They answered and said, "John the Baptist, and others say Elijah; but others, that one of the prophets of old has risen again."

**They told Him, saying, "John the Baptist** - The disciples knew that Herod thought that Jesus was John the Baptist raised from the dead (Mark 6:14,16+, Lk 9:19+)

**And others say Elijah** - Some Jews had said [Elijah](#) in (Mark 6:15+) because they were aware of the prophecy in Malachi 4:5+ which said "Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD." ([Why must Elijah return?](#)) This would imply that Jesus was the forerunner of the Messiah

**But others, one of the prophets** - Some Jews had this opinion in (Mark 6:15+), such as Jeremiah who according to Jewish tradition would return with the Ark of the Covenant (that had disappeared with the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem during Jeremiah's ministry) when the Messianic Kingdom was established (there is no Scriptural support for this tradition).

**NET Note** - The appearance of Elijah would mean that the end time had come. According to 2 Kgs 2:11, Elijah was still alive. In Mal 4:5 it is said that Elijah would be the precursor of Messiah.

**Mark 8:29 And He continued by questioning them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered and said to Him, "You are the Christ."**

Wuest And He himself kept on questioning them, But as for you, who are you saying that I am? Answering, Peter says to Him, As for you, you are the Messiah. ([Wuest](#))

NET Mark 8:29 He asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Christ."

NLT Mark 8:29 Then he asked them, "But who do you say I am?" Peter replied, "You are the Messiah. "

ESV Mark 8:29 And he asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Christ."

NIV Mark 8:29 "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "You are the Christ."

GNT Mark 8:29 κα α τ ς π η ρ τ α α τ ο ς , μ ε ς δ τ ν α μ ε λ γ ε τ ε ε ν α ι ; π ο κ ρ ι θ ε ς Π τ ρ ο ς λ γ ε ι α τ , Σ ε Χ ρ ι σ τ ς .

KJV Mark 8:29 And he saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Peter answereth and saith unto him, Thou art the Christ.

YLT Mark 8:29 And he saith to them, 'And ye -- who do ye say me to be?' and Peter answering saith to him, 'Thou art the Christ.'

ASV Mark 8:29 And he asked them, But who say ye that I am? Peter answereth and saith unto him, Thou art the Christ.

CSB Mark 8:29 "But you," He asked them again, "who do you say that I am?" Peter answered Him, "You are the Messiah!"

NKJ Mark 8:29 He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered and said to Him, "You are the Christ."

NRS Mark 8:29 He asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Messiah."

NAB Mark 8:29 And he asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter said to him in reply, "You are the Messiah."

NJB Mark 8:29 'But you,' he asked them, 'who do you say I am?' Peter spoke up and said to him, 'You are the Christ.'

- **But:** Mk 4:11 Mt 16:15 Lu 9:20 1Pe 2:7
- **You:** Mt 16:16 Joh 1:41-49 4:42 6:69 11:27 Ac 8:37 9:20 1Jn 4:15 5:1
- **Mark 8 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 16:15+ He said to them, "But who do **YOU** (EMPHATIC) say that I am?" 16 Simon Peter answered, "**You are the Christ, the Son of the living God**" But He warned them and instructed them not to tell this to anyone,

Luke 9:20+ (The question of WHO IS JESUS - Lk 7:49, Lk 8:25, Lk 9:9) And He said to them, "But who do **YOU** (EMPHATIC) say that I am?" And Peter answered and said, "**The Christ of God.**"

Strategic Location of Who Do You Say I Am?

## JESUS IS THE CHRIST THE MESSIAH

The diagram above is from the Gospel of Matthew and marks the strategic place in that Gospel regarding Jesus. If you [examine Irving Jensen's diagram](#) on the Gospel of Mark at the top of this page, you will see that the corresponding passages in Mark are also related to Jesus' climatic question "**who do you say that I am?**"

**Grassmick** - "At the center of his Gospel Mark placed Peter's confession that Jesus is the Messiah. Up to this point the underlying question had been, 'Who is He?' After Peter's declaration on behalf of the Twelve, Mark's narrative is oriented toward the Cross and the Resurrection. From now on the underlying double question was, 'What kind of Messiah is He, and what does it mean to follow Him?' This crucial passage is the point to which the first half of the book leads and from which the second half proceeds." ([Bible Knowledge Commentary](#))

**John MacArthur** explains that "it was on this occasion (Mark 8:29; cf. Mt. 16:16+; Luke 9:20+) that the apostles, through their spokesman Peter, stated that truth with greater conviction and confidence than ever before, doing so against the backdrop of widespread confusion among the crowds and increasing hostility from Israel's religious leaders. That which began as a hope-filled expectation had become a heart-fixed certainty. Appropriately, this passage marks the climax of Mark's gospel and the culmination of Jesus' training of the Twelve. Their discipleship had been intensified over the previous few months, as the Lord increasingly withdrew from the Galilean multitudes to focus on mentoring His apostles. After weeks of concentrated instruction, this essentially constituted their final exam." ([MNTC-Mark 1-8](#))

**Constable** - The timing of this question in Jesus' ministry was very important. The disciples had believed that Jesus was the Messiah from the beginning of their contact with Him (John 1:41, 51). However their understanding of the Messiah then was the traditional one of their day, namely that of a political leader. The multitudes likewise failed to understand that Jesus was much more than that. The religious leaders were becoming increasingly antagonistic. The disciples were about to receive new revelation regarding Jesus that would have costly implications for them. Therefore it was necessary for them to confess Jesus' identity clearly and unmistakably now.

**And He continued by questioning them, "But who do you say that I am?"** - **You** is plural (all 12) and emphatic! **Say** (lego) is plural underscoring the fact that His question was addressed to all 12 disciples. **Questioning** is [epetotao](#) in the [imperfect tense](#) indicating again and again. "He kept on questioning them." This is Jesus' final exam question.

**Wuest** on **you** - **You** is *humeis*, the personal pronoun used for contrast. It is "As for you, in contradistinction to others, who are you saying that I am?" ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmann Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

**Peter answered and said to Him, "You are the Christ-** "You are the Messiah." **You** is emphatic. In Matthew's version Peter adds "**the Son of the living God.**" (Mt 16:15+) and Luke has "**The Christ of God.**" (Lk 9:20+) Peter now identifies Jesus as **the Christ**, "the Anointed One" the equivalent of the Hebrew term [mashiach/masiyah](#) from which we derive our word Messiah.

The tragedy is while Peter answered for the 12, one of the 12 (Judas Iscariot) would never believe that Jesus was the Messiah and would perish forever in his sins in spite of his intimate association with Jesus. This is only the second time in Mark's gospel that the title [Christos](#) has been used, the first being Mk 1:1.

As an aside only twice before has Peter been mentioned in Mark (Mk 3:16; 5:37), but from this point on, he is the most prominent disciple (as in all the other Gospel accounts).

**Hiebert** - In the time of Jesus, it was the current Jewish designation for the promised greater Son of David who would restore the kingdom of David and reign in worldwide power. The occurrences of the title in the Gospels show that Jesus was reluctant to use the term of Himself, apparently because of the limited and inadequate nature of the current messianic hopes. In popular thought, the Messiah had largely become a nationalistic figure; and, if used of Jesus, the title would at once have inflamed the political aspirations of the people (cf. John 6:14–15). But Jesus did not reject the title whenever it was applied to Him. He understood and fulfilled His messianic mission in a way different from and larger than the current messianic expectations. In His own understanding of His Person and mission, Jesus fused the Old Testament pictures of the Messiah, the suffering Servant, and the Son of man. Thus, His own presentation of Himself was not at once fully understood. The present discussion with His disciples was intended by Jesus to lead them into a fuller understanding of His messianic identity and function. ([Gospel of Mark - An Expository Commentary](#))

**MacArthur** - Peter proclaimed Jesus to be God's supreme "Anointed One," the Savior of the world. After more than two years of following the Lord, the apostles' doubts about who Jesus was had vanished. Both His deity and His messiahship were firmly anchored in their minds. To be sure, they would still exhibit times of failure and weakness (cf. Mark 14:66–72). But they had come to know that Jesus was indeed the Messiah, the Son of God. The resolute conviction that filled their hearts was not of their own doing. As Jesus told Peter in response, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 16:17). The disciples could take no credit for this theological breakthrough of faith. They believed only because the Father had drawn them (John 6:44), the Son had revealed Himself to them (Matt. 11:27), and the Spirit had opened their eyes to the truth (1 Cor. 2:10–14; 2 Cor. 3:15–18). ([MNTC-Mark 1-8](#))

**Constable** - Peter's confession constitutes a high-water mark in the disciples' understanding of and commitment to Jesus. They still had much to learn about the significance of Jesus being the Messiah that the Old Testament promised and its implications. Nevertheless now Jesus could build on their faith and commitment.

**Wuest** - It is the judgment of the present writer that the translation here should be "Messiah," the transliteration of the Hebrew word meaning "the Anointed One." It has a definite content of meaning with reference to Israel which the word "Christ" does not have to the English reader. In Psalm 2:2, the kings of the earth are said to take counsel against the Lord and His Anointed, the word "Anointed" here being "Messiah" ([mashiach/masiyah](#)) in the original (ED: THE SEPTUAGINT TRANSLATES THE HEBREW WITH [Christos](#)). The word designates that King whom God will provide for Israel, who will occupy the throne of David forever. Thus Peter was confessing the fact that he believed that Jesus of Nazareth was that coming King. ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmann Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

**Believer's Study Bible** - Peter means by his answer that Jesus is the One who would fulfill the messianic hope of the O.T. He does not completely understand the nature of Jesus' messiahship, but the truth is beginning to dawn, as Matthew 16:16 makes clear by the expression "the Son of the living God." ( This is Peter's astonishing insight. To avow that Jesus was the Messiah was not startling. But to affirm that Jesus, the Messiah, was the Son of God -- deity in human flesh -- was an insight of momentous illumination (Mt 16:17).

**Henry Morris** - Peter's great confession apparently was given as spokesman for all the disciples since Jesus had asked them the question. They understood that Jesus was both the promised Messiah ("the Christ") and (not in Mark but in Mt 16:16) also the only begotten Son of God. They had learned this first from John the Baptist (see John's testimony as recorded in John 1:15-18), but this had been further confirmed by their personal knowledge of Christ and by the inward witness of the Holy Spirit. ([Mark 8](#))

**NET Note** - The term **christos** was originally an adjective ("anointed"), developing in LXX into a substantive ("an anointed one"), then developing still further into a technical generic term ("the anointed one"). In the intertestamental period it developed further into a technical term referring to the hoped-for anointed one, that is, a specific individual. In the NT the development starts there (technical-specific), is so used in the gospels, and then develops in Paul to mean virtually Jesus' last name.

**Christ** (5547) ([Christos](#) from [chrio](#) = to rub or anoint, consecrate to an office) describes one who has been anointed with oil, one who has been consecrated. The majority of the NT uses refer to Jesus (exceptions = "false Christs" - Mt 24:24, Mk 13:22). **Christos** describes one who has been anointed, symbolizing appointment to a task. It is used here as the title "Anointed One" and is the Greek synonym for "Messiah." Christos is used in the [Septuagint](#) describing everyone anointed with the holy oil, especially the priesthood (Lev. 4:5+, Lev 4:16+) and it is also a name applied to those who were acting as redeemers like Cyrus. In the TWOT Hamilton suggests a fourfold significance to anointing (Heb - [Mashiach](#)): (1) separation unto God, (2) authorization by God, (3) divine enablement, and (4) the coming Deliverer. In regards to Deliverer Hamilton says "Though this association with the term māshach is not as prevalent in the OT as often

supposed, the prospect of a righteous, Spirit-filled ruler is increasingly discernible in the OT (cf. Isaiah 9:1-7<sup>±</sup>; Isaiah 1:1-5<sup>±</sup>; Isa 61:1) ” **BDAG** adds **Christos** signifies the "Fulfiller of Israelite expectation of a Deliverer" and was used in the **Septuagint** of the great messianic Ps 2:2<sup>±</sup> describing the future day when "The kings of the earth take their stand And the rulers take counsel together against the LORD and against His **Anointed** (Hebrew = [Mashiach/masiyah](#); [Lxx](#) = Christos)." The first use of **Christos** in the Septuagint describes "**the anointed** (Hebrew = [Mashiach/masiyah](#); [Lxx](#) = Christos) **priest**" (Lev 4:5<sup>±</sup>) carrying out a blood sacrifice, clearly foreshadowing the One Who would come as both the Sacrifice and the Priest! Daniel 9:26<sup>±</sup> gives us the incredible prophecy that after 69 weeks (483 years) "the Messiah ([Mashiach](#); Christos) will be cut off," a specific prophecy of **what** would happen to Messiah and **when** it would happen. The Jews could have known and should have known (and some Jews have been saved when they read Daniel's prophecy) (See Luke 19:42<sup>±</sup>. **Christos** is translated in the NAS 1995 edition as Christ (516x), Christ's (11x) and **Messiah** (4x - Mt 1:1, 16, 17, 2:4). The NIV and ESV never translate Christos as Messiah, but always as Christ. The Holman Christian Standard Bible has an interesting approach and translates Christos as Messiah many times depending on the context ([see explanatory note](#)) The NLT translates **Christos** as Messiah over 80 times. The NET translates Christos as Messiah in Jn 4:29, Acts 3:20, Eph 2:12.

#### Related Resources:

- [Messiah - Anointed One](#)
- Messiah = [messias](#)
- [See incredible videos that chronicle Jewish men and women recognizing Jesus as their Messiah](#)
- [Is Jesus the Messiah?](#)
- [What does Messiah mean?](#)
- [Why do most Jews reject Jesus as the Messiah?](#)
- [Does the Old Testament truly predict a second advent of the Messiah?](#)

#### Mark 8:30 And He warned them to tell no one about Him.

Wuest And He strictly charged them that they should not tell even one person concerning Him. [Wuest](#)

NLT Mark 8:30 But Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him.

ESV Mark 8:30 And he strictly charged them to tell no one about him.

NIV Mark 8:30 Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him.

GNT Mark 8:30 κα̅πετ̅ μ̅η̅ σ̅εν̅ α̅ το̅ ς̅ να̅ μ̅η̅ δ̅εν̅ λ̅ γ̅ω̅ σ̅ι̅ν̅ περ̅ α̅ το̅ .

KJV Mark 8:30 And he charged them that they should tell no man of him.

YLT Mark 8:30 And he strictly charged them that they may tell no one about it,

ASV Mark 8:30 And he charged them that they should tell no man of him.

CSB Mark 8:30 And He strictly warned them to tell no one about Him.

NKJ Mark 8:30 Then He strictly warned them that they should tell no one about Him.

NRS Mark 8:30 And he sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him.

NAB Mark 8:30 Then he warned them not to tell anyone about him.

NJB Mark 8:30 And he gave them strict orders not to tell anyone about him.

- Mk 8:26 7:36 9:9 Mt 16:20 Lu 9:21
- **Mark 8 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 16:16+ Simon Peter answered, "**You are the Christ, the Son of the living God**" But He warned them and instructed them not to tell this to anyone, (**FOLLOWING NOT IN MARK'S ACCOUNT**) 17 And Jesus said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My

Father who is in heaven. 18 "I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. 19 "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven

Luke 9:21+ But He warned them and instructed them not to tell this to anyone,

**Morris** - tell no man. Jesus told the unclean spirits (Mark 3:12), those who had seen His miracles (Mark 5:43), and His own disciples here in this verse that they should not make His identity or His miracles known. At least seven times in Mark's gospel alone, He gave such an instruction. Until Jesus was ready, He wanted people to believe His words for their own intrinsic value, as true to God's will. ([Mark 8](#))

**And He warned them to tell no one about Him - Warned** is [epitimao](#) a strong term generally implying censure and rebuke (cf Mk 1:25; 3:12) and which means to admonish, and even threaten! It was not time for Him to be fully revealed as the Messiah. His so-called triumphal entry into Jerusalem would be the fit occasion (Mt 21:9 unwittingly fulfilling Ps 118:25,26<sup>+</sup>, Lk 19:37, 38+ - [What is the significance of the triumphal entry?](#)). See related topic, the so-called "[Messianic Secret](#)" which discusses why Jesus did not want His identity to be revealed.

**Utley** - This is another example of the Messianic Secret so common in Mark (cf. Mark 1:33–34, 43; 3:12; 4:11; 5:43; 7:24, 36; 8:26, 30). ([Mark 8 Commentary](#))

Earlier in Mark we read a similar order by Jesus after He had healed the deaf and mute man = "He gave them **orders not to tell anyone**; but the more He ordered them, the more widely they continued to proclaim it." (Mark 7:36+)

**Hiebert** explains that for the disciples "to go out and broadcast the fact that He was the Messiah would simply raise false hopes among the people who were expecting an earthly Messiah who would fulfill their political hopes. Furthermore, the disciples themselves were not yet qualified to proclaim the whole truth concerning Him as Messiah. "The disciples now clearly see 'who' Jesus is, but they do not yet see afar enough to understand 'how' He will fulfill His mission as the Christ." His messianic mission could not be rightly understood apart from the work of the cross. Only when they understood the relationship between His suffering and His glory would they be qualified to proclaim Him adequately as the Messiah. ([Gospel of Mark - An Expositional Commentary](#))

**NET Note** - Mark 8:27–10:52. The entire section Mk 8:27–10:52 is built around three passion predictions of Jesus (Mk 8:31; 9:31; 10:33). These predictions form the structure of the section, the content for the section (Jesus' suffering, death, and the meaning of genuine discipleship) and the mood of the section (i.e., a somber mood). What is interesting is that after each passion prediction, Mark records both the misunderstanding of the disciples and then Jesus' teaching on the nature of his death and what genuine discipleship is all about: (1) denying oneself (Mk 8:34–38); (2) humility and serving (Mk 9:33–37); (3) suffering, humble service, and not lording it over people (Mk 10:35–45). For further discussion of the structure of the passage, see W. L. Lane, Mark (NICNT), 292–94.

**Mark 8:31 And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.**

Wuest And He began to be teaching them that it was necessary in the nature of the case for the Son of man to suffer many things, and, after having been put to the test for the purpose of being approved should He meet the specifications, to be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and to be put to death, and after three days to arise. ([Wuest](#))

NET Mark 8:31 Then Jesus began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and experts in the law, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

NLT Mark 8:31 Then Jesus began to tell them that the Son of Man must suffer many terrible things and be rejected by the elders, the leading priests, and the teachers of religious law. He would be killed, but three days later he would rise from the dead.

ESV Mark 8:31 And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again.

NIV Mark 8:31 He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again.

GNT Mark 8:31 Κα ρεξατο διδ σκειν α το ς τι δε τ υ ν το νθρ που πολλ παθε ν κα ποδοκιμασθ ναι π

τ ν πρεσβυτ ρων κα τ ν ρχιερ ων κα τ ν γραμματ ων κα ποκτανθ ναι κα μετ τρε ς μ ρας ναστ ναι·

KJV Mark 8:31 And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

YLT Mark 8:31 and began to teach them, that it behoveth the Son of Man to suffer many things, and to be rejected by the elders, and chief priests, and scribes, and to be killed, and after three days to rise again;

ASV Mark 8:31 And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders, and the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

CSB Mark 8:31 Then He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, be killed, and rise after three days.

NKJ Mark 8:31 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.

NRS Mark 8:31 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.

- **he began:** Mk 9:31,32 10:33,34 Mt 16:21 17:22 20:17-19 Lu 9:22 18:31-34 Lu 24:6,7,26,44
- **rejected:** Mk 12:10 1Sa 8:7 10:19 Ps 118:22 Isa 53:3 Mt 21:42 Lu 17:25 Joh 12:48 Ac 3:13-15 7:35,51,52
- **and after:** Ho 6:2 Jon 1:17 Mt 12:40 Joh 2:19 1Co 15:4
- **Mark 8 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 16:21+ From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day.

Luke 9:22+ saying, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed and be raised up on the third day."

## A SUFFERING MESSIAH PRECEDES THE CONQUERING KING

[Constable](#) gives us the setting of Mk 8:31-10:52 explaining that "Having comprehended Jesus' true identity the disciples next turned south with Jesus and headed from Caesarea Philippi toward Jerusalem. This section of the Gospel traces that journey and stresses Jesus' preparation of His disciples for His coming death and resurrection. Mark structured his narrative around three predictions of His passion that Jesus gave the disciples. Each unit begins with a prediction followed by the disciples' reaction. Then follow lessons that Jesus taught them about discipleship. Until now, Mark reported Jesus speaking in veiled terms (cf. Mk 2:20; 4:33–34). From now on He spoke more clearly to both the disciples and the multitudes....In this section, Mark recorded Jesus' first clear prediction of His passion (Mk 8:31), the disciples' reaction to it (Mk 8:32–33), and several lessons on discipleship (Mk 8:34–9:29)."

**And He began to teach them** - **Began** marks the commencement of this new teaching. **Teach** is [didasko](#) in the [present tense](#) indicating the continuation of the instruction - this would be the first of several times He would tell them about the Cross (cf. Mt. 17:9, 12, 22–23; Mk 9:31; 10:33, 45; Jn 12:7).

**Robertson** - Mark is fond of this idiom (**began to teach**), but it is not a mere rhetorical device. Matt. 16:21 expressly says **from that time.**" It was a suitable time for the disclosure of the greatest secret of his death. It is now just a little over six months before the cross. They must know it now to be ready then. They had to be told soon about the approaching death of Jesus. The confession of faith in Jesus indicated that it was a good time to begin.

**Hiebert** emphasizes this new teaching would have been a shock to the disciples - Instead of talking about His eventual reign, Jesus talked about His imminent suffering and death. The disciples had not associated the thought of suffering and death with Him as the Messiah. "All their lives they had thought of Messiah in terms of irresistible conquest, and they were now being presented with an idea which staggered them." ([Gospel of Mark - An Expository Commentary](#))

Why teach them on the Cross now? In context, they finally understood He was the Messiah, but were still "fuzzy" about His Mission. Now Jesus would unfold His true Mission as the Redeemer of the world.

**That the Son of Man must suffer many things** - Matthew 16:21 explains the "where" of this event declaring "He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things." **Many things** predicts not just the agony of the Cross but many things done to Him prior to the

Cross (unfair trials, spitting, scouring, mocking, etc) **Son of Man** is a biblical messianic title (Da. 7:13–14; cf. Mk 2:10, 28, cf. Acts 7:56 - Stephen being stoned) and was Jesus' favorite term of self-designation in all the Gospels (81 times). Notice the verb **must** which leaves no room for Him being a political Messiah, but a Messiah obligated (must) to die on the Cross. The word **Son** would speak to Jesus divinity and **Man** to His humanity.

**MacArthur on must** - As Peter would later come to clearly understand and proclaim that Jesus was “delivered over [to be crucified] by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God” (Acts 2:23; cf. Luke 22:22, 37; Acts 3:18; 4:27–28; 13:27–29). The cross was no accident; it was part of the divine plan of salvation from eternity past. As Jesus Himself explained regarding the purpose of His earthly mission: “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45). ([MNTC-Mark 1-8](#))

**Son of Man** in Mark - Mk. 2:10; Mk. 2:28; Mk. 8:31; Mk. 8:38; Mk. 9:9; Mk. 9:12; Mk. 9:31; Mk. 10:33; Mk. 10:45; Mk. 13:26; Mk. 14:21; Mk. 14:41; Mk. 14:62; [What does it mean that Jesus is the Son of Man? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**Must** (1163) (**dei** from **deō** = to bind or tie objects together, put in prison and also root of **doulos**, bond-servant) refers to what is not optional but needful (binding) out of intrinsic necessity or inevitability. **Dei** refers to inward constraint which is why it is often translated “**must**”. **Dei** describes that which is under the necessity of happening or which must necessarily take place, and as stated above, conveys a sense of inevitability. To express the sense of necessity **dei** is translated “one ought”, “one should”, “one has to” or “one must”. Uses in Mark - Mk. 8:31; Mk. 9:11; Mk. 13:7; Mk. 13:10; Mk. 13:14;

**Wuest on must** in this passage - “**Must**” is **dei** “it is necessary in the nature of the case.” The word points to the inevitableness and rationale - of the Cross. Since God is love and man is a sinner, He will provide a salvation for him. But since He is also just, it is necessary in the nature of the case, for Him to die on the Cross and thus pay the penalty that would satisfy the demands of that justice which required that sin be paid for. ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmann Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used by permission)

**Suffer** (3958) (**pascho**) means essentially what happens to a person experience. It means to undergo something; to experience a sensation, to experience an impression from an outside source, to undergo an experience (usually difficult) and normally with the implication of physical or psychological suffering. Uses in Mark - Mk. 5:26; Mk. 8:31; Mk. 9:12;

**NET Note** - The necessity that the Son of Man suffer is the particular point that needed emphasis, since for many 1st century Jews the Messiah was a glorious and powerful figure, not a suffering one.

**and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes**(experts in the law) - This is one of the more sad statements in Scripture that they very ones who should have recognized the Messiah instead rejected the Messiah. Their accountability at the Great White Throne judgment will be great and their punishment will be more severe. From him who is given much (light in this case), much is expected. Those who knew the written word failed to recognize the Living Word in their midst.

**Constable** - The three groups that would reject Jesus constituted the Sanhedrin. The elders were its lay members. They were men of wealth and were the leaders of aristocratic families. The chief priests were the ranking priests and were mostly Sadducees. They occupied a hereditary office and supervised the temple and the sacrificial system. The chief priests included Annas, Caiaphas, and the leaders of the 24 divisions of the priesthood. The scribes or teachers of the law were the approved interpreters of the law, and they were mostly Pharisees. They were the theologians and lawyers of Judaism who were experts in Israel's laws. Together these three groups formed a united front as opponents of Jesus.

**Hiebert - be rejected** means that He would be subjected to an official examination and, like a spurious coin, be disapproved. Because He did not meet its standards for the Messiah, the Sanhedrin as a definite act would reject Him. The three groups composing the Sanhedrin are made distinct by the definite article before each; each group would equally share the guilt. The elders were influential lay leaders of the nation who were members of the court. Only in this enumeration of its constituent elements are they named first. The chief priests included the official high priest, any ex-high priest, and the leaders of the twenty-four courses. They were Sadducees and the most influential element in the court. The scribes, mostly Pharisees, were the professional interpreters of the Mosaic law and the guardians of the rabbinical tradition. Had the Sanhedrin not persisted in its absolute rejection of Jesus, Pilate would not have crucified Jesus. ([Gospel of Mark - An Expository Commentary](#))

**Wuest on rejected** - The religious leaders of Israel put Jesus to the test for the purpose of approving Him as Messiah, for they were looking for their Messiah. But He did not meet their specifications. He was not the kind of a Messiah the Jews wanted. They wanted a military leader who would liberate them from the yoke of Rome, not a Saviour who would free them from their bondage to sin.

Peter in his first letter (1 Pe 2:7+ uses apodokimazo = "THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS **REJECTED**") speaks of the same thing. ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdman Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

**Rejected** (593) **apodokimazo** from **apo** = off, away from, pictures separation of one thing from another + **dokimazo** = to test, examine, scrutinize to see whether a thing is genuine or not) means "to put a person to the test for the purpose of approving him should he meet the specifications laid down." Thus the idea was to reject or refuse to accept something or someone after testing, scrutiny or examination. The preposition **apo** speaks of separation and thus conveys the picture of rejecting completely. It means to examine and deem as useless. It means to judge something or someone as not being fit, worthy or genuine and thus something or someone to be rejected. It means to throw out as the result of a test, to put out of office, to repudiate, to disapprove or to declare useless. Eight of the nine NT uses of apodokimazo refer to men's (primarily Israel and her leaders who should have known better) rejection of the Messiah as genuine, worthy, qualified! All NT uses = Matt. 21:42; Mk. 8:31; Mk. 12:10; Lk. 9:22; Lk. 17:25; Lk. 20:17; Heb. 12:17; 1 Pet. 2:4; 1 Pet. 2:7

**Elders** (4245) **presbuteros** the comparative form of **présbus** = an old man or an ambassador) referred to men who were older or more senior with no negative connotations but rather a sense of venerability. In this context **presbuteros** designated lay members of the **Sanhedrin** from important families as distinct from priests and scribes

**Chief priests** (749) (**archiereus** from **arche** = first in a series, the leader or ruler, idea of rank or degree + **hiereus** = priest. In Mk 8:31 it is in the plural and so **archiereus** refers to all the ruling priests, the members of the high-priestly families as a group, the upper echelons of the priestly class, especially those who served on the **Sanhedrin**, the Jewish high court (Lk 9:22+, Mk 8:31). In the singular **archiereus** refers to the acting high priest (Lk 3:2, Mk 14:47, 53, 54, 60, 61, 63, 66), who by Jesus' day was more of a role obtained by political connections than priestly lineage.

**Scribes** (1122) **grammateus** from **grapho** = to write) was one skilled in Jewish law and theology scribe, expert, scholar (Mt 2.4). They were the recognized experts in the law of Moses and in traditional laws and regulations. Jesus gives a long rebuke including **8 WOES** primarily to the Scribes and Pharisees which should be read to help understand how this group of Jewish religious men functioned (See Mt 23:1-39, 13, 14, 15, 16, etc). Most sources consider the **lawyers** (nomikos - meaning one skilled in the Mosaic law) to be **scribes** specialized in the jurisprudence of the Law of Moses. Finally the **scribes** in Lk 5:17 (nomdidaskalos) were teachers of the Jewish law who were equal to the lawyers and scribes.

**and be killed** - At this time Jesus does not tell them the mode of murder nor the profound significance of His death. But if they had good memories they might have ponder words like those of John the Baptist who declared "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29). They knew about sacrificial lambs and knew that they provided atonement only by shedding their blood. They simply failed to put the pieces of the puzzle together.

**Killed** (put to death) (615) **apokteino** from **apó** = intensifies meaning + **kteíno** = slay) means to kill outright or to put to death in any manner. To kill someone results in a state of separation and often used of Christ's death (Mt 16:21; 17:23; 21:35, 38, 39) All uses in Mark - Mk. 3:4; Mk. 6:19; Mk. 8:31; Mk. 9:31; Mk. 10:34; Mk. 12:5; Mk. 12:7; Mk. 12:8; Mk. 14:1

**Utley on "be killed ... rise again"** This is the essence of the gospel message: a substitutionary sacrifice, and a glorious divine confirmation of its acceptance. ([Mark 8 Commentary](#))

**Utley on after 3 days** - This phrase could refer to Hos. 6:1-2. It is interpreted in a similar way in the Aramaic Targum on this verse. However, Jesus seems to be making an allusion to Jonah 1:17 (cf. Matt. 12:39; 16:4). This type of predictive sign was exactly what the Pharisees were asking for in v. 12 (cf. Matt. 16:4). This type of prediction was the basis of defining a true prophet according to Deut. 13:2-5; 18:18-22. Jesus gave them sign after sign, but they could not comprehend. ([Mark 8 Commentary](#))

**and after three days rise again** - He clearly predicts His resurrection from the dead. "The announcement of His resurrection made no impression upon the disciples, as their future behavior at that event clearly shows." (Wuest)

**MacArthur** - What the disciples considered to be the ultimate bad news on that day near Caesarea Philippi was, in reality, the best news the world has ever received. It was the very heart of the gospel. By dying and rising again, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, paid the penalty for sin and conquered death, so that all who believe in Him might have eternal life (c.f. John 3:16; 6:40; Rom. 10:9-10; 2 Cor. 5:20-21; 1 Tim. 1:15). ([MNTC-Mark 1-8](#))

**This rainbow on the cloud was not seen.**

A T Robertson

**Rise** (450) **anistemi** from **ana** = up, again + **histemi** = stand, to cause to stand) means literally to get up, to stand up, to stand again, to cause to rise (thus "to raise"), to stand or be erect. Most uses of **anistemi** denote the act of getting up from a seated or reclined position. The most important figurative use of **anistemi** is to raise up from the dead or to bring back to life. Below are the 30 uses of **anistemi** that refer to **resurrection** - Mk 5:42, Mark 8:31, 9:9, 31, 10:34, 12:23, 25, Lk 9:8, 19, 16:31, 18:33, Lk 24:7, 46, John 6:39, 40, 44, 54, Jn 11:23, 11:31, Jn 20:9, Acts 2:24, 32, Acts 9:40, 9:41, 10:41, 13:16, 34, Acts 13:33, Eph 5:14, 1Th 4:14, 1Th 4:16.

### Mark 8:32 And He was stating the matter plainly. And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him.

Wuest And with utter plainness of speech, He was speaking the word. And having taken Him aside, Peter began to be rebuking Him. ([Wuest](#))

NET Mark 8:32 He spoke openly about this. So Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.

NLT Mark 8:32 As he talked about this openly with his disciples, Peter took him aside and began to reprimand him for saying such things.

ESV Mark 8:32 And he said this plainly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.

NIV Mark 8:32 He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.

GNT Mark 8:32 κα παρρησ τ ν λ γον λ λει. κα προσλαβ μενος Π τρος α τ ν ρξατο πιμ ν α τ .

KJV Mark 8:32 And he spake that saying openly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him.

YLT Mark 8:32 and openly he was speaking the word. And Peter having taken him aside, began to rebuke him,

ASV Mark 8:32 And he spake the saying openly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him.

CSB Mark 8:32 He was openly talking about this. So Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him.

NKJ Mark 8:32 He spoke this word openly. And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him.

NRS Mark 8:32 He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.

NAB Mark 8:32 He spoke this openly. Then Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.

NJB Mark 8:32 and he said all this quite openly. Then, taking him aside, Peter tried to rebuke him.

GWN Mark 8:32 He told them very clearly what he meant. Peter took him aside and objected to this.

- **stating the matter plainly:** Joh 16:25,29
- **Peter:** Mk 4:38 Mt 16:22 Lu 10:40 Joh 13:6-8
- **Mark 8 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 16:22+ Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to You."

Luke 9:22+ saying, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed and be raised up on the third day."

## PETER'S' REBUKE OF JESUS

**And He was stating the matter plainly** - **Stating** is in the [imperfect tense](#) = over and over or continuous action. **Hiebert** says the idea "indicates that the thought of that verse was repeated or enlarged upon. He tried to impress the truth upon the minds of the disciples." **Matter** is [logos](#), the word. Plainly is [parrhesia](#) (freedom of speech, liberty to speak out) which in this context means openly, unmistakably, with frankness, outspokenness and ultimately with boldness and fearlessness. Jesus did not fear His fate. He held back nothing, told it all. His plain explanation was something that even His dim disciples could not miss (ALBEIT THEY SEEM TO MISS THE CRUCIAL POINT OF HIS RISING FROM THE DEAD!) as they did earlier in Mark 8:14-21! Jesus would not state this

truth so **plainly** to the Pharisees for in Mt 12:40+ He said " just as JONAH WAS THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS IN THE BELLY OF THE SEA MONSTER, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." And to the temple authorities Jesus was even more "parabolic" declaring "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (John 2:19+).

**Wuest** on **plainly** - Here, as in John 11:14, 16:25, 29, it means plain speech as opposed to hints or veiled allusions, such as Jesus had previously given as in Mark 2:20 (bridegroom taken away)." ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmann Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

**Hiebert** on Jesus' veiled allusions to His death - Previous obscure intimations of His death were given in (1) His statement to the Jews at the first Passover, John 2:19; (2) His words to Nicodemus in John 3:14; (3) His remark about the bridegroom's being taken away, Matt. 9:15, Mark 2:20; (4) His words about giving His flesh for the life of the world in John 6:51; (5) His reference to the sign of Jonah, Matt. 16:4. ([Gospel of Mark - An Expository Commentary](#))

**Jones** - "If Christ had allowed His death to come upon Him without a word of warning to His disciples, it would have shattered their faith completely." ([Mark 8 Commentary](#))

**Utley** - Jesus tried several times to inform the disciples about His prophesied suffering (cf. Mk 8:31; 9:30–31; 10:33–34), but they could not understand (cf. Mk 8:32–33; 9:32–34; 10:35–37). ([Mark 8 Commentary](#))

**Hiebert** - Peter was scandalized by Jesus' announcement of His coming death. The whole idea was abhorrent, inconsistent with the confession Jesus had just warmly approved. Like his countrymen after the crucifixion, Peter reacted to "the offense of the cross." Motivated by his affection for Jesus, Peter felt it was essential to pressure Him to eliminate these gloomy forebodings from His mind. ([Gospel of Mark - An Expository Commentary](#))

**And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him** - This was done in sincerity, but not with understanding for unknowingly he acts as Satan's [surrogate](#)! This time Peter clearly understood what Jesus was saying! **Took aside** is [proslambano](#) which means to take hold of and lead aside ([middle voice](#) = taking to himself)! To take hold of another so as to have him facing him! Can you imagine this scene - a finite former fisherman having the audacity to take hold of the infinite God-Man and taking Him aside! **Rebuke** is [epitimao](#) the same word translated **warned** in Mk 8:30 and in the [present tense](#) depicts continuous action. [Epitimao](#) is also the same one Mark used to describe Jesus silencing demons (cf. Mk 1:25+; Mk 3:12+).

**Bruce** writes "'Peter here appears in a new character; a minute ago speaking under inspiration from heaven, now under inspiration from the opposite quarter"

**Utley** - In this context Peter "scolded" or "censured" Jesus for His remarks. Surely his motive was to protect Jesus, not condemn Him. Peter did not understand the vicarious and prophetic nature of Jesus' suffering. ([Mark 8 Commentary](#))

Matthew's version is even more "in your face" for Peter declared "God forbid it, Lord (AT LEAST HE CALLED HIM "LORD"! This shall never happen to You (Strongest kind of negation, as if Peter would not let it happen. Peter had perfect assurance.)." (Mt 16:22+)

Clearly Peter is still missing the point. He even seems to miss the incredible prophecy of the RESURRECTION from the dead! He does not understand that Isaiah 53+ had prophesied the Messiah would suffer and die for the sins of mankind must suffer (cf. Ge 3:15+ Ps. 16:10; Ps 22:1, 7–8, 16–18; Ps 69:21; Isa. 50:6; Zech. 11:12–13; Zech 12:10). He still did not understand Jesus' purpose as summarized in Mark 10:45 "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to **give His life a ransom for many.**"

**Warren Wiersbe** puts it like this: 'One minute Peter was a rock, and the next he was a stumbling block'.

**G Campbell Morgan** put it like this: 'The man who loves Jesus but shuns God's method is a stumbling block to Him'. You see, you can love the Lord but not recognize His way of doing things, and you can actually be a stumbling block to His will - and in this particular context it was Peter and the disciples recognized that 'Thou art the Christ', but they didn't recognize His method of saving men was by dying, and three days later rising again.

**Criswell** - Peter's "rebuke" of Jesus was due to his still incomplete understanding of the true mission of the Messiah. Peter could not reconcile the idea of the suffering Messiah with the current Jewish notions. The O.T. had predicted a Messiah who would suffer and die for the sins of the people (cf. Isa 53), and this message became the central focus for the early church (cf. Acts 17:2, 3).

**Mark 8:33** But turning around and seeing His disciples, He rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind Me, Satan; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's."

Wuest But having wheeled around and having looked on His disciples, He rebuked Peter, and says, Get behind Me, Satan, because you do not have a mind for the things of God but for the things of men. ([Wuest](#))

NET Mark 8:33 But after turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan. You are not setting your mind on God's interests, but on man's."

NLT Mark 8:33 Jesus turned around and looked at his disciples, then reprimanded Peter. "Get away from me, Satan!" he said. "You are seeing things merely from a human point of view, not from God's."

ESV Mark 8:33 But turning and seeing his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man."

NIV Mark 8:33 But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. "Get behind me, Satan!" he said. "You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men."

GNT Mark 8:33 ὁ πιστραφε ς κα ὶ ν το ς μαθητ ς α το πετ μησεν Π τρ κα λ γει, παγε π σω μου, Σαταν , πι ο φρονε ς τ το θεο λ λ τ τ ν νθρ πων.

KJV Mark 8:33 But when he had turned about and looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men.

YLT Mark 8:33 and he, having turned, and having looked on his disciples, rebuked Peter, saying, 'Get behind me, Adversary, because thou dost not mind the things of God, but the things of men.'

ASV Mark 8:33 But he turning about, and seeing his disciples, rebuked Peter, and saith, Get thee behind me, Satan; for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men.

CSB Mark 8:33 But turning around and looking at His disciples, He rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind Me, Satan, because you're not thinking about God's concerns, but man's!"

NKJ Mark 8:33 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."

NRS Mark 8:33 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."

- **turning around:** Mk 3:5,34 Lu 22:61
- **He rebuked:** Lev 19:17 2Sa 19:22 Ps 141:5 Pr 9:8,9 Mt 15:23 Lu 9:55 1Ti 5:20 Tit 1:13 Rev 3:19
- Get: Ge 3:4-6 Job 2:10 Mt 4:10 Lu 4:8 1Co 5:5
- savourest: Mt 6:31,32 Ro 8:5-8 Php 3:19 \*Gr: Jas 3:15-18 1Pe 4:1 1Jn 2:15
- **Mark 8 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 16:23+ But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's."

## JESUS' REBUKE OF PETER

**But turning around and seeing His disciples** - "Peter had called Jesus off to himself (προσκολλησαμενος [proskalesamenos]), but Jesus quickly wheeled round on Peter" (Robertson). The **disciples** were now all in plain sight (this detail only in Mark) for they all needed to hear Jesus' rebuke. **Disciples** ([mathetes](#)) means learners and they were about to learn a lesson! "Jesus whirled around to face Peter, and in doing so, observed that the other disciples knew and approved of what Peter was saying. His reply was for their benefit as well." (Hiebert)

**Turning around** (1994) [epistrepho](#) from **epi** = motion toward + **strepho** = twist, turn quite around or reverse) means to revert, to turn about, to turn around, to turn toward, to return

**He rebuked Peter - Rebuked** is [epitimao](#) the same word Mark used to describe Peter's statement! Not only did Jesus physically turn around but He verbally turned around the rebuke on Peter! Lesson? When you throw "verbal boomerangs" watch out!"

**Wuest** - The word is used not only of an unjust, undeserved rebuke, but also of one which is deserved, but where the rebuke is ineffectual, where the one rebuked is not brought to see his sin. Had Peter been convicted of wrong-doing here, Mark could have

used elegchō (λεγγω) "to rebuke so as to bring the person rebuked, if not always to a confession, yet at least to a conviction of his sin." Peter at this time did not realize the dreadful thing he did. ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdman Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

**Robertson** on **get behind Me Satan** - Peter had not risen above the level of ordinary men and deserves the name of Satan whose role he was now acting. It was withering, but it was needed. The temptation of the devil on the mountain was here offered by Peter. It was Satan over again....Just before Peter played the part of a rock in the noble confession and was given a place of leadership. Now he is playing the part of Satan and is ordered to the rear. Peter was tempting Jesus not to go on to the cross as Satan had done in the wilderness. "None are more formidable instruments of temptation than well-meaning friends, who care more for our comfort than for our character" (Bruce). "In Peter the banished Satan had once more returned" (Plummer)

**Hiebert** - In Peter's effort to dissuade Him from the cross, Jesus recognized a repetition of the wilderness temptation; Peter had made himself an unwitting agent of Satan. Satan does not identify Peter with the Devil but names Peter as a real adversary. Jesus banished Peter's suggestion with the finality used against Satan in the wilderness. ([Gospel of Mark - An Expository Commentary](#))

## A SPOKESMAN FOR THE DEVIL!

**and said, "Get behind Me, Satan - Get** is in the [present imperative](#) (command calling for continual "falling in line" so to speak). This recalls Jesus' command to Satan in His temptation = "Then Jesus \*said to him, "Go, Satan! For it is written, 'YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND SERVE HIM ONLY.'" (Mt 4:10+) Peter was not commanded to leave Him but to get out of His way, for he was a stumbling block (Matt. 16:23).

**MacArthur** - Though the devil tempted Jesus intensively in the wilderness (Mark 1:13), Satan's attacks did not end there. According to Luke 4:13 (NKJV), after the forty days ended, Satan "departed from Him until an opportune time," meaning that he was continually looking for ways to tempt Jesus (cf. Heb. 2:18; 4:15). Peter's severe transgression provided that opportunity on this occasion. Knowing that the cross would spell his downfall and defeat (cf. Gen. 3:15; John 12:31; Col. 2:14–15; Heb. 2:14), Satan tried vigorously to derail God's plan of redemption. Jesus never succumbed to those temptations (cf. Heb. 2:18; 4:15). ([MNTC-Mark 1-8](#))

**Wuest** - It was an agonizing cry, for Jesus recognized a repetition of the temptation of Satan when the latter said to Him, after he had shown Him the great Roman empire, "These things, all of them, I will give to you, if having fallen down, you will worship me" (Matt. 4:9). This is the order of the words in the Greek text. Notice the bargaining power of the Devil. It was a temptation to go around the Cross and receive the rulership of the world empire from the hands of Satan, the price, the worship of him. Here was Satan again, using the foremost of the disciples, to tempt our Lord to go around the Cross. It is the opinion of the present writer that our Lord did not call Peter, Satan, but that, recognizing the source, He spoke directly to the Tempter, including Peter in the rebuke. Since Satan is incorrigible, he could not be brought to repentance, and epitimaō (πιπιμαω) is most fitting here. Our Lord, in His utterance, brands Peter's words as Satanic. ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdman Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

**Satan** (4567)([satanas](#) transliterated from Hebrew [Satan](#) - see [07854](#) and Aramaic sātānā) literally means **Adversary**, the evil antagonist who offers opposition, hostility, resentment, etc. An enemy who that contends with, opposes, resists. An **adversary** is one who hates or opposes another person and tries to harm them or stop them from doing something because of hatred and malice. **Satan** is the [inveterate](#), [implacable](#), relentless, ruthless, remorseless, merciless, heartless, pitiless, cruel, hard, harsh, hardened, incorrigible, dedicated enemy of God and man.

**Matthew** adds "**You are a stumbling block to Me**" (Mt 16:23+) - "Peter was acting as Satan's [catspaw](#), in ignorance, surely, but none the less really. He had set a trap for Christ that would undo all his mission to earth. "Thou art not, as before, a noble block, lying in its right position as a massive foundation stone. On the contrary, thou art like a stone quite out of its proper place, and lying right across the road in which I must go—lying as a stone of stumbling" (Morison)." (Robertson)

**for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's - Not** in Greek is "absolutely not." **Setting** is in the [present tense](#), describing continuous action (attitude in this case) and denoting what dominated and swayed Peter's thoughts. "He was motivated not by the things of God, things related to God's purposes, but by the things of men, the concerns of fallible human beings. His human desire to spare his Master such sufferings prompted Peter to urge Jesus to avoid the very suffering to which Jesus had committed Himself as the messianic Servant." (Hiebert)

**Setting...mind** (5426)([phroneo](#) from [phren](#) = literally the diaphragm and thus that which curbs or restrains. Figuratively, [phren](#) is the supposed seat of all mental and emotional activity) refers to the basic orientation, bent, and thought patterns of the mind, rather than to the mind or intellect itself (that is the Greek

word **nous**) . **Phroneo** includes a person's affections and will as well as his reasoning. In other words **phroneo** refers not simply to intellectual activity but also to direction and purpose of heart.

**Mark 8:34 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.**

NET Mark 8:34 Then Jesus called the crowd, along with his disciples, and said to them, "If anyone wants to become my follower, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.

NLT Mark 8:34 Then, calling the crowd to join his disciples, he said, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross, and follow me.

ESV Mark 8:34 And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

NIV Mark 8:34 Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

GNT Mark 8:34 Κα προσκαλεσμενος τιν χλον σν το ς μαθητα ς ατο επεν ατο ς, Ε τις θλει πσω μου κολουθε ν, παρνησθω αυτ ν κα ρτω τ ν σταυρ ν ατο κα κολουθε τω μοι.

KJV Mark 8:34 And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

ASV Mark 8:34 And he called unto him the multitude with his disciples, and said unto them, If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

CSB Mark 8:34 Summoning the crowd along with His disciples, He said to them, "If anyone wants to be My follower, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me.

NKJ Mark 8:34 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.

NRS Mark 8:34 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.

YLT Mark 8:34 And having called near the multitude, with his disciples, he said to them, 'Whoever doth will to come after me -- let him disown himself, and take up his cross, and follow me;

- **He summoned** : Mk 7:14 Lu 9:23 Lk 20:45
- **If anyone**: Mk 9:43-48 Mt 5:29,30 7:13,14 16:24 Lu 13:24 14:27,33 Ro 15:1-3 1Co 8:13 9:19 Php 3:7 Tit 2:12
- **take**: Mk 10:21 Mt 10:38 27:32 John 19:17 Ac 14:22 Ro 6:6 8:17 1Co 4:9-13 1Co 15:31 Ga 2:20 5:24 6:14 Php 3:10 Col 1:24 3:5 2Th 3:11 1Pe 4:1,13 Rev 2:10
- **follow**: Nu 14:24 1Ki 14:8 Lu 14:26 18:22 Joh 10:27 13:36,37 21:19,20 Heb 13:13 2Pe 1:14 1Jn 3:16
- **Mark 8 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## DO YOU WISH TO FOLLOW JESUS?

### Related Passages:

Matthew 16:24-28+ Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. 25 "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. 26 "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? 27 "For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and WILL THEN REPAY EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS. 28 "Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom."

Luke 9:23-27+ And He was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily (HOW OFTEN?) and follow Me. 24 For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it. 25 "For what is a man profited if he gains the

whole world, and loses or forfeits himself? 26 "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes in His glory, and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. 27 "But I say to you truthfully, there are some of those standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God."

**Wiersbe** - Discipleship is a daily discipline: we follow Jesus a step at a time, a day at a time. A weary cleaning woman said to a friend of mine, "The trouble with life is that it's so daily!" But she was wrong. One of the best things about life is that we can take it a day at a time (Deut. 33:25+ "may your strength match the length of your days!" NLT).

**COMMENT** - Note the fact that one was to take up the cross **daily** underscores the fact that this is metaphorical and not literal.

Numbers 14:24+ "But My servant Caleb, because **he has had a different spirit and has followed Me fully**, I will bring into the land which he entered, and his descendants shall take possession of it.

1 Kings 14:8 and tore the kingdom away from the house of David and gave it to you—yet you have not been like My servant David, who kept My commandments and **who followed Me with all his heart**, to do only that which was right in My sight;

Acts 14:22+ strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, "**Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.**"

Peter had just set his mind on man's interest, not God's so Jesus now presents God's interest.

**John MacArthur** gives us the context for this next pericope Mark 8:34-38 - The recognition that Jesus was the divine Messiah, as articulated by Peter's confession (Mk 8:29), represented a euphoric moment of realization and clarity for the apostles. Their joy was quickly eclipsed by the news that Jesus must suffer and die (Mk 8:31). The Twelve had difficulty accepting the notion of a suffering Messiah, as evidenced by Peter's impetuous reaction (Mk 8:32). In reality, they were setting their minds on man's interests (Mk 8:33), thinking only of glory and blessings for themselves in the messianic kingdom. What they failed to understand was that God's plan of redemption required a sacrifice for sin (cf. Isa. 53:10-12; John 1:29)...For the unbelievers in the crowd, Jesus' words come after Me comprised an open invitation to place their faith in Him and join His disciples. To do so would cost them everything. As the Lord made transparent, true saving faith is characterized by self-denial, cross bearing, and submissive obedience. ([MNTC-Mark](#))

**Kent Hughes** - Confessing Christ means we must follow him to crucifixion....The Cross is for all who follow Christ. Christ leads the procession carrying his cross, and we, his followers, tread in his steps, bearing our own crosses. We march to death....A cross comes from specifically walking in Christ's steps, embracing his life. It comes from bearing disdain because we are embracing the narrow way of the Cross—that Jesus is "the way and the truth and the life" (John 14:6). It comes from living out the business and sexual ethics of Christ in the marketplace and world. It comes from embracing weakness instead of power. It comes from extending oneself in difficult circumstances for the sake of the gospel. Our crosses come from and are proportionate to our dedication to Christ. Difficulties are not an indication of cross-bearing; difficulties for Christ's sake are. We need to ask ourselves if we have any difficulties because we are following close after Christ. ([Preaching the Word](#))

**James Edwards** points out that "A wrong view of Messiahship leads to a wrong view of discipleship." ([PNTC-Mark](#))

**Wiersbe** - Mark 8:34 indicates that, though Jesus and His disciples had met in private, the crowds were not far away. Jesus summoned the people and taught them what He taught His own disciples: there is a price to pay for true discipleship. He knew that the crowds were following Him only because of the miracles, and that most of the people were unwilling to pay the price to become true disciples. Jesus laid down three conditions for true discipleship: (1) we must surrender ourselves completely to Him; (2) we must identify with Him in suffering and death; and (3) we must follow Him obediently, wherever He leads. **If we live for ourselves, we will lose ourselves**, but if we lose ourselves for His sake and the Gospel's, we will find ourselves.

**And He summoned ([proskaleo](#)) the crowd with His disciples, and said to them** - The context is Jesus had just explained to His 12 disciples that He must suffer and die. Jesus' striking statement is for anyone and everyone who would desire to follow in His steps, steps of suffering for His Name and for some even martyrdom. And remember from here on in the Gospel of Mark Jesus has fixed His face like flint toward the Cross. Do you still want to follow Him dear reader? The Cross speaks of death. The preposition "pros" ([proskaleo](#)) indicates Jesus called the to Himself.

**Lenski** - He had an important communication to make to them. Jesus, however, says nothing about his own future course. That is fixed once for all. He speaks about the course of those who would be his disciples.

**Robertson** points out that "Mark alone notes the unexpected presence of a crowd up here near Caesarea Philippi in heathen territory. In the presence of this crowd Jesus explains his philosophy of life and death which is in direct contrast with that offered by

Peter and evidently shared by the disciples and the people. So Jesus gives this profound view of life and death to them all."

When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die

-- Dietrich Bonhoeffer

**If anyone wishes** (present active indicative) **to come** (aorist active infinitive) **after Me - IF** is first class condition assumed to be true from Jesus' perspective (condition of reality). Note the **anyone** which means everyone who would follow Him - Jesus flings the door "wide open!" The first half of this conditional statement involves a volitional choice, a decision of one's will. I would submit that even here the desire to will or wish to follow Jesus, does not originate from our fallen nature (cf Ro 3:11b), but from God the Spirit's working in our heart. We still have to respond, but it is the Spirit Who provides the initial impetus.

**Wishes** (Better "Wills") (2309) (**thelo**) refers to exercising of one's will with the underlying sense of to be willing to apply oneself to something. **Thelo** "expresses not simply a desire, but a determined and constant exercise of the will." (W E Vine) As **Vincent** says on Mk 8:34 **thelo** "is more than *is wishful*." In secular Greek use **thelo** as used by Homer spoke of "readiness," "inclination," and "desire," so that when one was ready for an event or inclined to undertake a course of action, **thelo** was the Greek word used. Are you ready and willing to follow Jesus as His disciple?

**Wuest** on **comes** - "**Come**" is *erchomai* (ρχομαι). The word is used in John 5:40 where our Lord speaks of the fact that certain will not come to Him that they might have life. The word is used here in the sense of **becoming a disciple of Jesus**, one who follows His instruction and enters into His fellowship. Likewise, **to come after Jesus** means to become His disciple, follow His teachings, and enter into His fellowship. ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmann Publishing Company Volume 1](#), [Volume 2](#), [Volume 3](#) - used by [permission](#))

**Bruce Barton** on **come after Me** - The initial decision to "come after" Christ and be His disciple is a once-for-all act. From then on the believer is no longer his or her own; that person belongs to Christ. ([Life Application Commentary](#))

**After** (3694) **opiso** from **opis** = a looking back) can refer to a position behind another (Lk 7:38), as a marker of one who is followed as a leader (Mt 16:24, in a negative sense 1 Ti 5:15, Rev 13:3). It can describe time - "after me One is coming" (Mk 1:7), "He who comes after me" (Jn 1:15, 27, 30). It means to fall back (Jn 18:6); look backward (Luke 9:62); turn back (Mt. 24:18; Mk 13:16; Lk 17:31; Jn 6:66; Jn 20:14; Ge 19:17, 26; 2 Sa 1:22; 1 Ki 18:37) It is used metaphorically in Php 3:13 "forgetting what lies behind" Paul alluding to his former human accomplishments. Jesus' summons, "**Follow** (after) **me**," demands a severing of ties with one's former life and a rendering of an unconditional commitment to Him (Mt 4:19; cf. Mt 16:24). The disciple must renounce his own will (Mt 10:38) and studiously avoid the temptation to return to the things that he renounced to follow Christ (Lk 17:31). Only by this level of self-renunciation and commitment to Christ can one hope to share in His kingdom (Mark 8:34-38). Having understood this aspect of commitment implied in *opisō*, other similar constructions are easily understood, such as Acts 5:37; 20:30; 1 Timothy 5:15. ([Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary](#))

## (1) DENIAL OF ONESELF

**He must deny himself** - Here is the first condition that **must** be met in order to follow after Jesus. **He must deny himself** not a popular topic in our "selfie" generation. The verb **must deny** is not "maybe" or "might" but speaks of a definite obligation, an absolute necessity to deny self. This is a command in [aorist imperative](#) ("Just Do It!") which necessitates [dependence on the Holy Spirit to obey](#). Jesus does not use the usual word for deny but a stronger verb (*aparneoma*), meaning to have absolutely no association with or disown completely without reservations or hesitation! The sad irony is that this is the very verb Jesus used to prophesy Peter's denial of Him! (Mk 14:30, 31, 72+ fulfilled in Mk 14:66-71+)

Note He is not saying to deny "things" (like ice cream and deserts or giving up something for Lent!), but is making a radical command. In other words it is not a denial of *something* but of *someone* -- oneself!

To some degree the 12 disciples had already manifested denial of self as Peter later said in Mk 10:28 "Peter began to say to Him, "Behold, we have left everything and followed You."

**MacArthur** - The Lord's point was that those who wished to follow Him must be willing to disown themselves and give up everything for His sake (cf. Mt. 13:44-46+). They must abandon both their self-righteousness and their sin, submitting all their ambitions and agendas to Him. ([MNTC-Mark](#))

**MacArthur** goes on to point out a vital aspect of self-denial especially relevant in first century Israel where the people were taught they needed **SELF** righteousness to enter the Kingdom of God - Inherent in the reality of **self-denial** is the affirmation that the sinner

cannot gain entrance into heaven through his own **self-righteous** or religious efforts. For those in the crowd still trapped in the legalism of the Pharisees and scribes, the call to **self-denial** was a command to abandon their apostate system of externalism, works-righteousness, and hypocrisy (cf. Mt 5:20-48+). That was the very message Jesus preached in the Sermon on the Mount, when He insisted that salvation is given to those who are poor in spirit (Mt. 5:3+), meaning those who recognize their spiritual bankruptcy before a holy God (cf. Isa. 64:6). Grace is not extended to those who think they are well but to those who know they are sick (Mk 2:17+). It was not the self-assured Pharisee whom Jesus declared to be righteous but the undeserving and self-confessed unworthy sinner who cried out for mercy (Lk 18:14+). Jesus' hearers needed to recognize that they could not merit God's favor through outward conformity to the rituals and traditions of Judaism. Unable to keep the law perfectly (James 2:10+), they fell woefully short of God's standard of holy perfection (Rom. 3:23), and thus deserved divine condemnation and eternal death (Ro 6:23+). Only by rejecting their **self-righteous** efforts as worthless and clinging to God's gracious gift of righteousness through faith in Christ could they be saved (cf. Ro 3:24-28+). When the apostle Paul was regenerated by God, he denounced his former good works as a Pharisee, calling them worthless. (Phil. 3:3-8+). As he explained, true righteousness is not a "righteousness of [one's] own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith" (Php 3:9+). The sinner denies himself when he abandons self-reliance and self-confidence, instead depending on Christ's power and mercy alone for salvation. The gospel call to self-denial also necessitates repentance from sin and selfish ambition (Luke 5:32; 14:26; 24:47). Those who follow Christ must do so on His terms, not theirs. They must be willing to break completely with their former way of life (cf. Isa. 55:6-7), turning to God from falsehood (1 Thess. 1:9) and abandoning the old habits of their sinful flesh (Rom. 6:6; 7:18; Eph. 4:22; Col. 3:5). All that they used to love must be rejected (1 John 2:15-17; cf. Rom. 13:14), having been replaced with undivided love for their Master (Matt. 10:37; John 8:42; 14:15, 23). ([MNTC-Mark](#))

[Stein](#) says **deny** in this context "requires the denying or saying no to the self as the determiner of one's goals, aspirations, and desires." ([Baker Exegetical Commentary](#))

[Wuest](#) on **must deny himself** - When used with the reflexive pronoun as it is here, it means "to forget one's self, lose sight of one's self and one's interests." The verb is ingressive aorist, speaking of entrance into a new state or condition. It is "Let him at once begin to lose sight of himself and his own interests." ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmann Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

[Bruce Barton](#) - To deny oneself means to surrender immediate material gratification in order to discover and secure one's true self and God's interests. It is a willingness to let go of selfish desires and earthly security. This attitude turns self-centeredness to God-centeredness. ([Life Application Commentary](#))

[Wiersbe](#) has some wise words on what it means to deny self -

Denying **self** is **not the same as self-denial**. We practice self-denial when, for a good purpose, we occasionally give up things or activities. But we **deny self** when we surrender **ourselves** to Christ and determine to obey His will. This once-for-all dedication is followed by a **daily "dying to self"** as we take up the cross and follow Him. From the human point of view, we are **losing ourselves**, but from the divine perspective, we are **finding ourselves**. When we live for Christ, we become more like Him, and (PARADOXICALLY) this brings out our own unique individuality.

[Robertson](#) on **deny himself** - - Say no to himself, a difficult thing to do (**ED: ACTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE FLESH - ONLY POSSIBLE BY THE SPIRIT'S GIVING THE DESIRE AND POWER**). Note reflexive along with the middle voice.

**Must deny** (533) ([aparneomai](#) from **apó** = from + **arneomai** = to deny, refuse) means to deny, to refuse to recognize or acknowledge. It is a strengthened form of **arneomai** and thus mean to deny utterly (to completely deny) as used in the context of Peter denying any connection with Jesus. **BDAG** says this verb means "to act in a wholly selfless manner (used in Mt 16:24; Mk 8:34; Lk 9:23)," Thayer says it means "to forget oneself, lose sight of oneself and one's own interests." This is the anti-thesis of our selfish culture as Paul predicted "But **realize** this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be **lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant**, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy," (2Ti 3:1-2+)

Jesus says His followers **must deny** self (Mt 16:24, Mk 8:34). **Aparneomai** in this context conveys the basic idea of saying "no," of acting in a wholly selfless manner. It is to disown oneself, to turn away from the idolatry of self-centeredness, to act in a wholly unselfish manner.

**Aparneomai** is used once of Jesus denying men who deny Him = "He who denies Me before men will be denied before the angels of God." (Lk 12:9+) Some evangelical commentators ([Constable](#)) make the interpretation that Jesus is referring to loss of rewards, but the passage says absolutely nothing about rewards (context is king in interpretation). This is not loss of rewards but loss of one's life in [eternal punishment](#) (Mk 8:35). The ESV Study Bible says "The **eternal consequences** for those who deny Christ, in

fact, will be far worse than the persecution that they sought to avoid." **Gilbrant** writes Jesus "said that whoever denies Him before men (that is, whoever does not acknowledge that he belongs to Jesus) the Lord himself shall reject before the angels of God. The "good news" is that whoever acknowledges Him before men, him the Son of Man will also acknowledge before the angels of God."

**Lenksi** on Luke 12:9 - During the ten great pagan persecutions in the early church many denied by sacrificing to idols or to Caesar because they feared the threats of the authorities. Many fear to lose the favor of men and the profits and the advantages men offer them. Self-deception veils the secret motive in thousands of cases, for the heart is deceitful above all things (Jer 17:9). The consequences are terrible beyond words. In Mt 7:23 we have the very words with which Jesus will in turn deny those who denied him. The agent is not indicated in the passive "shall be denied" (which is, therefore, futuristic, not volitive), but it will be Jesus (Matt. 10:33). Confusion, dismay, consternation, eternal terror will overwhelm them. Would to God that the warning might strike home to all (professed) disciples and doubly to the pastors who are to lead others!

## (2) TAKING UP ONE'S CROSS

**And take up his cross** - Jesus gives a second command (**airo** in the **aojist imperative**) means to pick up at once. This speaks of death to self, for the sake of Jesus. He is not saying "wear your cross," but "bear your cross." Many wear crosses today (I fear) who have never genuinely taken up their cross.

Matthew 10:38 "And he who **does not take (present tense) his cross** and follow after (present tense) Me is (present tense) not (ouk - absolute negation) worthy (**áxios**) of Me. (NLT old version - If you refuse to take up your cross and follow me, you are not worthy of being mine.)

**NET NOTE** on Mt 10:38 - It was customary practice in a Roman crucifixion for the prisoner to be made to carry his own cross. Jesus is speaking figuratively here in the context of rejection. If the priority is not one's allegiance to Jesus, then one will not follow him in the face of possible rejection.

**Ryrie** - . This reference to a cross needed no explanation, for the Jews had seen thousands of their countrymen crucified by the Romans. Allegiance even to death is demanded of Christ's followers.

**MacArthur** - The Romans crucified their victims in public, along highways, as a gruesome reminder of what happened to those who defied Caesar's imperial authority. Estimates suggest that as many as thirty thousand Jews were crucified during Jesus' lifetime. Thus, when the Lord used a cross to explain the cost of discipleship, His audience knew precisely what He meant. Jesus' point was that those who desired to be His disciples, rather than seeking prosperity and ease, must be willing to endure persecution, rejection, hardship, and even martyrdom for His sake. To follow Christ was to embark on a path of adversity and maltreatment. (cf Jn 15:18-21, Mt 10:24-25)...Those who initially profess Christ, but are unwilling to suffer for His sake, expose the fact that they are not truly His disciples. As the Lord Himself explained in the parable of the soils, "These are the ones on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy; and they have no firm root in themselves, but are only temporary; then, when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately they fall away" (Mark 4:16-17+). Conversely, those who endure trials and hardship for the honor of Christ prove the genuineness of their faith (1 Peter 1:6-7+). (**MNTC-Mark**)

Paul spoke of taking up one's cross when he wrote "may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world." (Gal 6:14+).

Paul alluded to taking up one's cross when he declared "Indeed, **all** who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus (aka "to take their cross") **will be persecuted.**" (2 Ti 3:12+, cf 1 Pe 4:12-14+)

**NET Note** - To bear the cross means to accept the rejection of the world for turning to Jesus and following him. Discipleship involves a death that is like a crucifixion. See Gal 6:14+

**Bruce Barton** - Death on a cross was a form of execution used by Rome for dangerous criminals. A prisoner carried his own cross to the place of execution, signifying submission to Rome's power. Following Jesus, therefore, meant identifying with Jesus and his followers, facing social and political oppression and ostracism, and no turning back. Christians follow their Lord by imitating his life and obeying his commands. To take up the cross meant to carry your own cross to the place where you would be killed. Many Galileans had been killed that way by the Romans. Applied to the disciples, to take up the cross meant to identify completely with Christ's message, even if death were to result. We must deny our selfish desires to use our time and money our own way and to choose our own direction in life without regard to Christ. Following Christ is costly now, but we are promised true victory and eternal rewards. (**Life Application Commentary**)

**Hiebert** - **aojist imperative** again demands the acceptance of the cross as a definite act. Execution by crucifixion was well known in

Palestine, and Jesus' figure must have carried startling implications for His hearers. The Romans compelled the condemned criminal to bear the cross-beam to the place of execution; to take up his cross meant that such a one was going out to die. Like his Lord, each disciple must bear his own cross. **The reference is not to the common sufferings experienced in life but to that shame and suffering which the disciple assumes because of his relationship to Jesus and which can be escaped by denying that relationship.** Luke's statement "Take up his cross **daily**" does not mean that a new cross must be taken up each day but that this willingness to accept his cross must characterize the disciple every day. Brooks (NAC) aptly remarks, "The concept should never be cheapened by applying it to enduring some irritation or even a major burden.... It is a willingness to **suffer for Jesus** and for others. Such a concept of discipleship is so radical that many contemporary Christians in the West have difficulty relating to it." ([Gospel of Mark - An Expositional Commentary](#))

**A T Robertson** - Criminals were crucified in Jerusalem. It was the custom for the condemned person to carry his own cross as Jesus did till Simon of Cyrene was impressed for that purpose. The Jews had become familiar with crucifixion since the days of Antiochus Epiphanes and one of the Maccabean rulers (Alexander Jannaeus) had crucified 800 Pharisees. It is not certain whether Jesus was thinking of his own coming crucifixion when he used this figure, though possible, perhaps probable. The disciples would hardly think of that outcome unless some of them had remarkable insight.

### (3) FOLLOWING JESUS

**And follow Me - Follow** is [akoloutheo](#), a command in the [present imperative](#) which calls for this to be a disciple's lifestyle. We cannot accomplish this in our own natural strength! It is IM-possible. Indeed, it is only HIM-possible. In other words this command calls for us to continually depend on [the Holy Spirit to obey](#). Following entails Spirit wrought loving obedience to Jesus and His voice (His Word).

True sheep hear and follow the Good Shepherd!

John 10:27 "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they**follow** ([akoloutheo](#) in present tense - as their lifestyle) Me;

Jesus "defined" true sheep (disciples) in John 8:31 (for there was some who heard but were not true disciples - cf Jn 8:30 with Jn 8:42-45, 59)

So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine."

Continuing in Jesus' Word is simply one of the ways an individual demonstrates that they are a genuine follower of Jesus. And continuing in His Word means not just reading His Word, but believing and obeying His Word. (see [Obedience of faith](#) and [Relationship of saving faith and obedience](#))

As **MacArthur** says "Those who live in obedience to Christ demonstrate that they are truly His disciples. Conversely, those who persist in unrepentant sin give evidence that they do not belong to Him (cf. 1 John 3:4-10+). It is important to note that self-denial, cross bearing, and obedience are not meritorious works that somehow earn salvation. Nor do they comprise a list of sequential steps that must be followed to be saved from sin. Rather, they are the inherent characteristics of repentant faith and the new birth, which is the gift of God (Eph. 2:8+; 2 Ti 2:25+) imparted by His Spirit at the moment of salvation. Those whom God saves He transforms, giving them a new heart (cf. Ezek. 36:25-27+), so that out of love for the Savior, they eagerly deny themselves, endure suffering, and submit obediently to His Word. ([MNTC-Mark](#))

**Hiebert** - the present tense denotes a continuing relationship. Christian discipleship centers in this personal relationship to Christ, expressed in persevering obedience to His leadership. He heads the procession as it goes to His death, and all who follow Him must also face death to self. ([Gospel of Mark - An Expositional Commentary](#))

**Wuest on Follow Me** - The word "**follow**" is [akoloutheo](#) (κολουθεω) "to take the same road as another does." It is used with the associative instrumental case. It is, "Let him follow with Me." The idea is not that of following behind another, but that of accompanying the other person, taking the same road that he takes and fellowshiping with him along that road. The first two imperatives are aorist, giving a summary command to be obeyed at once. The "coming after" and the "taking up" are to be obeyed at once and are to be a once-for-all act. That is, these acts are to be looked upon as a permanent attitude and practice of life. The whole life is to be characterized by habitual coming after and taking up of the cross. After having once for all given over the life to the Lord, the believer must hence-forward count it ever so given over. He is not his own anymore. He belongs to the Lord. He is the Lord's property. The word "**follow**" however, is in the present imperative, which commands the doing of an action and its habitual, moment by moment continuance. The first two imperatives give direction to the life. The last speaks of the actual living of that which has been given direction by two once-for-all acts. ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmans Publishing Company Volume 1](#), [Volume 2](#), [Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

**Colton** - Men will wrangle for religion, write for it, fight for it, die for it; anything but—live for it.

**THOUGHT - Follow** means just that - FOLLOW. The English dictionary says it means "to travel behind, go after, come after" What's the point? Following Jesus means we don't blaze our own trail! How is this possible? I like the NIV translation of Galatians 5:25 "Since we live by the Spirit, **let us keep in step with the Spirit**" (Gal 5:25NIV±) The Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus, so we need to learn to let the Spirit lead us, for as Paul says "if you **are led by the Spirit**, you are not under the Law." (Gal 5:18±). Paul says "all who **are being led** by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God." (Ro 8:14±). There is your answer dear follower of Christ! Be filled with the Spirit (Eph 5:18±) just as Jesus was filled (Lk 4:1±). Walk by the Spirit, in the power of the Spirit, (Gal 5:16±) just as Jesus walked (Lk 4:14±). When we walk like this, we can be sure that the Spirit will lead us to follow in His steps (1 Peter 2:21± - note following often brings suffering)! Are you following Jesus or blazing your own trail? The former is the path of freedom and fruitfulness (Jn 15:5) but the latter is the path of frustration, futility, failure and fruitlessness and ultimately if you wish to save your life you will lose it!

For more on this very important topic see the in depth discussion of [The Holy Spirit-Walking Like Jesus Walked!](#)

**Follow** (190) **akoloutheo** from **a** = expresses union with, likeness + **keleuthos** = a road, way) means to walk the same road (Ponder that simple definition dear believer - Am I willing to walk the same road as Jesus?) Literally to follow (like the crowds followed Jesus) and in a figurative sense to follow Jesus as a disciple. To follow (closely) and was used of soldiers, servants and pupils. To go after someone or something (not as a true disciple however as we see with the crowds who physically followed Jesus, following however without a willingness to commit wholly to Him! cf John 6:60-65, 66) Early in the history of the Greek language **akoloutheo** came to mean to imitate or follow someone's example. This dual meaning colored the New Testament use of our word **akoloutheo**. **Akoloutheo** is a technical term in Hebrew and Greek for the reactions and relationships of a disciple to his teacher. The essence of Christianity in fact lies in the words "to follow Jesus." When we walk with Him, He promised we would never walk in darkness! (Jn 8:12). He is our Lamp wherever we walk, always walking with us, His Spirit within us enabling us to "Walk by the Spirit." (Gal 5:16) Paul expressed walking after Jesus as being His imitator (1 Cor 11:1+) When He says go, I go. When He says stop, I stop. His sheep know His voice and follow Him (Jn 10:27) Sadly , some declined to follow (Mt 19:21-23). Note that most of the uses of **akoloutheo** are in the Gospels and thus this verb is firmly linked with the life of Jesus, for He is the One to follow. When Jesus issued a call to "**Follow Me**" was always in the [present imperative](#) indicating that Jesus is calling for this to be one's lifelong path, ultimately one which can only be successfully trodden by yielding to His Spirit who enables us to obey that command as our lifestyle (not perfection, but general direction). **There is a big difference between the disciples who followed Jesus in Mt 4:20, 22 and the crowds following Him (Mt 4:25, 8:1, etc)** for the former left their possessions (nets, boat), while the latter left nothing. Some claimed they wanted to follow Him but were not willing to count the cost (Mt 8:19, 22). In the Gospels **akoloutheo** is always related to Jesus as the object of following in discipleship (exceptions: Mark 9:38; 14:13 par. Luke 22:10; Matt 9:19; John 11:31; 20:6).

The most important call of Jesus was the phrase **Follow Me** 19x all [present imperative](#) - Matt. 4:19; Matt. 8:22; Matt. 9:9; Matt. 16:24; Matt. 19:21; Mk. 1:17; Mk. 2:14; Mk. 8:34; Mk. 10:21; Lk. 5:27; Lk. 9:23; Lk. 9:59; Lk. 18:22; Jn. 1:43; Jn. 10:27; Jn. 12:26; Jn. 13:36; Jn. 21:19; Jn. 21:22

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**David Garland** gives an excellent discussion of the **The Demands of Discipleship** (Mk 8:34–9:1)

WHEN JESUS LAYS out the demands and expectations of discipleship, he calls the crowd along with the Twelve and therefore opens it to anyone willing to accept his conditions. He presents them with three demands (8:34), a rationale for accepting these demands (8:35–37), a solemn warning (8:38), and a confident promise (9:1).

**Three demands.**

**(1) Jesus insists that if the disciples want to follow him, they must deny themselves**

He does not ask disciples to deny something to themselves but to deny the self and all self-promoting ambitions. Discipleship is not part-time volunteer work that one does as an extracurricular activity. God refuses to accept a minor role in one's life; he requires a controlling place. Those who deny themselves have learned to say, "Not my will but thine be done."

## **(2) Jesus demands that his disciples take up a cross.**

This vivid imagery must have sounded strange before Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection but would have communicated danger and sacrifice. Public executions were a prominent feature of life. Cicero described crucifixion as a cruel, disgusting penalty, the worst of extreme tortures inflicted on slaves and something to be dreaded. The Romans made the condemned carry the transverse beam of the cross to the place of execution, where they affixed it to the execution stake. By requiring disciples to carry their cross, Jesus expects them to be willing to join the ranks of the despised and doomed. They must be ready to deny themselves even to the point of giving their lives.

## **(3) Jesus tells his disciples to follow the way he has chosen, not the way they would choose for themselves.**

Jesus does not want a convoy of followers who marvel at his deeds but fail to follow his example. The procession he envisages is a rare sight: disciples following after their Master, each carrying a cross. The imagery means that disciples must obey his teaching, including what he says about giving their lives.

### **The rationale.**

Jesus appeals to the basic human desire to secure one's life as the rationale for making such a sacrifice. Humans seek to guarantee their lives but usually choose ways destined to fail. Jesus offers a paradoxical principle for successfully saving one's soul: To save one's life, one has to lose it. Human beings make futile attempts to safeguard their lives by storing up goods in bigger barns, but nothing that one acquires in this life can ransom one's soul from God. If we give up our lives for his sake and the gospel, we will be given the only life that counts, life from God.

### **A solemn warning.**

Jesus next warns his disciples about the judgment, when each one will have to give an account before the Judge. The warning implies that when the Son of Man comes in the glory of his Father, he will come as the Judge (see Matt. 25:31–32). He warns disciples not to retreat from his present shame in the eyes of this world as the crucified Messiah. They must side with him now in his suffering and humiliation, or they will not be at his side in the glorious age to come. The individual's stance toward Jesus will determine the final verdict.

Jesus uses the threat of judgment to induce his followers to be faithful. To be put to shame is the opposite of divine vindication (Pss. 25:3; 119:6; Isa. 41:10–11; Jer. 17:18). Those who may be frightened by the edicts of earthly courts (represented in this Gospel by Herod Antipas, the high priest's Sanhedrin, and the Roman governor, Pilate) should fear even more the decision of the heavenly tribunal, which determines their eternal destiny. The petty tyrants, who for a fleeting moment hold the whip hand, can inflict fearful punishment. But one cannot appease them or straddle the fence. To win the favor of the world and its despots means to lose the favor of heaven. To win the favor of heaven means to lose the favor of the world.

In the judgment, the utter powerlessness of God's hostile adversaries will be manifest as they are brought to the bar to answer to God. Those who have thrown in their lot with them will find that they have made a fatal choice. They have bartered a few more years of life on earth with this wicked and adulterous generation for an eternity with them in hell. Giving one's life in service to God may mean losing a few years on earth, but the result will be spending eternity with the glorified Son of Man. Jesus does not say that confessing him will make us happier but that it will save us from God's judgment. The better part of wisdom is to follow Jesus' way, even if it leads to earthly humiliation; the only other choice leads to divine condemnation. This warning hits home when Peter cannot make the same bold confession in a hate-filled courtyard (Mk 14:66–72; see also Mk 13:9).

### **A confident promise.**

Jesus concludes this first lesson on discipleship requirements with a solemn promise that some of them will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God coming in power (Mk 9:1). The suffering will not go on forever. The resurrection of the Son of Man (Mk 8:31) and his coming in glory with the holy angels (8:38) removes the sting from the humiliation of a cross. (Source: [NIVAC-Mark](#))

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## **It's Not A Game**

Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. — Mark 8:34

My former neighbor often talked about “**the game of life**,” and I can understand why he did. It’s part of human nature to approach life as one big game made up of a lot of little games. Competing can be fun, exciting, and stimulating.

But life is a whole lot more than a game—especially for a follower of Jesus Christ. When a believer needs to own the biggest house, drive the largest SUV, get the promotion first, and win every argument, something’s terribly wrong from God’s point of view. It’s not right to run over people’s feelings, bend or break the rules, and gloat over victories.

To approach life as one big game that you always have to win is to live in hopeless delusion and fantasy. While material possessions, professional success, and personal victories are enjoyable, they last only for this life. Then they’re all left behind.

Jesus instructed His disciples to deny themselves, identify with His cross, and follow Him in self-denial, and for some that even meant death (Mark 8:34-35). He made it clear to His disciples that artificial victories in “the game of life” don’t count for much. What really counts is what’s done for the Lord. By: David C. Egner ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

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## **Follow Me**

Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. —Mark 8:34

Today’s Scripture: Mark 8:34-38

During World War II, B-17 bombers made long flights from the US mainland to the Pacific island of Saipan. When they landed there, the planes were met by a jeep bearing the sign: “Follow Me!” That little vehicle guided the giant planes to their assigned places in the parking area.

One pilot, who by his own admission was not a religious man, made an insightful comment: “That little jeep with its quaint sign always reminds me of Jesus. He was [a lowly] peasant, but the giant men and women of our time would be lost without His direction.”

Centuries after our Savior walked the streets and hills of Israel, the world with all its advances still needs His example and instruction. When His ways aren’t followed, numerous problems and evils arise in our world—including immorality, crime, and greed.

How do we follow Jesus’ ways? First of all, we turn from our sin and entrust our lives to Him as our Savior and Lord. Then, we seek His will in His Word each day and put it into practice by the power of the Holy Spirit within us. We learn to deny our selfish desires and give ourselves completely to following Jesus (Mark 8:34-35).

If you want to get in line with the purposes of God, respond to Jesus’ invitation: “Follow Me!” By: Vernon Grounds [Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

## THINKING IT OVER

For help on your Christian journey,  
read the online booklet *What Does It Take To Follow Christ?*

To find your way through life, follow Jesus.

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## **Subtle Wisdom**

If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. —John 12:26

Today’s Scripture: Mark 8:34-38

When I was in college, my co-worker Bud, a fork-truck driver, often enriched my life with his pithy wisdom. We were eating lunch one day, sitting on the back of his fork truck, when I announced that I was transferring to another school.

“Why?” he asked.

“All my friends are transferring,” I answered.

Bud chewed his sandwich for a moment and then replied quietly and with subtle irony, “I guess that’s one way to pick a school.”

His words struck me with rare force. Of course, I thought. But is this the only way to choose a school? Will I follow my friends for the rest of my days, or will I follow Jesus? Will I seek His face and His will and go where He wants me to go?

Twenty-five times in the New Testament, Jesus said to His disciples, “Follow Me.” In Mark 8:34, He said, “Whoever desires to come

after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." No matter what others do or what direction their lives may take, we must do what He asks us to do.

The words of an old song come to mind: "My Lord knows the way through the wilderness; all I have to do is follow!" By: David H. Roper ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

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## Cafeteria Christianity

Read: Mark 8:34-38

Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. —Mark 8:34

In his book **Thinking in the Future Tense**, Edward B. Lindaman refers to "the cafeteria culture of our age." It's the tendency to shy away from life's unpleasant disciplines and seek only what brings immediate pleasure.

Christians are not exempt from this tendency. Some persuasive preachers promote an "abundant life" of success and prosperity through positive thinking, more faith, or giving money to get God's blessing in return.

The Bible, of course, teaches us to think positively (Phil. 4:8) and to give liberally (2 Cor. 8:2). But much "prosperity preaching" lacks the nourishing truths of Christ's sacrifice for sin and His demand for godly living. Our God is not only loving, good, and generous; He is also righteous, holy, and demanding. He hates sin and will not compromise with evil.

It's wonderful to hear about the blessings Christ offers, but we also need to experience repentance and self-denial. The picking and choosing of a cafeteria-style Christianity is no substitute for a well-rounded diet, which includes the tough truths of taking up Christ's cross and following Him (Mark 8:34). That kind of nourishment stimulates the growth of spiritual muscle and Christlike character. And I need all of that I can get, don't you? By Dennis J. DeHaan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

From subtle love of softening things,  
From easy choices, weakenings;  
Not thus are spirits fortified,  
Not this way went the Crucified.  
—Carmichael

To be conformed to Christ, let God's Spirit form Christ in you.

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**Alan Carr** has a great **illustration** about "costs" in his sermon on the related passage Mark 8:34-38 - **[NO CHEAP SEATS](#)** - Intro: Last Sunday was Super Bowl Sunday. Millions of Americans watched the New York Giants shatter the New England Patriots' dreams of finishing a perfect 19-0 season. While I'm not much of a football fan, I was curious to know what it would cost to see the game. After a few moments of research I discovered that there are no cheap seats for the Super Bowl. The tickets I found ranged from \$1,674.00 in the nosebleed section all the way up to \$11,668.00 for a pretty good seat near the 50 yard line. No matter how you slice it, it costs some big bucks to go to the Super Bowl. There are no cheap seats! If you want to see Celine Dion in concert, expect to pay between \$100.00 and \$2,000.00. If you want to see an old rock band named Journey expect to pay between \$100.00 and \$500.00. It will cost you at least \$250.00 to go to trace in Daytona next week. It would cost you nearly a hundred bucks to see either Dolly Parton or Willie Nelson! There are no cheap seats! Jesus wants to teach us the same thing about being His follower. He wants us to know that there are No Cheap Seats in His service....**Many believe they can have Jesus and the world too.** Many believe they can claim to be followers of Christ, while they live their lives as they please. Jesus lets us know in no uncertain terms that such notions are utterly false. If a person is going to be a follower of Jesus Christ, there is a very high price to pay. This passage (Mark 8:34-38) makes it clear that there are **No Cheap Seats for followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.**

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**James Earley** - Jesus said, "**Follow Me.**" Jesus did not say, "Follow a set of rules" or "Follow a series of rituals." He said, "Follow Me." Discipleship is an intensely personal pursuit. Make no mistake about it. Being a disciple of Jesus is more than adding a new set of activities to your already busy life. Being a disciple of Jesus is first and foremost a response to His call to pursue Him passionately. The call "**Follow Me**" is the essence, heartbeat, challenge, and adventure of discipleship. It is a formal challenge to live with, learn from, and study under Rabbi Jesus. It is a call to be close to Him, obey His teachings, take the same path He takes, and walk the same road He walked. It involves daily growth and development **at the expense of personal comfort. It demands absolute abandonment** (Ed: see Oswald Chambers' comments below) **of all else in order to pursue Jesus fully.** This chapter (In his book [Disciple Making Is...](#)) will go deeper into stage two of the discipleship process (development), exploring what it means to follow Jesus. The common command in Jesus' initial encounter with His disciples was "**Follow Me..**" In chapter 6, we discussed how

Jesus opened His relationship with His future disciples with the challenge "Follow Me" (John 1:43). In chapter 7, when Jesus formally invited Simon, Andrew, James, and John into a rabbi/disciple relationship, He did so with the words "Follow Me, ... and I will make you fish for people!" (Mt 4:19). Jesus issued the same call again, tying it with the proclamation that the Father was leading Him to the cross. He said, "If anyone wants to come with Me, he must deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow Me" (Luke 9:23-note)...The point is to be certain that you follow Jesus, no matter the cost. I agree with Oswald Chambers, who said, **Be reckless for Jesus!"** ([Disciple Making Is...](#))

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**Adrian Rogers** - Now, what does it mean to take up your cross? It doesn't mean to put a cross around, across your back and walk around with it....Now, many people have a cross, a gold ornament, around their neck, and there's nothing wrong with that that I can see. But, friend, a cross is not a thing of beauty. A cross is a thing, ultimately, of shame and reproach. That's what it meant in Jesus' day when He said, "Pick up your cross."

When I was in college, I took a course in criminology, and we visited our penitentiary there in Florida, Raiford Penitentiary. And I went into the room there where they had the electric chair. I sat down in the electric chair. I checked the switch and everything to see no one was standing over there. But I sat down in the electric chair. Got up and looked at it, tried to image what it would be like to sit in that chair knowing that someone behind that panel is ready to pull the switch. And that chair was hideous. It was ugly. Can you image somebody with an electric chair on a chain around their neck, a little miniature electric chair?

Well, the cross, we have made it sort of a piece of jewelry, but when a person comes to Jesus Christ, he is a worshiper who will worship at any cost, personal relationships, personal reputation. To take up your cross is a mark of shame. Personal realization. Now, somebody says, "Well, my sickness is my cross." Not unless you got it by serving Jesus. You say, "My mother-in-law's my cross." She may be cross, but she's not your cross. A cross is something that you willingly take up. You don't have to bear it. Jesus said, "No man taketh my life from me. I lay it down of myself."

To follow Jesus is a worshiper who worships at any cost, above the cost of personal relationships, above the cost of personal reputation, above the cost of personal realization.

Somebody asked Dr. Tozer, "What does it mean to take up your cross? What does it mean to be crucified with Christ?" He said, "Three things. Number one: a man who is crucified is facing only one way. Number two: a man who is crucified is not going back. He has said goodbye. He is not going back. And number three: he has no further plans of his own." **Take up your cross, facing one way, not going back, no further plans of his own.** Can you say it, "I'm crucified with Christ?" We say it glibly. Do you mean it? That's what it means to be a disciple. Still want to be a disciple? Take up your cross. That's what the Lord Jesus Christ said. My precious friend, when you gave your heart to Jesus Christ and said, "I will take up my cross," that's the last legitimate, independent decision you ever make. There, from now on, your life belongs to Jesus Christ. You're not your own. You are bought with a price. Now, what a disciple is, number one, is a worshiper who worships at any cost. Got it?

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**Louis Cassels** - Obey . . . **take up your cross . . . deny yourself . . .** it all sounds very hard. It is hard. Anyone who tells you differently is peddling spiritual soothing syrup, not real Christianity. And yet, in a strangely paradoxical way, it is also easy. With every cross that we lift in obedience to Christ comes the strength to carry it. It is always a package deal.

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#### **QUESTION - [What does it mean to deny yourself? What is self-denial?](#)**

**ANSWER** - Jesus taught that to be His disciple—His follower—the spiritual discipline of self-denial is required: "Then Jesus told his disciples, 'If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me'" (Matthew 16:24ESV). Denying yourself is an essential part of the Christian life. Jesus called upon those who wish to be His followers to reject the natural human inclination toward selfishness. The Lord Himself exemplified self-denial (John 13:1–17).

The *Dictionary of Bible Themes* defines *self-denial* as "the willingness to deny oneself possessions or status, in order to grow in holiness and commitment to God." The words Jesus used in the original language for "deny yourself" were strong terms similar in meaning to Paul's wording in Philippians 3:7–8: "But whatever gain I had, I **counted as loss** for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ" (ESV, emphasis added). The purpose of self-denial—counting as "loss" all earthly gains—is to become more like Jesus in holiness and obedience to God.

Denying yourself includes overcoming the persistent fleshly demands of the body, also known as the carnal self or the [natural man](#), and bringing them into submission to God's Word so that you don't give into sin: "And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires" (Galatians 5:24ESV).

Self-denial for the Christian means renouncing oneself as the center of existence (which goes against the natural inclination of the human will) and recognizing Jesus Christ as one's new and true center. It means acknowledging that the old self is dead and the new life is now hidden with Christ in God (Colossians 3:3–5).

From the moment of our new birth into Jesus Christ, self-denial becomes a daily exercise for the rest of this life on earth (1 Peter 4:1–2). With the Holy Spirit now indwelling us, we are thrust into a conflict between the divine Spirit of God and the carnal self. Paul describes this ongoing struggle in Romans 7:14–25. Only by God’s grace and the power of the Holy Spirit can we learn to deny self: “For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say ‘No’ to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:11–13).

Through daily self-denial and crucifying the flesh, our life in Christ grows, strengthens, and develops more and more. Christ now becomes our life. These famous words of [Dietrich Bonhoeffer](#) help us understand the meaning of self-denial: **“When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die.”** A follower of Jesus must be prepared to die if death is where the path of discipleship leads: “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me” (Galatians 2:20; see also Romans 6:1–11).

[Fasting](#) is one of the disciplines of self-denial that Jesus practiced Himself (Matthew 4:1–2). Giving to the poor and needy is a form of self-denial that Jesus encouraged (Matthew 5:42; Luke 11:41). Watching in prayer is another way to deny yourself in service to God, as Jesus demonstrated (Matthew 14:23; 26:41). Likewise, living modestly rather than indulging in excessive luxury is an area in which believers can exercise self-denial (Matthew 8:20; 10:10; 1 Timothy 2:9).

Perhaps the most significant way we practice self-denial is in how we love and esteem our brothers and sisters in Christ. Self-denial is the basis for Christian fellowship and service within the church: “Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” (Philippians 2:4–8, ESV; see also Matthew 5:38–48; Mark 10:42–45).

Denying yourself means seeking the good of others before looking out for yourself (1 Corinthians 10:24). When Ruth followed Naomi, she practiced self-denial for the benefit of her mother-in-law (Ruth 2:11). When Esther put her life at risk to save her people, she demonstrated self-denial (Esther 4:16). Scripture teaches us to deny ourselves for the sake of those who are weak in the faith (Romans 14:21; 15:1–3; 1 Corinthians 8:13; 9:23). When you are willing to sacrifice your time, energy, rights, position, reputation, privileges, comforts, and even your very life for the sake of Christ, you exemplify what it means to deny yourself: “Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it” (Matthew 10:39; see also John 12:24–26; 2 Corinthians 6:4–5). [GotQuestions.org](#)

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**QUESTION - [What Did Jesus Mean When He Said, “Take up Your Cross and Follow Me”](#)** (Matthew 16:24; Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23)?

Let’s begin with what Jesus didn’t mean. Many people interpret “cross” as some burden they must carry in their lives: a strained relationship, a thankless job, a physical illness. With self-pitying pride, they say, “That’s my cross I have to carry.” Such an interpretation is not what Jesus meant when He said, “Take up your cross and follow Me.” When Jesus carried His cross up Golgotha to be crucified, no one was thinking of the cross as symbolic of a burden to carry. To a person in the first-century, the cross meant one thing and one thing only: death by the most painful and humiliating means human beings could develop.

Two thousand years later, Christians view the cross as a cherished symbol of atonement, forgiveness, grace, and love. But in Jesus’ day, the cross represented nothing but torturous death. Because the Romans forced convicted criminals to carry their own crosses to the place of crucifixion, bearing a cross meant carrying their own execution device while facing ridicule along the way to death.

Therefore, “Take up your cross and follow Me” means being willing to die in order to follow Jesus. This is called “dying to self.” It’s a call to absolute surrender. After each time Jesus commanded cross bearing, He said, “For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it. What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit his very self?” (Luke 9:24–25). Although the call is tough, the reward is matchless.

Wherever Jesus went, He drew crowds. Although these multitudes often followed Him as Messiah, their view of who the Messiah really was—and what He would do—was distorted. They thought the Christ would usher in the restored kingdom. They believed He would free them from the oppressive rule of their Roman occupiers. Even Christ’s own inner circle of disciples thought the kingdom was coming soon (Luke 19:11). When Jesus began teaching that He was going to die at the hands of the Jewish leaders and their Gentile overlords (Luke 9:22), His popularity sank. Many of the shocked followers rejected Him. Truly, they were not able to put to death their own ideas, plans, and desires, and exchange them for His.

Following Jesus is easy when life runs smoothly; our true commitment to Him is revealed during trials. Jesus assured us that trials will come to His followers (John 16:33). Discipleship demands sacrifice, and Jesus never hid that cost.

In Luke 9:57–62, three people seemed willing to follow Jesus. When Jesus questioned them further, their commitment was half-hearted at best. They failed to count the cost of following Him. None was willing to take up his cross and crucify upon it his own interests.

Therefore, Jesus appeared to dissuade them. How different from the typical Gospel presentation! How many people would respond to an altar call that went, “Come follow Jesus, and you may face the loss of friends, family, reputation, career, and possibly even your life”? The number of false converts would likely decrease! Such a call is what Jesus meant when He said, “Take up your cross and follow Me.”

If you wonder if you are ready to take up your cross, consider these questions:

- Are you willing to follow Jesus if it means losing some of your closest friends?
- Are you willing to follow Jesus if it means alienation from your family?
- Are you willing to follow Jesus if it means the loss of your reputation?
- Are you willing to follow Jesus if it means losing your job?
- Are you willing to follow Jesus if it means losing your life?

In some places of the world, these consequences are reality. But notice the questions are phrased, “Are you willing?” Following Jesus doesn’t necessarily mean all these things will happen to you, but are you willing to take up your cross? If there comes a point in your life where you are faced with a choice—Jesus or the comforts of this life—which will you choose?

Commitment to Christ means taking up your cross daily, giving up your hopes, dreams, possessions, even your very life if need be for the cause of Christ. Only if you willingly take up your cross may you be called His disciple (Luke 14:27). The reward is worth the price. Jesus followed His call of death to self (“Take up your cross and follow Me”) with the gift of life in Christ: “For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it” (Matthew 16:25–26). (from [Gotquestions - highly recommended resource](#))

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#### **ILLUSTRATION - You Mind if I Look Over these Crosses?**

Well, here I am, Lord. You said “Take up your cross,” and I’m here to do it. It’s not easy, you know, this self-denial thing. I mean to go through with it though, yes sir! I’ll bet you wish more people were willing to be disciples like me. I’ve counted the cost and surrendered my life, and it’s not an easy road.

You mind if I look over these crosses? I’d kind of like a new one. I’m not fussy, you understand; but a disciple has to be relevant these days.

I was wondering—are there any that are vinyl padded? I’m thinking of attracting others, see? And if I could show them a comfortable cross, I’m sure I could win a lot more. Got to keep up with the population explosion and all.

And I need something durable so I can treasure it always. Oh, is there one that’s sort of flat so it would fit under my coat? One shouldn’t be too obvious.

Funny, there doesn’t seem to be much choice here. Just that coarse, rough wood. I mean that would hurt. Don’t you have something more distinctive, Lord? I can tell you right now, none of my friends are going to be impressed by this shoddy workmanship. They’ll think I’m a nut or something. And my family will be just mortified.

What’s that? It’s either one of these or forget the whole thing? But Lord, I want to be your disciple, I mean, just being with you; that’s all that counts; but life has to have a balance, too. But you don’t understand—nobody lives that way today! Who is going to be attracted by this self-denial bit? I mean, I want to; but let’s not over do it. Start getting radical like this, and they’ll have me off to the funny farm. Know what I mean?

I mean being a disciple is challenging and exciting and I want to do it; but I do have some rights, you know. Now let’s see—no blood—OK? I just can’t stand the thought of that, Lord... Lord? Jesus?

Now where do you suppose He went?

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**Carrying the Cross of Words** - I am afraid we modern Christians are long on talk and short on conduct. We use the language of power but our deeds are the deeds of weakness. We settle for words in religion because deeds are too costly. It is easier to pray, “Lord, help me to carry my cross daily” then to pick up the cross and carry it; but since the mere request for help to do something we do not actually intend to do has a certain degree of religious comfort, we are content with repetition of the words.

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**F. B. Meyer** once shared a room with C. T. Studd. Meyer woke up one morning at seven and saw the bent figure of C. T. Studd etched against the light of a flickering candle, his university scarf wrapped around his neck. “How long have you been up, Charlie?” asked Meyer. He replied, “Since four o’clock.” “What on earth have you been doing for three hours?” Studd answered, “I’ve been

going through the New Testament afresh, in the light of the command of my Savior, 'If you love Me, keep My commandments,' and I've been checking off every commandment that I've obeyed." Meyer asked, "How can I be like you?" Studd pointed out the need to be fully surrendered to Christ in every area of life, in order that the Holy Spirit might radiate through his life. It was then that Meyer realized that he had handed over every key of his life except one his ability to preach. Studd reminded him, "If you don't trust the Lord in all, you don't trust Him at all." Norman Grubb, C. T. Studd

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**Alan Carr on taking up your cross** - When Jesus spoke of the cross, everyone in His audience knew what He was referring to. Some have estimated that over 30,000 Jews were crucified during the lifetime of Jesus alone. When Jesus says that we are to take up our cross, He is saying that we are to live as dead men! You see, to take up one's cross was to start upon a "death march". Their walk under that cross always ended up with them on that cross. They began a process from which there was no retreating and no turning back. To take up your cross was to embrace the death of self! This is just what Jesus did when He came to this world - Matt. 16:21-23; John 19, Mark 10:45. He set the example that we are to follow.

To understand what this cross Jesus refers to is, we need to talk about what it isn't. It isn't your lost husband or wife. It isn't your wayward children. It isn't your mother-in-law. Your cross isn't your difficulties or the bad situations you face in life. The cross is not just a place of suffering, it is a place of death! To take up one's cross means to willingly pick up and carry the shame (⇒ People mocked men who carried the cross. Unlike today when a person will carry one across America and draw cheers. A man under a cross in Jesus' day drew jeers!), the rejection, the suffering and the death that Jesus Himself willingly carried for us. To take up your cross means that you are willing to identify yourself with Jesus Christ, His death and His word, regardless of what it costs you personally, publically or financially! (Note: That's not a side of Christianity you hear very often! It isn't popular to talk about sacrifice, death and suffering, but that is what Christianity is all about! The sooner we learn that truth, the sooner God can and will send revival to His church and use us again for His glory!)...We are called upon to take up that cross, once for all, and go after Jesus. We are not to back out, turn around, or lay down the cross. We are to die on that cross, giving our all for His glory! This phrase has the idea of being willing to go all the way for Jesus - no holds barred and no turning back - just a steady, humble walk that follows His footsteps and His path through this world. Jesus said it as simply as it could possibly be said, John 12:26, "If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour." ([How to Experience the Heart of Real Christianity](#))

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**Ray Pritchard paraphrases** the words of Jesus in Mark 8:34-38 (similar to His words in Lk 9:23-26) - Now that you know who I am, are you ready to take up your cross and follow me? Before you answer, let me warn you that to follow me will seem, in the eyes of the world, as if you are wasting your life. The people of the world will never understand what you are doing. It will seem to them that by following me, you are throwing your life away.

You always have another option. You can try to save your life by following your own desires. Lots of people do that. They live as if their careers were all that mattered. But the people who live only for this life in the end will find that they wasted it on things that don't really matter. They tried to save it by living for themselves, but in the end they will lose it. They have wasted their lives on trivial pursuits.

After all, what good will it do if you become the richest man in the world, or climb to the top of the corporate ladder, or rise to the highest salary level in your company, or win the applause of the world? What good will all that do if in the end you find out it was all wasted? What good will that shiny new sports car do for you then? Will you be able to trade it in for another life? No, you won't. But if you want to live that way, go ahead. Millions of people do. In the end they will be sorry, but by then it will be too late to do anything about it.

So what will it be, men? The way of the cross or the way of the world? You've got to invest your life somewhere. What's the best deal you can make?

The martyred missionary Jim Elliot said, "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."

If you live for your career, what difference will it make ten seconds after you die? If you spend your life in the service of the [kingdom of God](#), the road may not be easy, but 10,000 years from now you'll never regret your decision.

Lord Jesus, you have called me to follow you, and now I must give an answer. Clear the cobwebs of confusion from my heart so that I might answer your call gladly, freely, completely, immediately, and say, "Here am I, Lord, ready to do your will." Amen.

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**ILLUSTRATION - R Kent Hughes** - This call to a crucified life demands a willingness to pour out one's life for Christ. The biography *The Shadow of the Almighty* records a beautiful prayer uttered by Jim Elliot:

Father, take my life, yea, my blood if Thou wilt, and consume it with Thine enveloping fire. I would not save it, for it is not mine to save. Have it, Lord, have it all. Pour out my life as an oblation for the world. Blood is only of value as it flows before Thine altar.

Young Jim Elliot went on to willingly shoulder his cross in missionary service, literally sealing it with his own blood at the hands of

**Robert Morgan on Luke 9:23-26** - God uses temptation to cultivate obedience. Look at Luke 9:23-26: In other words, if we're Christ's disciples, we're going to be in hostile territory and we're going to have to make hard moral decisions every day. The world will try to tempt us. The world will try to intimidate us. The world will try to make us ashamed of being Christians. But Jesus can use that temptation to cultivate obedience in our lives. I think one of the best things that I read in the purpose-driven materials we've been going through is this paragraph. I want to read it to you, because it is so well-stated:

"Temptation always tests whether you love God more than the temptation. Let me give you a tip about temptation. When you're tempted, don't resist it. Because as you're resisting it, guess what you're doing? You're just thinking about the temptation! You're getting into a spiritual tug-of-war with Satan, and he always wins. You don't resist it, you just drop the rope and walk a different direction and you think about something different. This is a verse that I've used literally hundreds and hundreds of times in my life [Philippians 4:8: "Whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things."] When I'm tempted it's my favorite verse to use to turn my thoughts from what's wrong to what's right, so I've memorized it very well, because I have been tempted a lot. If you'll take a verse like this and let it turn your mind from what's wrong to what's right, you'll find the temptation starts to drop away."

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**ILLUSTRATION - THE UNDERGROUND CHURCH IN NORTH KOREA** - adapted from report by Jan Vermeer

The inspired writer of the book of Hebrews says that everything was put in subjection under Jesus Christ (Hebrews 2:8). Does His supremacy actually show in this country full of idols, hunger and death camps? The North Korean Church consists of between 200-400,000 members. Fiercely persecuted, all of them hide their beliefs from the authorities. The church is truly an underground church, divided into thousands of small networks and cell groups. Most Christians hardly know other Christians outside their families. In case of an arrest, not many other Christians are in danger. The most visible proof of their faith is the possession of a Bible, which is illegal and punishable by death. Probably nowhere else in the world are so many copies of God's Word literally hidden underground. But the church is definitely growing. Many Christians keep their faith secret and are surviving. [Open Doors](#) is able to support almost 60,000 Christians with Bibles, books, training, food, clothes and medicines. Yet it is the individual tragedies that make it difficult to see with spiritual eyes that Jesus Christ is supreme even in North Korea. For example, a middle aged man was arrested after the police found a Bible in his home. He was terribly beaten in prison, as we learn from released prisoners who witnessed it. "His face is deformed. He told us he is certain he will die." How can Christ be supreme if one of his disciples is tortured so severely? "I've known this man for a long time," says a Christian friend of the prisoner. **"When he came to faith, he made the decision that one day he would die for Christ. Every Christian in North Korea has made that choice. Every Christian in my country has the spirit of martyrdom in him. If you lose that spirit for one second, you cannot carry the burden of being a follower of Jesus.** My friend knew that one day he could get caught and on that day he had to be steadfast in the faith and loyal to Jesus. I am convinced he can take the suffering because he constantly reminds himself of the joy that is set before him." The suffering North Korean Christians reveal Christ's supremacy because they look at the reward (Heb 11:26): Jesus Christ Himself. He is our Treasure (Col 2:3). He calls us to Himself, to suffer outside the gate and bear the reproach He endured (Hebrews 13:12-14). The kingdom of dictators like Kim in North Korea is limited in size and time. The Kingdom of our Lord is eternal and will come with power and crush all kingdoms like Kims!

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**ILLUSTRATION** Missionary Amy Carmichael worked with children in India, and one day she took them on a field trip to see a goldsmith refine his gold after the ancient manner of the East. He was sitting beside a little charcoal fire, and in the fire was a little curved roofing tile. Another tile covered it as a lid. This was the crucible. The goldsmith had concocted a solution, put it in the tile crucible, placed the lump of gold in the solution, and put the whole thing in the fire. As the fire did its work, the impurities in the gold began to leak into the solution and the gold become more pure. The goldsmith would occasionally take the gold out of the crucible with a pair of tongs, let it cool, and rub it between his fingers. Then he put it back into fresh solution in the tile and heated it up again. Every time this happened, the goldsmith blew the fire hotter than before. Looking up at the children, the goldsmith said, "The gold could not bear the fire this hot to begin with; it would have destroyed it. But now it helps it." One of the children asked, "How do you know when the gold is purified?" Here was the man's answer: "When I can see my face in it (the liquid gold in the crucible) then it is pure." Of course, Amy Carmichael couldn't miss the lesson for her own life. When our Great Refiner sees in us His own image, He has brought us to maturity and wholeness.

He uses truth to cultivate wisdom; trials to cultivate faith; tasks to cultivate faithfulness, and temptation to cultivate obedience until He can see His face to us and we have grown into the image of Christ. Is that process happening in your life? Fanny Crosby put it:

O to be more like Jesus,  
Earnest when 'ere I pray,  
Into His perfect likeness  
Growing from day to day.

Oh, that we might all be growing into the image of Christ, growing up into Him in all things, letting Christ be formed in us. And then one day all shall be fulfilled. As the old apostle John told us in the third chapter of his first epistle: Beloved, we are now children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

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### **RANDOM/ASSORTED NOTES ON MARK 8:34 (use "as is" - not proofread) -- these are related primarily to "take up your cross"...**

Context - Mk 8:31-32 is the context for the command to take up your cross -

and He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and **be killed, and after three days rise again**. 32 And He was stating the matter plainly. And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him." While Jesus did not specifically state He was to be killed by crucifixion, we know from many other NT passages this is what He was describing. And this clear declaration of physical death prompted Peter's strong opposition and rebuke. "33 But turning around and seeing His disciples, He rebuked Peter and \*said, "Get behind Me, Satan; for you are not setting your mind on **God's interests, but man's.**"

This is the context for the following instructions on following Jesus -- Peter sought man's interests (the Jews wanted a king to conquer Roman rule) but Jesus now points them to God's interests which are to follow Jesus and His Gospel. And so Jesus' allusion to death (cross implied) was a perfect segue (lead in) to the teaching on death to self (man's interests) and commitment to God's interests.

Parallel Passages:

Luke 9:23-27 and He was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. 24"For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it. 25"For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself? 26"For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes in His glory, and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. 27"But I say to you truthfully, there are some of those standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God."

Luke 14:26-27 "If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. 27"Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. COMMENT - In this parallel passage "carry" (Greek *bastazo* - to bear connotes carrying something with endurance. Metaphorically it means to bear/endure sufferings) Carry is in the present tense so here Jesus adds the thought that not just to take up the cross, but to keep on bearing the cross (not "wearing" a cross around our neck -- not to disparage this but it is NOT taking up one's cross!) as one's lifestyle, continually, daily as in Lk 9:23. While Jesus' primary meaning of taking up and carrying one's cross was metaphorical/figurative, He does not rule out that carrying it for His Name, might in fact cost one their physical life (as we hear of many Christians living in countries closed to the Gospel even today being willing to die [take up their cross] rather than to deny that they are followers of Jesus!)

The verb take up is *airo* - it was used 102x in 97v in the NT so it is relatively common verb. Literally *airo* means lifting up something, taking it up, raising it up as Luke used it to describe raising the ship's anchor (Acts 27:12). In the present context the verb is used figuratively by Jesus, not to take up a literal cross but a figurative "cross." The essence of the meaning is to be willing to suffer shame, disgrace humiliation, and if necessary martyrdom for the sake of the Name of Jesus and the Gospel of Jesus. The cross applies to any and all sorts of suffering in the name of Christ. (PARALLEL PASSAGE - the writer of Hebrews statement about Jesus' own reaction/response to the Cross - Heb 12:2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." And since we are not called to imitate Jesus - 1 Cor 11:1, especially 1 Pe 2:21 "walk in His steps" - Jesus' actions in Heb 12:2 would help motivate us to take up our cross "despising the shame.") In the first century the cross was an instrument of torture but only the most horrible criminals were crucified. To die on a cross was to be horribly shamed and humiliated. The crowd and disciples were well aware of

this meaning because the Romans crucified criminals on frequently used roadways so that those who saw would be fearful of suffering the same fate and thus would seek to be obedient to the Romans government. Crucifixion was known to be a lingering, dreadfully painful way to die and was in essence being tortured to death. So Jesus was calling for all who would follow Him, to be willing to suffer shame for His Name. Take up is in the aorist tense, imperative mood (command) which calls for this to be done immediately, to be done even with a sense of urgency (like the popular Nike commercial "Just Do It!") and to be done once and for all (although in another sense every follower would need to renew their commitment daily to take up their cross for the fallen flesh fights against the Spirit and seeks us "coerce" us to deny the cross, not take it up! Luke 9:23 supports the need to DAILY take up the cross - "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.) Take up is also in the active voice which is the voice calling for a personal decision, a choice of one's will, a "volitional" choice. Here is the paradox - Jesus is calling for potential followers to be willing (volitional choice) to die to self (figuratively to be crucified as Paul later describes in Galatians 2:20 - "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.) And yet we know that self does not hate self or even more unlikely seek to kill self, but in fact loves self. And so Jesus' commandment necessitates supernatural enablement to obey. The paradox is that the only way to obey is if God provides the power to obey. One passage that clearly teaches this vital truth is Phil 2:12-13 where Paul commanded (present imperative - continually, as their lifestyle) "work out your salvation with fear and trembling." In the context of Mk 8:34 to work out one's salvation would be tantamount to taking up one's cross. But Paul then gives the Philippians the supernatural solution to enable them to "work out their salvation". Phil 2:13 for (preposition introducing Paul's explanation of how to work out) it is God who is at work in you (almost certainly a reference to the indwelling Spirit), both to will and to work for His good pleasure." The NLT paraphrase says God gives them the "desire" and the "power" to obey the command. So while fallen flesh does not "want to" take up a cross, the Spirit gives this person the "want to" (so to speak) and then adds the provision of power to carry out the "want to" and thus to obey Jesus' command to take up the Cross and follow Him.

Another thought on taking up the cross - in context this relates to "Deny self" and in a sense is the ultimate denial of self, doing so to the point of either willing to die or literally dying, for the sake of the Name of Jesus.

Another point (parallel passage) that helps explain the powerful picture of taking up one's cross - Crucifixion was a deeply shameful death especially to Jesus' Jewish audience for they would recall the words of Deuteronomy 21:23: 'anyone who is hung on a tree is under God's curse!' So for those hearers who knew this passage, Jesus' command would be even more radical!

Another parallel passage to mention is Galatians 5:24 "Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires." Here we learn that one aspect of taking up one's cross results in radical dealing with our fleshly, sinful passions and desires! And we all have plenty of opportunities each day to "take up our cross" when these passions and desires come before our eyes or fly into our minds (like fiery missiles! Eph 6:16).

It should be emphasized that take up your cross does not refer to what many often think it means -- "I am bearing my cross" referring to some difficult circumstance or difficult person they are encountering. In this context they often say "I am bearing my cross" as they "put up" with this circumstance or person. That is not what Jesus is referring to for His command is for a holistic willingness to bear His shame and humiliation which also fits well with the context of this pericope in which Jesus says "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels." (Mk 8:38) To be "ashamed" in context would be to be unwilling to take up one's cross and follow Him.

The cross speaks of suffering in service. If you are going to do your duty for God, you will sooner or later meet up with the cross of suffering. But a good servant will not stop serving just because suffering for God is part of that service.

That is what Jesus himself will have to do literally, and it is the way that all his followers must be prepared to take. It means that we are prepared to follow our Master on the path of suffering. It means that if we are called on, we too will literally be willing to die— blood, toil, tears and sweat. There are no detached observers here, no spectators. If you are a Christian, this is what you have already committed yourself to, for Christian discipleship is shaped and determined by the cross.

Quote on Cross - So it meant social ostracism and utter loneliness at a time of the deepest suffering, when the slightest crumb of comfort would have been longed for. (Geoffrey Grogan - "Mark: Good News from Jerusalem" page 162)

Ezra Gould - The idea is, that a disciple is to follow the example of Jesus in giving up everything, even life itself, that belongs to the selfish interests, sooner than anything belonging to the higher purposes of life. (ICC Commentary on Mark - page 157)

Quote from an older writer J C Ryle - But all who accept this great salvation must prove the reality of their faith by carrying the cross after Christ. They must not think to enter heaven without trouble, pain, suffering and conflict on earth. They must be content to take up the cross of doctrine, and the cross of living a life which the world ridicules as too strict and righteous. They must be willing to crucify the flesh, to mortify the deeds of the body, to fight daily with the devil, to come out from the world and to lose their lives if

need be for Christ's sake and the Gospel's. These are hard sayings, but they cannot be evaded. The words of our Lord are plain and unmistakable. If we will not carry the cross, we shall never wear the crown. (HERE IS A GOOD CROSS REFERENCE TO SUPPLEMENT MY EXPLANATION OF THE ROLE OF THE SPIRIT GIVING US THE DESIRE AND THE POWER) Let us not be deterred from Christ's service by fear of the cross. Heavy as that cross may seem, Jesus will give us grace to bear it. "I can do everything through him who gives me strength" (Philippians 4:13). Thousands and tens of thousands have borne it before us, and have found Christ's yoke easy, and Christ's burden light. No good thing on earth was ever attained without trouble. We cannot surely expect that we can enter the kingdom of God without trouble. Let us go forward boldly, and allow no difficulty to keep us back. The glory at the end is forevermore. Let us often ask ourselves whether our Christianity costs us anything. Has it the true stamp of heaven? Does it carry with it any cross? If not, we may well tremble and be afraid. We have everything to learn. A religion which costs nothing is worth nothing. It will do us no good in the life that now is. It will lead to no salvation in the life to come. (Online - <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/ryl/mark-8.html>)

"Every hour is the last hour. Every successive hour and day, self is to be found by being lost. Let the disciple refuse himself: let him think constantly as one who feels the weight of the hateful beam across his back and knows himself condemned to die" (Fletcher 164).

Lutheran commentator R C H Lenski - This will mean that "he take up his cross" (α ρειν). Jesus undoubtedly chose this figure because he himself was to be crucified. Although this was a Roman mode of execution it was known universally. Jesus will bear his cross, one which he alone can bear. Of his disciples he says that each is to bear his cross, i. e., the particular one allotted to him. This word has grown too familiar by constant use. It is a mistake to call all our suffering a cross. The wicked have many sorrows (Ps. 32:10) but no crosses. The cross is that suffering alone which results from our faithful connection with Christ. And the intimation is that each disciple will have his share of such suffering. The thought grows overwhelmingly: Christ with his cross leads, and all his disciples, each loaded with his cross, follows in one immense procession, like men who are led away to be crucified. Paul carries the figure farther: they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh (Gal. 5:24); and Paul himself is crucified with Christ (Gal. 2:20). The earthly prospects of a disciple are not alluring. However heavy your cross may be, he helps you bear it after him. (Page 348 - The Interpretation of St Mark's Gospel)

Mark Strauss - to "take up your cross" does not mean to accept a life of hardship, as the idiom is sometimes used today. It means to subject oneself to excruciating and shameful execution by crucifixion. Of course, this will not mean actual martyrdom for all, but a willingness to renounce all for Christ. Luke explicitly introduces this metaphorical sense by adding "daily" (καθ' ἡμέραν; 9:23) to Mark's "take up his cross." (Mark Commentary from Zondervan - page 372)

### **Other thoughts on taking up Cross -**

Take up one's cross is a metaphor -A figure of speech in which a word or phrase that ordinarily designates one thing is used to designate another, thus making an implicit comparison,

Jesus' command would immediately bring to every hearer's mind the vivid image in which one who would seek to follow Jesus is likened to a condemned criminal carrying the transverse beam of his own cross to the place of execution

In the writings of Plutarch (De sera numinis vindicta (9.554b) we read "Every criminal who is executed carries his own cross."

Keep in mind the temporal context -- Jesus has not yet been crucified but He would be and so these words would even be more powerful after His crucifixion to anyone who sought to be His follower or disciple.

So it does not mean to be physically crucified

Instead it means to renounce all claims on self -- self's interest (cf Jesus' words "man's":interest in Mk 8:33) are no longer to be supreme.

Self in fallen man is "number one" but is to be "dethroned" in effect to be crucified (Gal 2:20)

The cross was an especially shameful way to die in that culture; in ours, we might feel the impact better if we paraphrased, "take along an electric chair (or lethal injection; or hangman's scaffold)."

### **CROSS REFERENCES ON BEARING ONE'S CROSS...**

Mark 10:21 Looking at him, Jesus felt a love for him and said to him, "One thing you lack: go and sell all you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."

Matthew 10:38 "And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. (NOTE - "WORTHY" is "axios" which is a Pix of a scale with weights on each side. Jesus on one side of scale and us

on the other -- the only way we can "balance" the scales with Him on the other side is to "imitate" Him enabled by His Spirit and thus be willing to take up our cross like He did).

Mt 27:32 as they were coming out, they found a man of Cyrene named Simon, whom they pressed into service to bear His cross.

Acts 14:22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, "Through many tribulations (THESE ARE A PICTURE OF BEARING OUR CROSS) we must enter the kingdom of God." (Other tribulations do not earn or merit entrance but demonstrate we are truly His disciples, suffering shame because of His Name.)

1 Cor 1:18 For the word of the cross (INCLUDING JESUS CALL TO "TAKE UP OUR CROSS) is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. (WE EXPERIENCE HIS POWER WHEN WE ARE WILLING TO TAKE UP OUR CROSS).

1 Peter 2:21 For you (FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST) have been called for this purpose (SEE "PURPOSE" IN VERSE 20! = TAKING UP ONE'S CROSS), since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps,

John 19:17 They took Jesus, therefore, and He went out, bearing His own cross, to the place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha.

Gal 6:14 But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

Colossians 1:24 Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body, which is the church, in filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions.

1 Peter 4:1; 13 Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, (4:13) but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation.

#### **SOME QUOTES RELATED TO TAKING UP CROSS -**

- Vance Havner -- What our Lord said about cross-bearing and obedience is not in fine type. It is in bold print on the face of the contract.
- Billy Graham in "The Offense of the Cross" -When Jesus said, "If you are going to follow me, you have to take up a cross," it was the same as saying, "Come and bring your electric chair with you. Take up the gas chamber and follow me." He did not have a beautiful gold cross in mind—the cross on a church steeple or on the front of your Bible. Jesus had in mind a place of execution.
- Jesus was crucified, not in a cathedral between two candles, but on a cross between two thieves. - George F. MacLeod
- The cross cannot be defeated, for it is defeat. - Gilbert K. Chesterton
- There are no crown-wearers in heaven who were not cross-bearers here below. - Charles Haddon Spurgeon
- We need men of the cross, with the message of the cross, bearing the marks of the cross. - Vance Havner
- Christ's cross is such a burden as sails are to a ship or wings to a bird. - Samuel Rutherford
- He came to pay a debt He didn't owe because we owed a debt we couldn't pay. - Anonymous
- The old cross slew men; the new cross entertains them. The old cross condemned; the new cross amuses. The old cross destroyed confidence in the flesh; the new cross encourages it. A.W. Tozer
- All heaven is interested in the cross of Christ, all hell is terribly afraid of it, while men are the only beings who more or less ignore its meaning. - Oswald Chambers
- The cross: God's way of uniting suffering with love. - Georgia Harkness
- The figure of the Crucified invalidates all thought which takes success for its standard. - Dietrich Bonhoeffer
- The cross is the lightning rod of grace that short-circuits God's wrath to Christ so that only the light of His love remains for believers. A. W. Tozer in "The Old Cross and the New."
- When the will of God crosses the will of man, somebody has to die.
- Thomas a Kempis, Imitation of Christ: What hindereth thee more than thine affections not fully mortified to the will of God?
- Meyer: We are not simply to cut off this or the other indulgence, but to put the Cross of Christ between ourselves and the gratification of our own will. We must be willing to follow the Lamb, though the old Abraham cries out in grievous pain.

NET Mark 8:35 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and for the gospel will save it.

NLT Mark 8:35 If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake and for the sake of the Good News, you will save it.

ESV Mark 8:35 For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it.

NIV Mark 8:35 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it.

GNT Mark 8:35 ς γ ρ ν θ λ τ ν ψ υ χ ν α τ ο σ σ α ι π ο λ σ ε ι α τ ν · ς δ ν π ο λ σ ε ι τ ν ψ υ χ ν α τ ο ν ε κ ε ν μ ο κ α τ ο ε α γ γ ε λ ο υ σ σ ε ι α τ ν .

KJV Mark 8:35 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it.

ASV Mark 8:35 For whosoever would save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's shall save it.

CSB Mark 8:35 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life because of Me and the gospel will save it.

NKJ Mark 8:35 "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.

NRS Mark 8:35 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.

YLT Mark 8:35 for whoever may will to save his life shall lose it; and whoever may lose his life for my sake and for the good news' sake, he shall save it;

- **wishes to save:** Es 4:11-16 Jer 26:20-24 Mt 10:39 Mt 16:25 Lu 9:24 17:33 Joh 12:25,26 Ac 20:24 21:13 2Ti 2:11-13 4:6-8 Heb 11:35 Rev 2:10 7:14 12:11
- **for My sake:** Mt 5:10-12 Mt 10:22 Mt 19:29 Lu 6:22,23 John 15:20,21 Ac 9:16 1Co 9:23 2Co 12:10 2Ti 1:8 1Pe 4:12-16
- **Mark 8 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## HOW TO SAVE YOUR LIFE! "LOSERS ARE KEEPERS!"

### Related Passages:

Philippians 3:7-9 But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. 8 More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, 9 and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith,

Matthew 10:39 "He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it.

Matthew 16:25+ "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.

Luke 9:24+ For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it.

**Adrian Rogers** - When I was a child, we used to play a little game called **'Finders, Keepers, Losers, Weepers.'** But our Lord is saying, **"Losers, Finders, Keeper's, Weepers."**

**Kent Hughes** - Jesus said, "Losers are keepers." This is a fundamental law of life. No one is excepted, in time or eternity. Nothing could be more opposed to the spirit of our age. The world today says, Look out for Numero Uno. Save yourself. Love yourself. Pamper yourself. Live for yourself....Narcissism is the order of the day as multitudes ease their souls into a living death by the

respectable vice of selfishness. A society of keepers inevitably becomes a society of losers. Ours is a society of losers! ([Preaching the Word](#))

**For (gar)** is a [term of explanation](#). Jesus is explaining why He placed supreme value on obedience to His commands to deny self, take up your cross and follow Him. In comparison everything else was of minimal significance when viewed from an eternal perspective. Lose some of your "self rights" temporally now (which is the behavior a believer would practice, and being enabled to do so ONLY by the supernatural enabling power of the Holy Spirit) or lose your soul eternally forever.

**Osborne** - This clarifies ("for") the meaning of "deny self" in Mk 8:34. **'Life'** has double meaning, referring to the temporary earthly life and also the eternal heavenly life. The question is which one we are truly "living" for. To **"save"** the one is always to **"lose"** the other. So the only way we can gain eternal life is to "deny" or **"lose"** (i.e., surrender) our temporary values and priorities. Interestingly, only Mark has "lose their life for me and for the gospel." **"Gospel"** appears four times in the second half of Mark, twice in discipleship sayings involving self-denial (Mk 8:35; 10:29) and twice regarding the proclamation of the kingdom message (Mk 13:10; 14:9). To follow Christ is to join his kingdom mission and proclaim the **gospel**. ([Teach the Text - Mark](#))

**Whoever wishes to save his life will lose it - Wishes(thelo)** speaks of an exercise of the will from a motive of desire (and so to wish). The [present tense](#) describes this as this person's lifestyle. This is what they live for so to speak. They live to save their life! They treasure the temporary and lose the eternal.

**Save (4982) (sozo)** has the basic meaning of rescuing one from great peril. Additional nuances include to protect, keep alive, preserve life, deliver, heal, be made whole. They fight in vain to keep their life (and all its "goodies"), and to fill the "God shaped" hole in their soul whole by filling their life with pursuits and pleasures of this world which is passing away and even its lusts (1 John 2:17<sup>±</sup>).

**Life (soul)(5590)(psuche)** from **psucho** = to breathe, blow, English = psychology, "study of the soul") is the breath, then that which breathes, the individual, animated creature.

**Lose (622)(apollumi)** from **apo** = away from or wholly + **olethros** = state of utter ruin <> **ollumi** = to destroy <> root of **apollyon** [Rev 9:11] = destroyer) means to destroy utterly but not to caused to cease to exist. The ultimate idea is to lose all worth to accomplish anything of eternal value. It describes that which is ruined and is no longer usable for its intended purpose.

The point Jesus is making is if one lives merely for this temporal life, their future life will be lost forever!

**Stephen Olford** - Anyone who hoards life selfishly will lose it. Life is like sand: the harder one tries to grasp it, the faster it flows through one's fingers. There must be selfless sacrifice.

**Hiebert** - A man may decide "to save his life," to preserve his personal interests by keeping aloof from Christ and His self-sacrificing demands. The sure result will be that he will "lose his life," more literally, "destroy" it. His self-preserving action will result in the destruction of his higher welfare. ([Gospel of Mark - An Expository Commentary](#))

**Wuest** - The "whosoever will come after Me" of verse 34, is in the indicative mode and uses the conditional particle ei (ε). The expression assumes as true that some do desire to come after Jesus. It is, "If, as is the case, anyone is desiring, etc." But the "whosoever will" of this verse is a future unfulfilled hypothetical condition. It is "For whosoever would desire to save his life." The word "life" here is not bios (βίος) referring to one's physical existence and its needs but psuchē (ψυχή), referring to the soul, that part of man which wills, and thinks, and feels, or in other words, to the will power, the reason, and the emotions, to the personality with all his activities, hopes, and aspirations. That is, the person who desires to so live that these will find self-gratification, will lose that which alone makes the activity of these things, worthwhile and satisfying. God has so created man, that he does not find complete rest and satisfaction until his entire being is swallowed up in the sweet will of God. This is Jesus' teaching here. Our Lord is not here giving the terms upon which God will give salvation, for self-denial never saved a soul from sin. Only Jesus' blood can do that. Jesus is here giving His philosophy of life. ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmann Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

**But** - Term of contrast - A change of direction in attitude (and actions) marks a change in one's eternal destiny.

**Whoever loses his life for My sake** - No other saying of Jesus is given such emphasis as shown by the repetition of this idea in the Gospels. (see Lk 14:26-27; 17:33; Mt 10:38-39; 16:24-25; Mk 8:34-35; Jn 12:25).

**Wiersbe** - note the motivation for true discipleship: **"for My sake and the Gospel's"** (Mark 8:35). To lose yourself is not an act of desperation; it is an act of devotion. But we do not stop there: personal devotion should lead to practical duty, the sharing of the Gospel with a lost world. "For My sake" could lead to selfish religious isolationism, so it must be balanced with "and the Gospel's." Because we live for Him, we live for others. (BEC)

**NET Note** - The point of the saying whoever wants to **save his life will lose it** is that if one comes to Jesus then rejection by many will certainly follow. If self-protection is a key motivation, then one will not respond to Jesus and will not be saved. One who is willing to risk rejection will respond and find true life.

**THOUGHT - Jesus is not saying works by us (self-effort) can save** In fact seeking to save yourself by good deeds will result in eternal loss of your soul! So what does Jesus mean? **The only person who would willingly lose his life for Jesus is a person who has been born again by the Spirit of Jesus. He then has the indwelling Spirit of Jesus Who gives him supernatural desire to die to self and his innate selfishness** (e.g., by serving others, giving to others, spending time with Jesus in His Word and prayer, etc). **No man would die to self by himself! In other words the natural tendency of our flesh is to survive and to pamper self. But in our day to day life we encounter many opportunities to die to self interests (enabled by the Spirit) and to put the interests of God and others before our interests. This is absolute antithesis of the way the world works!** The world's motto is "Look out for number one!" Jesus' motto is deny number one! And dying to self and living to God is the only way to a truly happy and fulfilling life in this world and the world to come. Selfless investment in time will yield priceless returns in eternity (cf Lk 19:11-27; Mt. 6:19-21; 19:27-30).

Father, let it be so for all who read these words, that enabled by Thy Spirit, we would daily supernaturally seek to die to self (and selfishness) and live for Christ, for His Kingdom and His glory (and Thy Glory), in His Name. Amen

**Hiebert** - The alternative statement assumed the matter of the will and stresses the higher objects for which the disciple sacrifices himself, "for my sake and the gospel's." The calm assertion "for my sake" reflects Christ's consciousness of His unique supremacy, which justly claims the absolute allegiance of His disciples. And the gospel's, added only in Mark (cf. 10:29), points to the message which the disciple accepts and propagates at the cost of himself. The two form two sides of one great reality. Christ is known to us only through the gospel, and our adherence to the gospel means our loyalty to Him. The paradoxical statement derives its force from the two meanings of the word life (psuchē), often translated "soul," the self-conscious life. The term here has a lower and higher meaning. In both statements it first means the outward, earthly life with its pleasures and aims and then the inward, spiritual life which begins here and reaches into eternity. The one who refuses to become a disciple to preserve the lower thereby destroys the higher; the present self-sacrifice of the interests of the lower life will result in true and ultimate self-preservation. ([Gospel of Mark - An Expository Commentary](#))

**Cornerstone Biblical Commentary** on losing temporarily paradoxically means gaining eternally – Perhaps this is what Hudson Taylor, the famous missionary to China, meant when, after a life of tremendous sacrifice, he solemnly declared, "I never made a sacrifice." He had truly lost all for Christ but in return found his all in Christ. Like Paul, he could say, "I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ and become one with him" (Phil 3:8-9).

**William MacDonald** - The natural tendency is to **save** our lives by selfish, complacent, routine, petty existences. We may indulge our pleasures and appetites by basking in comfort, luxury, and ease, by living for the present, by trading our finest talents to the world in exchange for a few years of mock security. But in the very act, we **lose** our lives, that is, we miss the true purpose of **life** and the profound spiritual pleasure that should go with it! On the other hand, we may **lose** our lives for the Savior's sake. Men think us mad if we fling our own selfish ambitions to the wind, if we seek first the [kingdom of God](#) and His righteousness, if we yield ourselves unreservedly to Him. But this life of abandonment is genuine living. It has a joy, a holy carefreeness, and a deep inward satisfaction that defies description. (Believer's Bible Commentary)

**For My sake** - Because of His Name. Because we openly, proudly "wear" His Name. It will cost!

See related passages on for the sake of Jesus and His Name (His Name equates with all that He is, His essence, His attributes, etc)...

Matthew 10:22 "You will be hated by all **because of My name**, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved.

Matthew 19:29 "And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms **for My name's sake**, will receive many times as much, and will inherit eternal life.

Luke 6:22; 23+ "Blessed are you when men hate you, and ostracize you, and insult you, and scorn your name as evil, **for the sake of the Son of Man** 23 "Be glad in that day and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven. For in the same way their fathers used to treat the prophets.

John 15:20; 21 "Remember the word that I said to you, 'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also. 21 "But all these

things they will do to you **for My name's sake**, because they do not know the One who sent Me.

Acts 9:16+ (JESUS SPEAKS OF PAUL) for I will show him how much he must suffer **for My name's sake.**"

**And the gospel's will save it** - Mark alone adds **and the gospel's**. This refers to salvation by grace through faith. (Spirit energized) Self-sacrifice is the only way to self-discovery. Dying is the doorway to living. Giving is the key to receiving. However beware of the deceptive thought that your DOING in any way contributes to your salvation but to the contrary is the fruit of your salvation.

**Daniel Akin** - If you save or treasure your life above all else, you will lose it. The one who plays it safe and considers his existence more important than Jesus will lose both Jesus and eternal life. In contrast, the one who gives his life for Jesus and the gospel will actually save it! Following Jesus involves risking it all—safety, security, satisfaction in this world. But He promises us that it leads to a reward this world can never, ever offer. There is a life worth *giving* for the glory of God *and the gospel!* It is a dying to self that others might live! It is not safe! But it is the normal Christian life! J. I. Packer says, "There are, in fact, two motives that should spur us constantly to evangelize. The first is love to God and concern for His glory; the second is love to man and concern for his welfare" (*Evangelism*, 73). C. T. Studd (1860-1931), missionary to China, India, and Sudan, said, "We will dare to trust our God ... and we will do it with His joy unspeakable singing aloud in our hearts. We will a thousand times sooner die trusting only in our God than live trusting in man" (Platt, *Radical*, 178). Your life is set free to live the normal/radical Christian life when you see death as reward, when you can say with Paul, "For me, living is Christ and dying is gain" (Phil 1:21). (Christ-Centered Exposition – Exalting Jesus in Mark)

**Wuest** - The "whosoever will come after Me" of verse 34, is in the indicative mode and uses the conditional particle *ei* (ε). The expression assumes as true that some do desire to come after Jesus. It is, "If, as is the case, anyone is desiring, etc." But the "whosoever will" of this verse is a future unfulfilled hypothetical condition. It is "For whosoever would desire to save his life." The word "life" here is not *bios* (βίος) referring to one's physical existence and its needs but *psuchē* (ψυχή), referring to the soul, that part of man which wills, and thinks, and feels, or in other words, to the will power, the reason, and the emotions, to the personality with all his activities, hopes, and aspirations. That is, the person who desires to so live that these will find self-gratification, will lose that which alone makes the activity of these things, worthwhile and satisfying. God has so created man, that he does not find complete rest and satisfaction until his entire being is swallowed up in the sweet will of God. This is Jesus' teaching here. Our Lord is not here giving the terms upon which God will give salvation, for self-denial never saved a soul from sin. Only Jesus' blood can do that. Jesus is here giving His philosophy of life. ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmann Publishing Company Volume 1](#), [Volume 2](#), [Volume 3](#) - used by [permission](#))

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**J C Ryle on Mark 8:34-38** - THE words of our Lord Jesus Christ in this passage are peculiarly weighty and solemn. They were spoken to correct the mistaken views of His disciples, as to the nature of His kingdom. But they contain truths of the deepest importance to Christians in every age of the Church. The whole passage is one which should often form the subject of private meditation.

**We learn, for one thing, from these verses, the absolute necessity of self-denial, if we would be Christ's disciples, and be saved.** What saith our Lord? "Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."

Salvation is undoubtedly all of grace. It is offered freely in the Gospel to the chief of sinners, without money and without price. "By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." (Ephes. 2:8, 9.) But all who accept this great salvation, must prove the reality of their faith by carrying the cross after Christ. They must not think to enter heaven without trouble, pain, suffering, and conflict on earth (Acts 14:22). They must be content to take up the cross of doctrine, and the cross of practice,—the cross of holding a faith which the world despises, and the cross of living a life which the world ridicules as too strict and righteous overmuch. They must be willing to crucify the flesh, to mortify the deeds of the body, to fight daily with the devil, to come out from the world, and to lose their lives, if needful, for Christ's sake and the Gospel's.—These are hard sayings, but they admit of no evasion. The words of our Lord are plain and unmistakable. If we will not carry the cross, we shall never wear the crown.

**Let us not be deterred from Christ's service by fear of the cross.** Heavy as that cross may seem, Jesus will give us grace to bear it. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." (Phil. 4:13.) Thousands and tens of thousands have borne it before us, and have found Christ's yoke easy, and Christ's burden light. No good thing on earth was ever attained without trouble. We cannot surely expect that without trouble we can enter the kingdom of God. Let us go forward boldly, and allow no difficulty to keep us back. The cross by the way is but for a few years. The glory at the end is for evermore.

**Let us often ask ourselves whether our Christianity costs us anything?** Does it entail any sacrifice? Has it the true stamp of heaven? Does it carry with it any cross?—If not, we may well tremble and be afraid. We have everything to learn. A religion which costs nothing, is worth nothing. It will do us no good in the life that now is. It will lead to no salvation in the life to come.

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**ILLUSTRATION OF LOSERS ARE KEEPERS** - Kent Hughes - The most famous living author of the 1930s was William Somerset Maugham, "Willie." He was an accomplished novelist, playwright, and short story writer. His novel *Of Human Bondage* is a classic. His play *The Constant Wife* has gone through thousands of stagings. He was a man who lived for his own refined tastes, his comfort, and his sexual perversions. In 1965, at the age of ninety-one, he was still a fabulously rich man, although he had not written a word in years. He still received over three hundred fan letters a week.

What had life brought [W. Somerset Maugham](#)? The London Times carried this excerpt by his nephew, Robin Maugham:

I looked round the drawing room at the immensely valuable furniture and pictures and objects that Willie's success had enabled him to acquire. I remembered that the villa itself, and the wonderful garden I could see through the windows—a fabulous setting on the edge of the Mediterranean—were worth £600,000. (\$820,683.00)

Willie had 11 servants, including his cook, Annette, who was the envy of all the other millionaires on the Riviera. He dined off silver plates, waited on by Marius, his butler, and Henri, his footman. But it no longer meant anything to him.

The following afternoon I found Willie reclining on a sofa, peering through his spectacles at a Bible which had very large print. He looked horribly wizened and his face was grim.

"I've been reading the Bible you gave me.... And I've come across the quotation, **What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?**' I must tell you, my dear Robin, that **the text used to hang opposite my bed when I was a child....** Of course, it's all a lot of bunk. But the thought is quite interesting all the same."

Robin Maugham goes on to describe an empty, bitter old man who repeatedly fell into shrieking terrors, crying, **'Go away! I'm not ready ... I'm not dead yet.... I'm not dead yet, I tell you....'**

**He was a man who had gained the whole world and lost his own soul, a "keeper" who lost.** On the other hand, there are "losers" who are the ultimate keepers. My wife, Barbara, and I visited John and Lorraine Winston who have been missionaries in France for more than thirty-eight years. The last twenty-two of those years have been given to founding the French Evangelical Seminary in Vaux-sur-Seine. As we sat in their rooftop apartment overlooking the seminary grounds, John reminisced. He said, as we well knew, that life had not been easy. There had been times when they had been pushed to their limits. And Lorraine nodded her assent. "But," he continued, **"I have had the best life. It has been challenging, exciting, and fulfilling. I wouldn't change a thing. I have no regrets." Losers are keepers!**

One hundred and eighty years after the death of Charlemagne, in about the year 1000, officials of the Emperor Otho opened the great king's tomb, where they found an amazing sight apart from the treasures. What they saw was this: the skeletal remains of the king seated on a throne, the crown still upon his skull, **a copy of the Gospels lying in his lap with his bony finger resting on this text: "What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul?"** ([Preaching the Word](#))

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**ILLUSTRATION** - John Sung, the apostle to China from 1928–1951, lost his faith in an American seminary. His liberal friends, thinking he had lost his mind, had him placed in a mental institution for 193 days. He was very sane, however, and with his brilliant mind he gave himself to unhurried Bible study and declared that the day of his release was his true graduation. Enroute home apart from a trophy kept to please his father Sung threw his academic prizes overboard. He died to the promise of a lucrative academic career and determined to live only for Christ. He had a profound influence on his generation.

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**ILLUSTRATION** On Tuesday April 20, 1999, Cassie Bernal was in the Columbine Colorado high school library reading her Bible when the two students burst in carrying guns. According to one of the witnesses, her friend Josh, one of the killers pointed his gun at Cassie and asked, "Do you believe in God?"

"She paused," Josh stated later, "like she didn't know what she was going to answer, and then she said 'yes.' She must have been scared, but her voice didn't sound shaky. It was strong. Then they asked her why, though they didn't give her a chance to respond. They just blew her away."

Cassie's martyrdom was even more remarkable when you consider that just a few years ago she had dabbled in the occult, including witchcraft. She had embraced the same darkness that drove her killers to such despicable acts. But two years earlier, Cassie dedicated her life to Christ and turned her life around.

According to the Boston Globe, on the night of her death, Cassie's brother Chris found a Scripture she had written out just two days prior to her death. It read:

Now I have given up on everything else—I have found it to be the only way to really know Christ and to experience the mighty power that brought him back to life again, and to find out what it means to suffer and to die with him. So, whatever it takes I will be one who lives in the fresh newness of life of those who are alive from the dead. (Phil 3:10-11 TLB)

## Would you die for Jesus?

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**ILLUSTRATION:** Dave Earley writes - "What else is better in this life? I have heard of nothing better." Jim Elliot was a promising student at Wheaton College in Illinois. He was a champion wrestler, honor student, amateur poet, and was warmly admired by students at Wheaton. He dated and married the prettiest girl at the school. He was truly the "big man" on campus.

In his studies, he read the words of Luke 9 and took them seriously. During his senior year, he wrote in his journal these now famous words: "He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."

God called him to take the gospel to an unreached tribe, the Waodomi people, called the Auca or Savage Indians in Ecuador. Elliot wrote, "Glad to get the opportunity to preach the gospel of the matchless grace of our God to stoical, pagan Indians. I only hope that He will let me preach to those who have never heard that name Jesus. What else is better in this life? I have heard of nothing better. 'Lord, send me!'"

Unfortunately, he and his four associates were killed by the warriors before they could share with them. Jim gave up what he could not keep. He gave up his earthly life to gain what he could not lose: eternal life.

Due to the publicity generated by the martyrdom of the missionaries, thousands of other young men and women committed to missions to take their place. Beyond that, the widows of the martyred missionaries went back to that tribe and led those warriors to Christ.

"Jim Elliot did not die in Ecuador." Years later, a young man traveling in Ecuador flew in a small plane over the country. The pilot knew of Jim Elliot's ministry.

"When we fly over the place where Jim Elliot and the others died, show me," the man said to the pilot.

"I can't take you there," replied the pilot.

"Why not?"

"Because Jim Elliot did not die in Ecuador."

Perplexed, the young man remarked, "Yes, I know Jim Elliot died here in Ecuador."

"Jim Elliot's body died in South America," the pilot said, "but Jim Elliot died while a college student at Wheaton College several years before when he yielded his life to God no matter the consequences."

Being a disciple requires that we follow Jesus to the cross. Would you be willing to die for Jesus Christ? Not unless you are living for Jesus right now. ([Disciple Making Is...](#))

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**ILLUSTRATION** - One hundred and eighty years after the death of Charlemagne, about the year 1000, officials of the Emperor Otho opened the great king's tomb, where in addition to incredible treasures they saw an amazing sight—the skeletal remains of King Charlemagne seated on a throne, his crown still on his skull, a copy of the Gospels lying in his lap with his bony finger resting on the text, "**What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul?**" (Preaching the Word – Luke, Volume I: That You May Know the Truth)

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**ILLUSTRATION OF SAVING ONE'S LIFE BUT LOSING ONE'S SOUL** - The most famous living author of the 1930s was William Somerset Maugham, "Willie." He was an accomplished novelist, playwright, and short story writer. His novel *Of Human Bondage* is a classic. His play *The Constant Wife* has gone through thousands of stagings. He was a man who lived for his own refined tastes, his comfort, and his sexual perversions. In 1965, at the age of ninety-one, he was still a fabulously rich man, although he had not written a word in years. He still received over three hundred fan letters a week.

What had life brought W. Somerset Maugham? The *London Times* carried this excerpt by his nephew, Robin Maugham:

I looked round the drawing room at the immensely valuable furniture and pictures and objects that Willie's success had enabled him to acquire. I remembered that the villa itself, and the wonderful garden I could see through the windows—a fabulous setting on the edge of the Mediterranean—were worth £600,000.

Willie had 11 servants, including his cook, Annette, who was the envy of all the other millionaires on the Riviera. He dined off silver plates, waited on by Marius, his butler, and Henri, his footman. But it no longer meant anything to him.

The following afternoon I found Willie reclining on a sofa, peering through his spectacles at a Bible which had very large print. He looked horribly wizened and his face was grim.

"I've been reading the Bible you gave me... And I've come across the quotation, **What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? I must tell you, my dear Robin, that the text used to hang opposite my bed when I was a child... Of course, it's all a lot of bunk. But the thought is quite interesting all the same.**"

Robin Maugham goes on to describe an empty, bitter old man who repeatedly fell into shrieking terrors, crying, "Go away! I'm not ready... I'm not dead yet... I'm not dead yet, I tell you..." He was a man who had gained the whole world and lost his own soul, a "keeper" who lost. On the other hand, there are "losers" who are the ultimate keepers. (R Kent Hughes - Preaching the Word - Mark, Volume I: Jesus, Servant and Savior)

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"What can a man give in exchange for his life?" (Mk 8:37) The answer is nothing. On April 17, 1998, Linda McCartney, wife of Paul McCartney of the Beatles, died. Newsweek concluded its article on her death by saying, "The McCartney's had all the money in the world... Enough to afford their privacy. Enough to give them a beautiful view. But all the money in the world wasn't enough to keep her alive" (Giles, "Lady McCartney," 64).

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**ILLUSTRATIONS OF INVESTING ONE'S LIFE** (from [SERMON](#) by Steven Cole) The famous evangelist George Whitefield once told of seeing some criminals riding in a cart on their way to the gallows. They were arguing about who should sit on the right hand of the cart with no more concern than children who are going somewhere with their parents. It seems absurd that men who are about to die would be arguing about who gets the best seat in the cart! Yet isn't that an indictment of us all? We're all about to die! This life is so fleeting and uncertain. Eternity is ahead. Yet we devote ourselves to gaining position and possessions in this world, with no thought of the world to come!

The irony of Jesus' perceptive statement is magnified by the fact that few of us ever come close to gaining the whole world. But even if we could do it, Jesus says, what good is it if we forfeit our own soul? **Alexander the Great** conquered vast territories and even ordered that he be worshiped as god, but he caught a fever and died at age 33. What good did his conquests do him in light of eternity? Just over 50 years ago, **Adolf Hitler** tried to conquer the world, but he ended up committing suicide when his plans failed. Some business tycoons, like **Ted Turner**, reject God and commit themselves to amassing a fortune. He owns more land than almost any other human being. But he soon will die and face God's judgment with nothing to cover his sin.

How much wiser was **Jim Elliot**, who was killed at 28 trying to take the gospel to the fierce Auca tribe in Ecuador. At age 22 he had written in his journal, "**He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose**" (Shadow of the Almighty [Zondervan], p. 15). Two years earlier he had prayed, "**Lord make my way prosperous, not that I achieve high station, but that my life may be an exhibit to the value of knowing God**" (ibid., p. 13).

The Christian life must be lived daily by keeping in view the shortness of this life and the insignificance of the things of this world in light of eternity. When he was just 19, Jonathan Edwards wrote down 34 resolutions that he committed himself to practice for God's glory. Number 9 was, "**To think much, on all occasions, of my dying, and of the common circumstances which attend death**" (The Works of Jonathan Edwards [Banner of Truth], 1:xx). That may strike you as a bit morbid for a young man, but Edwards was seeking to live in the light of eternity. A few months later he wrote, "**I frequently hear persons in old age say how they would live, if they were to live their lives over again: Resolved, That I will live just so as I can think I shall wish I had done, supposing I live to old age**" (ibid., 1:xxii).

To apply this, think about being at the end of your life. None of us knows how long we'll live, but assume that the Lord gives you 80 years. In light of eternity, what would you want to accomplish as you look back on your life from that point? In light of this, write out a purpose statement that sums up what you want God to do through you in the years He gives you. Then write out some specific goals for the coming year in light of that overall purpose. Then, whether you live to be 80 or 40, you won't spend your time trying to gain the world while losing your soul.....

**ILLUSTRATION** In 1777, Dr. William Dodd, a well-known London clergyman, was condemned to be hanged for forgery (the penalties were a bit more severe back then!). When his last sermon, delivered in prison, was published, a friend commented to Samuel Johnson that the effort was far better than he had thought the man capable of. Dr. Johnson's classic reply was, "Depend upon it, when a man knows he is to be hanged in a fortnight, it concentrates his mind wonderfully."

If we would keep in mind that life is very short and that eternity is just ahead, it would concentrate our minds wonderfully! Even though it is difficult and painful, we would daily put self on the cross and follow Jesus because we will soon stand before Him on judgment day. Instead of getting caught up with the things of this world, we would live in view of the world to come. The reality of eternity is the motivation for living obediently now, even though it means a slow, painful death to self.

An Italian legend tells about a man who had a servant who was rather stupid. One day the master became exasperated and told the

servant, “You’re the stupidest fellow I’ve ever known. I want you to take this staff and carry it with you. If you ever meet a man who is more stupid than you are, give him the staff.”

The servant took the staff. He met some pretty dumb men, but he wasn’t sure if they were dumber than he was, so he never gave away the staff. Then one day he was called back to the castle. He was ushered into the master’s bedroom, where the master was on his deathbed. He told the servant, “I’m going on a long journey.” The servant asked, “When will you be back?” The master replied that he would not return.

The servant asked, “Well, sir, have you got everything prepared for your journey?” The master said, “No, I’ve not really made much preparation for it.” The servant asked, “Could you have made preparation? Could you have sent something on?” The master said, “Yes, I guess I had a lifetime to do that, but I was just busy about other things.” The servant went on, “Then you won’t be back to the castle, to the lands, to the animals?” The master said he wouldn’t be back.

The legend says that the servant took the staff which he had carried for all those years and said to the master, “Here, you take the staff. I finally met a man who was more stupid than myself.”

We’re all going to take that journey. Jesus tells us how to prepare. Trust Him as Savior and follow Him as Lord, denying self even when it’s hard. One day you will see Him smile and say, “Well done!” Then it will be worth it all! (from [SERMON](#) by Steven Cole)

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## Willing To Jump

Read: Luke 9:18-26

Whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. —Luke 9:24

Russian revolutionary Vladimir Ilyich Lenin spoke of communists as “dead men on furlough.” Those dedicated followers of the atheistic philosophy were willing to die for the cause, and each new day was simply a reprieve.

If people were willing to risk everything for a cause based on a lie, how much more should we who know Christ be willing to do so for the truth! Jesus told those who wanted to be His disciples that they had to be willing to follow Him to death. It was to be a commitment of their entire life, no matter what the cost.

In his book *One Crowded Hour*, Tim Bowden describes an incident in Borneo in 1964. Nepalese fighters known as Gurkhas were asked if they would be willing to jump from airplanes into combat against the Indonesians. The Gurkhas didn’t clearly understand what was involved, but they bravely said they would do it, asking only that the plane fly slowly over a swampy area and no higher than 100 feet. When they were told that the parachutes would not have time to open at that height, the Gurkhas replied, “Oh, you didn’t mention parachutes before!”

Jesus calls us to follow Him with a similar kind of commitment and courage, willing to risk all for His sake. By Haddon W. Robinson ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Halfhearted! Master, shall any who know Thee  
Grudge Thee their lives, who hast laid down Thine own?  
Nay! We would offer the hearts that we owe Thee,  
Live for Thy love and Thy glory alone.  
—Havergal

We may not walk to the martyr’s stake, but we must walk in the Master’s steps.

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## A Life That Satisfies

Read: Mark 8:34-38

Whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s will save it. —Mark 8:35

In his book *Facing Loneliness*, J. Oswald Sanders writes, “The round of pleasure or the amassing of wealth are but vain attempts to escape from the persistent ache. . . . The millionaire is usually a lonely man, and the comedian is often more unhappy than his audience.”

Sanders goes on to emphasize that being successful often fails to produce satisfaction. Then he refers to Henry Martyn, a distinguished scholar, as an example of what he is talking about.

Martyn, a Cambridge University student, was honored at only 20 years of age for his achievements in mathematics. In fact, he was

given the highest recognition possible in that field. And yet he felt an emptiness inside. He said that instead of finding fulfillment in his achievements, he had “only grasped a shadow.”

After evaluating his life’s goals, Martyn sailed to India as a missionary at the age of 24. When he arrived, he prayed, “Lord, let me burn out for You.” In the next 7 years that preceded his death, he translated the New Testament into three difficult Eastern languages. These notable achievements were certainly not passing “shadows.”

Real fulfillment comes in following Christ. A life lived fully for the Lord is a life that truly satisfies. By Richard DeHaan [Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

If we commit ourselves to Christ  
And follow in His way,  
He'll give us life that satisfies  
With purpose for each day.  
—Sper

A fulfilled life is a life full of love for the Lord and others.

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## Risky Business

Read: Luke 9:18-27

Whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. —Luke 9:24

As the worldwide financial crisis deepened in 2010, executives of a global banking firm were investigated for deceiving their customers about the risk involved in certain investments they were selling. While promising a high rate of return, the banking firm knew that the investments were destined to fail, leaving those who purchased them with nothing.

Deception is nothing new. Jesus described Satan as one who “does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him . . . for he is a liar and the father of it” (John 8:44). The enemy of our souls tells us, “Live only for the present,” when he knows it will result in our eternal loss.

Jesus, on the other hand, did not offer His disciples a life of prosperity and ease but called them to self-sacrifice and identification with Him. After telling them that He would be killed and raised from the dead, Jesus said, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it” (Luke 9:23-24).

There are two voices telling us where to invest our lives. It’s risky business to follow the wrong one. -- David C. McCasland [Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

When you hear the Shepherd’s voice  
As He calls you, “Come to Me,”  
In your life make Him your choice  
And His faithful follower be.  
—Hess

If we hold on to God’s truth, we won’t be trapped by Satan’s lies.

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## Mark 8:36 "For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul?"

NET Mark 8:36 For what benefit is it for a person to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his life?

NLT Mark 8:36 And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul?

ESV Mark 8:36 For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?

NIV Mark 8:36 What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul?

GNT Mark 8:36 τ γ ρ φελε νθρωπον κερδσαι τ ν κ σμον λον κα ζημιωθ ναι τ ν ψυχ ν α το ;

KJV Mark 8:36 For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

ASV Mark 8:36 For what doth it profit a man, to gain the whole world, and forfeit his life?

CSB Mark 8:36 For what does it benefit a man to gain the whole world yet lose his life?

NKJ Mark 8:36 "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?"

NRS Mark 8:36 For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life?

YLT Mark 8:36 for what shall it profit a man, if he may gain the whole world, and forfeit his life?

- **what:** Job 2:4 Ps 49:17 73:18-20 Mt 4:8-10 16:26 Lu 9:25 Lk 12:19,20 Lu 16:19-23 Php 3:7-9 Rev 18:7,8
- **profit:** Job 22:2 Mal 3:14 Ro 6:21 Heb 11:24-26 Jas 1:9-11
- **Mark 8 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## A SHORTSIGHTED BARGAIN!

### Related Passages:

Luke 9:25+ "For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself?"

Matthew 16:26+ "For ([term of explanation](#) - explains Mt 16:25 losing one's life by asking a rhetorical question) what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? **Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?**

Luke 12:19; 20+ 'And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry.'" 20 "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?'

Luke 16:19-23+ "Now there was a rich man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, joyously living in splendor every day. 20 "And a poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores, 21 and longing to be fed with the crumbs which were falling from the rich man's table; besides, even the dogs were coming and licking his sores. 22 "Now the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried. 23 "In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and \*saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom.

**For** - Term of explanation - Jesus continues to explain the value of His call to **follow** Him (discipleship) by explaining the priceless value of losing one's life versus the incredible loss of trying to save it. If our goal is to gain the whole world, we are clearly not going to be individuals who deny our selfish desires and take up our cross because the cross speaks of death to self and those selfish desires (which we all have because we all have the fallen flesh we must battle daily, a battle Jesus called for in Lk 9:23+).

"**for** elucidates by contrasting the higher life with the world, all that it stands for as estranged from God." (Hiebert)

**William MacDonald** - As the Savior talked with the twelve, He realized that the desire for material riches might be a powerful deterrent against full surrender. And so He said, in effect, "Suppose you could stockpile all the gold and silver in **the whole world**, could own all the real estate and property, all the stocks and bonds—everything of material value—and suppose that in your frantic effort to acquire all this you missed the true purpose of life, what good would it do you? You would have it for only a short while; then you would leave it forever. It would be an insane bargain to sell that one, short life for a few toys of dust." (Believer's Bible Commentary)

**What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul**- There may be short term, temporal "profit," but long term, even eternal loss! A financial adviser would call this a very bad "investment!"

**Osborne** - Jesus says what is at stake in the choice stated in verse 35. We are dealing with temporary benefits versus eternal loss. This same truth is stated frequently in Jewish thought (Ps. 49:7-9; Eccles. 1:3; 2 Bar. 51:15). To live only for earthly benefits is to waste your life. One can be a billionaire, have all the world's goods at one's fingertips, and in the end have nothing. **Death is the great equalizer.** But those who have eternal rewards will enjoy them forever...Nowhere are the two choices that determine the meaning of life more apparent than here in 8:35-37. **There are no options more important than these: temporary gain that brings eternal loss versus temporary loss that produces eternal gain. Every human being is faced with the alternatives, and none matter more than these. To opt for the temporary is to face constant uncertainty and anxiety, for this world will never be our friend. More importantly, to choose the earthly over the heavenly will result in the greatest loss imaginable, the loss of eternal life.** The soul is an everlasting creation and will never cease to exist, but that eternity can be what is called "eternal destruction," eternal punishment in the lake of fire (Rev. 20:15+; Rev 21:8+). ([Teach the Text - Mark](#)) (Bolding Added)

**Profit** ([5623](#))/([opheleo](#) from [ophéllō](#) = heap up or from [ophelos](#) = increase, profit) means to provide

assistance, with emphasis upon the resulting benefit. It is used usually with the sense of gain, profit in both a material and non-material sense.

**Gain** (win) (2770) [kerdaino](#) from [kerdos](#) = gain) means literally to procure an advantage or profit, to acquire by effort or investment (as in the parable of the talents Mt 25:16,17, 20, 22; James 4:13 = "make a profit"). The synoptic Gospels use **kerdaino** to emphasize the tragic state of a man who **'gains'** the whole world (Mt 16:26, Mark 8:36, Luke 9:25), this use speaking literally of money, possessions, investments, etc, but also figuratively of the position, power, acclaim, etc ("boastful pride of life" 1 Jn 2:16). The Spirit must consider this truth of great importance, to reiterate it in all three Gospels! Note also that **world** in each of these three passages is **kosmos**.

**World** (2889) ([kosmos](#)) refers to the world system of evil of which Satan is the head, all unsaved people his servants, together with the pursuits, pleasure, purposes, people, and places where God is not wanted. **Kosmos** defines the world not as a neutral influence but as an "evil force", the inveterate, incorrigible, intractable, intransigent, irrevocable enemy of God and of every believer. This begs the question "Why would any believer ever desire to befriend or be friends with such a 'ferocious' foe?" **Bishop Trench** summarizes the definition of the **kosmos**, the anti-God world system as "All that floating mass of thoughts, opinions, maxims, speculations, hopes, impulses, aims, aspirations, at any time current in the world, which it may be impossible to seize and accurately define, but which constitutes a most real and effective power, being the moral, or immoral atmosphere which at every moment of our lives we inhale, again inevitably to exhale."

**Forfeit** (2210) ([zemioo](#) from [zemia](#)) means to affect with damage or to do damage to, to suffer injury, to suffer loss, to sustain damage, to forfeit or to fine. It means to experience the loss of something, with implication of undergoing hardship or suffering. **Zemioo** was a business term meaning to "punish by exacting a forfeit" (Vincent). **A T Robertson** writes that [zemioo](#) "occurs in the sense of being fined or mulcted (penalized by fining or demanding forfeiture) of money. **Marvin Vincent** agrees noting that [zemioo](#) was "Often in the classics, of fining or mulcting in a sum of money.

**Hiebert** - The thought is presented under a commercial metaphor, and the question implies that there is not profit in the suggested transaction. The present gain is pictured in its highest form, "gain the whole world," a clear impossibility for any individual. But granting the impossible, if a man should accomplish it and thereby forfeit his life, what is the profit in it? The argument is valid whether life be taken in its lower or higher meaning. ([Gospel of Mark - An Expository Commentary](#))

**Guzik** - What will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Avoiding the walk down death row with Jesus means that we may gain the whole world, and end up losing everything. Jesus Himself had the opportunity to gain all the world by worshipping Satan (Luke 4:5-8), but found life and victory in obedience instead (Ed: Obedience is a reflection of one's faith. No obedience, no faith in Jesus and His Gospel). Amazingly, the people who live this way before Jesus are the (only) ones who are really, genuinely happy (blessed). Giving our lives to Jesus all the way, and living as an others-centered person does not take away from our lives, it adds to it. (Enduring Word Commentary)

**Wuest** - On the other hand, while self-denial will not save a person in the sense of making him a child of God, yet, lack of self-denial, together with self-satisfaction will result in his going into eternity, a lost sinner. "World" here is kosmos (κοσμος), and refers to the world system of evil of which Satan is the head, all unsaved people his servants, together with the pursuits, pleasure, purposes, people, and places where God is not wanted. The word "lose" is zemioō (ζεμιωω) "to sustain damage, to receive injury, to suffer loss." ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmans Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

**D L Moody** - As you love your soul, beware of the world; it has slain its thousands and ten thousands. What ruined Lot's wife? The world. What ruined Judas? The world. What ruined Simon Magus? The world. And "what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

#### Related Resources:

- [Luke 9:24-26](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 9:23-25 The Gospel: Self-Love or Self-Hate?](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 9:23-26 The Gospel in Perspective](#) - John MacArthur

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#### J C Ryle on Mark 8:34-38 -

THE words of our Lord Jesus Christ in this passage are peculiarly weighty and solemn. They were spoken to correct the mistaken views of His disciples, as to the nature of His kingdom. But they contain truths of the deepest importance to Christians in every age of the Church. The whole passage is one which should often form the subject of private meditation.

**We learn, for another thing, from these verses, the unspeakable value of the soul.** What saith our Lord? “What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” These words were meant to stir us up to exertion and self-denial. They ought to ring in our ears like a trumpet, every morning when we rise from our beds, and every night when we lie down. May they be deeply graven in our memories, and never effaced by the devil and the world!

We have all souls that will live for evermore. Whether we know it or not, we all carry about with us something which will live on when our bodies are mouldering in the grave. We have all souls, for which we shall have to give account to God. It is an awful thought, when we consider how little attention most men give to anything except this world. But it is true.

Any man may lose his own soul. He cannot save it: Christ alone can do that. But he can lose it, and that in many different ways. He may murder it, by loving sin and cleaving to the world.—He may poison it by choosing a religion of lies, and believing man-made superstitions.—He may starve it, by neglecting all means of grace, and refusing to receive into his heart the Gospel.—Many are the ways that lead to the pit. Whatever way a man takes, he, and he alone, is accountable for it. Weak, corrupt, fallen, impotent as human nature is, man has a mighty power of destroying, ruining, and losing his own soul.

**The whole world cannot make up to a man the loss of his soul. The possession of all the treasures that the world contains, would not compensate for eternal ruin.** They would not satisfy us, and make us happy while we had them. They could only be enjoyed for a few years, at best, and must then be left for evermore. Of all unprofitable and foolish bargains that man can make, the worst is that of giving up his soul’s salvation for the sake of this present world. It is a bargain of which thousands, like Esau, who sold his birthright for a mess of pottage, have repented,—but many, unhappily, like Esau, have repented too late.

**Let these sayings of our Lord sink deep into our hearts. Words are inadequate to express their importance.**

- May we remember them in the hour of temptation, when the soul seems a small and unimportant thing, and the world seems very bright and great.
- May we remember them in the hour of persecution, when we are tried by the fear of man, and half inclined to forsake Christ.
- In hours like these, let us call to mind this mighty question of our Lord, and repeat it to ourselves, “What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?”

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## The Treasure Myth

Read: Psalm 37:7-20

What will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul. —Mark 8:36

When the great ocean liner Titanic sank in 1912, it was rumored to have gone down with a fortune in jewels and gold. That longstanding myth was dispelled, however, by the discovery of the ship’s manifest, which showed that the ship was carrying raw feathers, linen, straw, hatter’s fur, tissue, auto parts, leather, rabbit hair, elastics, hair nets, and refrigerating equipment.

There is another persistent rumor about riches. It is widely believed that a wealthy person should be honored and valued, even though he may be ungodly. On the other hand, a godly, self-disciplined person is considered by some to be of little worth if he is not wealthy.

David, the author of Psalm 37, cautioned the poor and needy not to be envious of the rich and prosperous. In time, the cargo manifest of the ungodly will be uncovered, revealing that their lives contain nothing of enduring value.

This life is only the beginning of an everlasting existence. So don’t look longingly at the ungodly and their riches. They have no lasting treasures. Instead, be like those who wait with patience for their eternal God (vv.7,9)—no matter what their economic situation may be. They alone know where to find real treasure. By Mart DeHaan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Some people think they have it all  
When riches come their way;  
But their great loss will be revealed  
On God’s accounting day.  
—Bosch

It’s better to be poor and walk by faith than to be rich and walk by sight.

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**Dietrich Bonhoeffer** (1906-1945) understood what the normal Christian life should look like. The way may be hard, but the path and

the end are glorious.

The cross is laid on every Christian. The first Christ-suffering which every man must experience is the call to abandon the attachments of this world. It is that dying of the old man which is the result of his encounter with Christ. As we embark upon discipleship we surrender ourselves to Christ in union with his death—we give over our lives to death. Thus it begins; the cross is not the terrible end to an otherwise god-fearing and happy life, but it meets us at the beginning of our communion with Christ. When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die.... But it is the same death every time—death in Jesus Christ, the death of the old man at his call. Jesus' summons to the rich young man was calling him to die, because only the man who is dead to his own will can follow Christ. In fact every command of Jesus is a call to die, with all our affections and lusts. But we do not want to die, and therefore Jesus Christ and his call are necessarily our death as well as our life. The call to discipleship, the baptism in the name of Jesus Christ means both death and life. (Bonhoeffer, *Cost*, 99) (Quoted by Daniel Akin in Christ-Centered Exposition – Exalting Jesus in Mark)

**ILLUSTRATION** - Adrian Rogers tells this story about Ernest Hemingway - Ernest Hemingway was a remarkable man. He won a Pulitzer Prize. He won a Nobel Prize. He was a young reporter—already a news reporter—when World War I began. And, he went to the front and was wounded in Italy. He came back and had an exciting life as a big game hunter. He was a bullfighter. He was a sports fisherman, who would fish for marlin. And, when World War II came, he didn't want to be left out, so he took his fishing boat and rigged it with two 50-caliber machine guns, bazookas, hand grenades, and would cruise off the coast of Cuba, hoping that a German U-boat would surface. If he could see the conning tower or the periscope, or if he could see the water breaking over that steel skin of that U-boat, he would move toward it, expecting them to surface and get a boarding party to come and board his ship. And, he would remain about 50 yards away. And, when it would come up, and they would open the tower and come out on the deck, then he would increase speed and move toward them with machine guns firing, hoping to lob a grenade down the conning tower into the U-boat and to sink it. A daring man! He was in an airplane accident. He was hit by a taxi. He had all kinds of escapades. He was wounded in war. He lived in France. He lived in Italy. He lived in Cuba. He lived in Key West. He lived in Idaho. He was a man that did everything. But, he abused himself with alcohol and became just a slave to alcohol. He went through four marriages. He said, finally, at the end of all of this, thinking of his life—this great novelist, this great author—he said, "It seems that we are ants"—a-n-t-s—"ants on the end of a burning log." Do you know how he ended it all? With a shotgun to his head. Ernest Hemingway—he did so much, seeking, everywhere, adventure. You talk about a man who had a full life and an empty life at the same time! His life was filled with futility—no purpose. "We're like ants—ants on the end of a burning log." An empty life.

**ILLUSTRATION** - Bob Hope was one of the most beloved comedians in American history. He had everything ([just glance at his home which sold for \\$13 million](#)). He had the world, but the question is did he have Jesus as His Savior? You be the judge - Here are two distinctly different critiques of his life to help you decide (and of course you and I are NOT the final judge - that right is God's alone!) - (1) [Stories of Faith: Bob Hope Finds Real Hope in Jesus](#) (2) [The Death of Bob Hope - R L Hymers](#) Finally see [this article in Wikipedia](#) regarding Hope's lifestyle. What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his soul?

### Mark 8:37 "For what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"

NET Mark 8:37 What can a person give in exchange for his life?

NLT Mark 8:37 Is anything worth more than your soul?

ESV Mark 8:37 For what can a man give in return for his soul?

NIV Mark 8:37 Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?

GNT Mark 8:37 τ γ ρ δο νθρωπος ντ λλαγμα τ ς ψυχ ς α το ;

KJV Mark 8:37 Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

ASV Mark 8:37 For what should a man give in exchange for his life?

CSB Mark 8:37 What can a man give in exchange for his life?

NKJ Mark 8:37 "Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"

NRS Mark 8:37 Indeed, what can they give in return for their life?

YLT Mark 8:37 Or what shall a man give as an exchange for his life?

- Ps 49:7,8 1Pe 1:18,19
- **Mark 8 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## A SIMPLE QUESTION ANSWER: NOTHING!

### Related Passages:

Matthew 16:26+ "For ([term of explanation](#) - explains Mt 16:25 losing one's life by asking a rhetorical question) what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? **Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?**

No man can by any means redeem his brother Or give to God a ransom for him— (49:8) For the redemption of his soul is costly, And he should cease trying forever (Psalm 49:7-8<sub>±</sub>)

**Spurgeon** - With all their riches, the whole of them put together could not rescue a comrade from the chill grasp of death. They boast of what they will do with us, let them see to themselves. **Let them weigh their gold in the scales of death, and see how much they can buy therewith from the worm and the grave.** The poor are their equals in this respect; let them love their friend ever so dearly, they cannot give to God a ransom for him. A king's ransom would be of no avail, a Monte Rosa of rubies, an America of silver, a world of gold, a sun of diamonds, would all be utterly [contemned](#). O ye boasters, think not to terrify us with your worthless wealth, go ye and intimidate death before ye threaten men in whom is immortality and life. **For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever.** Too great is the price, the purchase is hopeless. For ever must the attempt to redeem a soul with money remain a failure. Death comes and wealth cannot bribe him; hell follows and no golden key can unlock its dungeon. Vain, then, are your threatenings, ye possessors of the yellow clay; your childish toys are despised by men who estimate the value of possessions by the shekel of the sanctuary.

**For** - Term of explanation - "**for**, omitted in the KJV, again confirms the declaration, setting forth the finality of the unprofitable transaction. The question suggests that no exchange will be possible. The loss is irrevocable. The question underlines the incomputable value of the human soul.." (Hiebert)

**Osborne** - God alone can make a "soul" or create life. Such is not for sale in any store, and one cannot order it online. Everything that one does purchase has only a single purpose: to improve the quality of life. But only God can extend one's life/soul into eternity, so Jesus is saying that the soul is of inestimable worth, and thus everyone must turn to God. ([Teach the Text - Mark](#))

**What will a man give in exchange for his soul?** - The answer is that a sinner can give no payment for his soul. He is a debtor for the wages of sin is death. There is only one acceptable payment and it is the precious blood of Jesus Christ which alone provides full, forever atonement for all of a man's sins. Peter writes

Knowing that you were not redeemed with **perishable things like silver or gold** from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with **precious blood**, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, **the blood of Christ**. (1 Peter 1:18-19+)

In Him **we have redemption through His blood**, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace (Eph 1:7+)

for this is **My blood** of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins. (Mt 26:28)

**Exchange** ([465](#)) (**antallagma** from **anti** = over against + **allasso** = to change) is a noun describing that which is given in exchange or equivalent, substitute. "That which is given in place of another thing by way of exchange; what is given either in order to keep or to acquire anything":(Thayer) The only other use is in Mt 16:26 ""For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"

**TDNT** = **antallagma**. This means "purchase-money," "equivalent," "substitute." It occurs in the NT only in Mk. 8:37 = Mt. 16:26 (based on Ps. 49:7), not to stress the infinite worth of the human soul, but to show that divine judgment is so serious that in it no exchange of equivalent for a forfeited life is possible.

There are 6 uses in the **Septuagint** - Ruth 4:7; 1 Ki. 21:2 = "I will give you the price of it in money."; Job 28:15; Ps. 55:19; Ps. 89:51; Jer. 15:13; Matt. 16:26; Mk. 8:37

**Thayer** writes that "nothing equals in value the soul's salvation.' Christ transfers a proverbial expression respecting the supreme

value of the natural life (Homer, Iliad 9, 401 οὐ γάρ ἐμοί, γυχ/ἰ ἀντάξιον) to the life eternal. (Ruth 4:7; Jer. 15:13; Sir. 6:15, etc.; Euripides, Or. 1157; Josephus, b. j. 1, 18, 3.)\*

**Mark 8:38 "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."**

Wuest For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this generation which is adulterous and sinful, also the Son of Man shall be ashamed of him, when He comes in the glory of His Father with the angels, the holy ones. ([Wuest](#))

NET Mark 8:38 For if anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

NLT Mark 8:38 If anyone is ashamed of me and my message in these adulterous and sinful days, the Son of Man will be ashamed of that person when he returns in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

ESV Mark 8:38 For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

NIV Mark 8:38 If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels."

GNT Mark 8:38 ζ γ ρ ν παισχυνθ με κα το ς μο ς λ γους ν τ γενε τα τ τ μοιχαλ δι κα μαρτωλ , κα υ ς το νθρ που παισχυνθ σεται α τ ν , ταν λθ ν τ ὀ ξ το πατρ ς α το μετ τ ν γγ λων τ ν γ ων.

KJV Mark 8:38 Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

ASV Mark 8:38 For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of man also shall be ashamed of him, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

CSB Mark 8:38 For whoever is ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."

NKJ Mark 8:38 "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."

NRS Mark 8:38 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."

YLT Mark 8:38 for whoever may be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man also shall be ashamed of him, when he may come in the glory of his Father, with the holy messengers.'

- **ashamed:** Mt 10:32,33 Lu 19:26 12:8,9 Ac 5:41 Ro 1:16 Ga 6:14 2Ti 1:8,12,16 2:12,13 Heb 11:26 12:2,3 13:13 1Jn 2:23
- **adulterous:** Mt 12:39 16:4 Jas 4:4
- **the Son:** Mk 14:62 Da 7:13 Mt 16:27 24:30 25:31 26:64 Joh 1:14 5:27 12:34
- **when:** De 33:2 Da 7:10 Zec 14:5 Mt 13:41 Joh 1:51 1Th 1:7,8 Jude 1:14,15
- **Mark 8 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **CHRIST'S GLORIOUS RETURN BRINGS SHAME TO THE ASHAMED**

### **Related Passages:**

Luke 9:26+ "For whoever is **ashamed** of Me and My words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes in His glory, and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.

Matthew 16:27+ "For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and WILL THEN REPAY EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS. ("pay day, some day! Here shame paid for shame

practiced).

This passage should frighten any sane person who hears Jesus' words. And don't confuse Jesus allusion to shame as that reaction we all have when we know we should speak for Christ, but instead shrink back. Peter did this three times and yet later boldly proclaimed Jesus as the Savior (cf Acts 4:13+ - "confidence" = boldness). The best way to assure who won't have a reaction of shame regarding Jesus, is to be filled with His Word and filled with His Spirit (Eph 5:18+, cf [Filled with His Spirit/Richly Indwelt with His Word](#)). Throughout the book of Acts we see one manifestation of Spirit filled believers was a boldness to speak up for Christ (cf Acts 4:31+, Acts 9:27+, Acts 28:31+ = "openness"). Here is a good prayer if you lack Spirit empowered boldness "And now, Lord, take note of their threats, and grant that Your bond-servants may speak Your word with all confidence (boldness)." (Acts 4:29+).

**For** - Term of explanation - "the final for vindicates the demands of discipleship by relating them to the eschatological messianic victory (8:38–9:1). In that day the crucial point will be man's relation to the one now making the demands." (Hiebert)

**A T Robertson on whoever is ashamed** - It is not a statement about the future conduct of one, but about his present attitude toward Jesus. The conduct of men toward Christ now determines Christ's conduct then

**Osborne** - This was an honor-shame culture, and it was defined through patron-client relationships. So the warning about "being ashamed" of Jesus means much more than the emotion of being embarrassed to witness or be known as a Christian. We are dealing with our allegiance and loyalty to Jesus. Discipleship means to acknowledge and be identified with Jesus in every sphere of life, so being "ashamed" probably parallels Matthew 10:32–33, the danger of "denying" Jesus. Those who seek to "save their life" and "gain the whole world" (vv. 35, 36) are denying ("ashamed of") Jesus....Those who care only for the world and give Jesus only token allegiance will answer to him at the final judgment (the "great white throne" of Rev. 20:11–15). ([Teach the Text - Mark](#))

**Whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation** - NET "if anyone is ashamed." What were Jesus' **words**? The most important words (of My words) were the gospel, the good news of salvation He provided to otherwise hopeless sinners. Mark's first direct quote of Jesus is in Mark 1:15+ Jesus declaring "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; **repent and believe** in the **gospel**." Note also Paul's declaration in Romans 1:16+ (using same Greek word for **ashamed**) "For I am not **ashamed** of the gospel, (WHY NOT?) for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek." Everyone who is ashamed of these the words of the Gospel, has no other hope of eternal life.

What a contrast WHOEVER is ashamed is which "whoever" in Romans

Romans 10:11+ For the Scripture says, "**WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED.**"

**Whoever is ashamed** will be eternally **disappointed!**

Romans 10:13+ for "**WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.**"

**Whoever is ashamed** will be eternally lost!

**Ashamed** (1870)([epaischunomai](#) from **epi** = upon or used to intensify + **aischunomai** from **aischos** = disfigurement & then disgrace) means to be reluctant through fear of humiliation. Epaischunomai is a reluctance to receive Jesus or His words because of fear of humiliation. In effect it amounts to a denial of Jesus and His words and in effect is tantamount to failure to believe in Him for salvation.

**Epaischunomai** is used 11 times - Mark 8:38; Luke 9:26; Ro 1:16; Ro 6:21; 2 Ti 1:8, 2 Ti 1:12, 16; Heb 2:11; Heb 11:16. In Septuagint 3x - Ps 118:6, Job 34:19, Is 1:29

If we are true to Him in time, He will be true to us in eternity.

-- William Barclay

**The Son of Man will also be ashamed of him** - In other words Our response to Jesus today will determine how Jesus judges us when He returns.

**Son of Man** in Mark - Mk. 2:10; Mk. 2:28; Mk. 8:31; Mk. 8:38; Mk. 9:9; Mk. 9:12; Mk. 9:31; Mk. 10:33; Mk. 10:45; Mk. 13:26; Mk. 14:21; Mk. 14:41; Mk. 14:62;

**NIV Study Bible** - A person who is more concerned about fitting into and pleasing his own "**adulterous and sinful generation**" than about following and pleasing Christ will have no part in God's kingdom.

Some like J Vernon McGee who I greatly respect feel this is a true believer, albeit one who is ashamed of Jesus and/or His words. I beg to disagree with Dr McGee on his interpretation. Here are some other comments...

**John MacArthur** - Jesus identifies those who will not **repent and believe** in Him (**ED**: cf Mark 1:15+) as those who are **ashamed** of Him and His **words** (cf. Mt. 10:32-33). To be **ashamed** in this context means to reject,

despise, and find unacceptable. Such people are proud of what they should be ashamed of; their "glory is in their shame" (Phil. 3:19). (MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Luke 6-10)

**J C Ryle** - The wickedness of being **ashamed** of Christ is very great. **It is a proof of unbelief.** It shows that we care more for the praise of men whom we can see, than that of God whom we cannot see. It is a proof of ingratitude. It shows that we fear confessing Him before man who was not ashamed to die for us upon the cross. Wretched indeed are they who give way to this sin. Here, in this world, they are always miserable. A bad conscience robs them of peace. In the world to come they can look for no comfort. **In the day of judgment they must expect to be disowned by Christ to all eternity,** if they will not confess Christ for a few years upon earth. Let us resolve never to be ashamed of Christ. Of sin and worldliness we may well be ashamed. Of Christ and His cause we have no right to be ashamed at all. Boldness in Christ's service always brings its own reward. The boldest Christian is always the happiest man. ([Commentary](#)) (Bolding added)

**Adam Clarke** - As he refused to acknowledge Me before men, so will I refuse to acknowledge him before God and his angels. **Terrible consequence of the rejection of Christ!** And who can help him whom the only Savior eternally disowns. Reader! Lay this subject seriously to heart ([Commentary](#)) (Bolding added)

**POSB** – The point is clear: when Jesus comes in His glory, the materialist will not join Him. He will not be welcomed into the glory of the Lord. Why? Christ will be *ashamed* of him. He will be embarrassed by the man, too embarrassed to acknowledge that He knows the man.

**John Martin** - In the same manner Jesus noted that if one **is ashamed of Him** (i.e., will not identify with Him or believe on Him) **and His words** (i.e., His message), **the Son of Man will be ashamed of him** in the future. (The Bible Knowledge Commentary)

**HCSB Study Bible** - To be **ashamed** of Christ and His **words** indicates unbelief, which will bring eternal judgment (Lk 12:9; 2Ti 2:12) at His second coming.

**Matthew Henry** - When the service and honour of Christ called for his testimony and agency, he denied them, because the interest of Christ was a despised interest, and every where spoken against; and therefore he can expect no other than that in the great day, when his case calls for Christ's appearance on his behalf, Christ will be ashamed to own such a cowardly, worldly, sneaking spirit, and will say, "He is none of mine; he belongs not to me."

**Robert Stein** - This is another way of saying "to disown me," and the opposite is "to acknowledge me" as Lk 12:8–9 points out (cf. Lk 22:54–61). The loyalty to ultimate values demanded in Lk 9:24 becomes more focused on Jesus. (New American Commentary – Volume 24: Luke)

**William Hendriksen** - To be ashamed of Jesus means to be so proud that one wants to have nothing to do with him and with his words. Jesus is going to be ashamed of such people. Cf. Matt. 7:23; Luke 13:27. At his return he will reject and condemn them. Cf. Matt. 25:41-46a. Note Christ's self-designation, "the Son of man," as in Lk 9:22; see on that verse and on Lk 5:24. (Baker New Testament Commentary – Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke)

**NET Note** - How one responds now to Jesus and His teaching is a reflection of how Jesus, as the Son of Man who judges, will respond then in the final judgment.

**College Press NIV Commentary** - Therefore, **whoever wants to save his life** (that is, whoever **is ashamed of** Jesus when persecution comes) will forfeit life in the [kingdom of God](#).

**MacArthur Study Bible** - **whoever is ashamed of Me.** I.e., unbelievers. Cf. Mt 10:33; Ro 9:33; 10:11; 2Ti 2:12." In his sermon on Luke 9:26 MacArthur declares that if you are "ashamed of Jesus now, He will be ashamed of you then (**Ed:** When He comes in Judgment). The record of your shame will be displayed at the judgment, and you will spend the rest of eternity with nagging, gnawing torment in full recognition of your shame (Lk 13:28). Be ashamed of yourself now, be forgiven. Or be ashamed of yourself forever with no relief." ([Luke 9:26 Who's Ashamed of Whom?](#))

**ESV Study Bible** - Being **ashamed** of Jesus means to deny any link with him (cf. Lk 22:54-61) and is the opposite of acknowledging him as one's Lord and teacher (Lk 12:8-9; see note on Mark 8:38).

**Cornerstone Biblical Commentary** - To shun the Son is to face the prospect of being shunned by him when He returns with the angels to exercise judgment in the power and glory of the Father (Mk 14:62). That is, to lose one's soul.

**William Barclay** - Loyalty to Jesus will have its reward, and disloyalty its punishment. If we are true to Him in

time, He will be true to us in eternity. If we seek to follow him in this world, in the next he will point to us as one of his people. But if by our lives we disown him, even though with our lips we confess him, the day must come when he cannot do other than disown us. (The New Daily Study Bible – The Gospel of Luke)

**What the Bible Teaches** - To be ashamed of the Lord and His words in this present time means that in the day of glory He will be ashamed of us....This is a test of the genuine against the false, real believers against mere professors, so this is the shame of those who reject the cross as well as cross-bearing. The loss is eternal.

**John Piper** - What's the opposite of being **ashamed** of somebody? Being proud of them. Admiring them. Not being embarrassed to be seen with them. Loving to be identified with them. So Jesus is saying, "If you are embarrassed by Me and the price I paid for you (**and He's not referring to lapses of courage when you don't share your faith, but a settled state of your heart toward him**)—if you're not proud of Me and you don't cherish Me and what I did for you—if you want to put yourself with the goats that value their reputation in the goat herd more than they value Me, then that's the way I will view you when I come. **I will be ashamed of you, and you will perish with the people who consider Me an embarrassment.**" ("The Son of Man")

**when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels**- This is Mark's first specific reference to Jesus' final return. and clearly describes the Second Coming of Christ. This has nothing to do with the judgement of Jerusalem in 70 AD. The phrase **the glory of His Father** refers to the glory which belongs to God the Father but which Jesus also possesses as the coequal, coeternal, coexistent God.

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**J C Ryle on Mark 8:34-38** - We learn, in the last place, from these verses, the great danger of being ashamed of Christ. What saith our Lord? "Whosoever shall be ashamed of my and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed when He cometh in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."

When can it be said of any one, that he is ashamed of Christ? We are guilty of it, when we are ashamed of letting people see that we believe and love the doctrines of Christ, that we desire to live according to the commandment of Christ, and that we wish to be reckoned among the people of Christ. Christ's doctrine, laws, and people were never popular, and never will be. The man who boldly confesses that he loves them, is sure to bring on himself ridicule and persecution. Whosoever shrinks from this confession from fear of this ridicule and persecution, is ashamed of Christ, and comes under the sentence of the passage before us.

Perhaps there are few of our Lord's sayings which are more condemning than this. "The fear of man" does indeed "bring a snare." (Prov. 29:25.) There are thousands of men who would face a lion, or storm a breach, if duty called them, and fear nothing,—and yet would be ashamed of being thought "religious,"—and would not dare to avow that they desired to please Christ rather than man. Wonderful indeed is the power of ridicule! Marvellous is the bondage in which men live to the opinion of the world!

Let us all pray daily for faith and courage to confess Christ before men. Of sin, or worldliness, or unbelief, we may well be ashamed. We ought never to be ashamed of Him who died for us on the cross. In spite of laughter, mockery, and hard words, let us boldly avow that we serve Christ. Let us often look forward to the day of His second coming, and remember what He says in this place. Better a thousand times confess Christ now, and be despised by man, than be disowned by Christ before His Father in the day of judgment.

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### **The Fellowship of the Unashamed**

I'm part of the fellowship of the unashamed, I have the Holy Spirit power, the die has been cast, I have stepped over the line, the decision has been made: I'm a disciple of Jesus Christ. I won't look back, let up, slow down, back away, or be still.

My past is redeemed, my present makes sense, my future is secure. I'm finished and done with low living, sight walking, smooth knees, colorless dreams, tamed visions, worldly talking, cheap giving, and dwarfed goals.

I no longer need preeminence, prosperity, position, promotions, plaudits, or popularity. I do not have to be right, first, tops, recognized, praised, regarded, or rewarded. I now live by faith, lean in His presence, walk by patience, am uplifted by prayer, and I labor with power.

My face is set, my gait is fast, my goal is heaven, my road is narrow, my way is rough, my companions are few, my guide is reliable, my mission is clear. I won't give up, shut up, let up until I have stayed up, stored up, prayed up for the cause of Jesus Christ.

I must go till He comes, give till I drop, preach till everyone knows, work till He stops me, and when He comes for His own, He will have no trouble recognizing me because my banner will have been clear.

These words were found in the possession of a young African after he was martyred for his faith in Zimbabwe. He denied himself, took up his cross and fully followed Jesus.

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**ILLUSTRATION on UNASHAMED** - Wouldn't you like for Him to call your name in Heaven today? Wouldn't you like for Him to say, "She's mine; he's mine. They gave their heart to Me. They turned from their sin. They embraced the cross. They're not ashamed of Me. They confess Me; and now, Lord, I confess them"?

You say, "Adrian, coming forward in the service—does that save me?" No. Trusting Jesus is what saves you.

But, let me tell you a story—I heard this years ago—about a revival crusade. And, they were giving a public invitation, and a little girl was in the back—a young teenager, I suppose—and she was weeping, under deep conviction of sin. A personal worker went back there to talk to her and said, "Won't you come forward and confess Christ as your personal Savior?" She said, "No, I can't go down there in front of all of those people. I can't do that. Can't I be saved back here?" The personal worker said, "No, if you want to be saved, you've got to come forward." Now, I know what you're thinking, but let me get finished. "If you want to be saved, you've got to come forward." She said, "I can't do it."

The next night, under deep conviction again, the same thing happened—same song, second stanza. The worker went back and said, "Young lady, won't you please come forward and confess Christ as your personal Savior and Lord?" She said, "I just can't do that—not in front of all of these people. I can't do that. Can't I be saved back here?" He said, "No, you cannot."

The third night—the same thing. He went back there, said, "Young lady, will you come forward and confess Christ as your personal Lord and Savior?" Do you know what she said? She said, "Yes, I will. I'll go anywhere. I'll do anything, if I can be right with God." He said, "Now you don't need to come forward; you can be saved back here."

Do you understand that? Do you understand what it's all about? Jesus is simply saying, "If you are ashamed of Me, I'll be ashamed of you." **And, the faith that will not lead to confession will not lead to Heaven. You're not saved by walking down an aisle. But, when you are saved, the Bible says, "When you believe on Jesus, you'll not be ashamed of Him."** You're not going to slip into Heaven as a secret disciple. He hung naked on a cross for you, and He is saying to you today, "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark 8:36). (Adrian Rogers - The Value of a Human Soul)

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**Rod Mattoon - ILLUSTRATION** - May we never be ashamed of the Lord or the suffering that is attached to following Christ. The great Reformer John Hus (see [youtube video](#) or [another video](#)) ([Watch John MacArthur speak of John Hus](#)) was not ashamed of his Lord, and for it, paid the ultimate physical price. In 1415, when he was a pastor in Prague, this unashamed follower of Christ was arrested, condemned, and sentenced to burn at the stake for preaching the true gospel. As the flames engulfed his body, he was heard praying, "O my God, I trust in Thee: let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over me (Ps. 25:2+)." John was not afraid of dying, only of being ashamed of his Master. God grant us grace to do the same! Amen.

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**Joseph Grigg** sums all this up so well in his hymn **Jesus and Shall it Ever Be**:

Jesus, and shall it ever be,  
A mortal man ashamed of thee?  
Ashamed of thee, whom angels praise,  
Whose glories shine through endless days!

Ashamed of Jesus, that dear Friend,  
On whom my hopes of heaven depend!  
No! When I blush, be this my shame,  
That I no more revere his name.

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**Mark 9:1+ And Jesus was saying to them, "Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power."**

Mark 9:1 goes better with Mark 8:38 so this is another poor chapter division. **Robertson** says "This verse (Mk 8:38) could not be separated from Mark 9:1 as the chapter division does. These two verses in Mark 8:38 and 9:1 form one paragraph and should go together."

And Jesus was saying to them, "Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who will not

taste death (IDIOM FOR PHYSICAL DEATH) until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power.”

**Wuest** has a long comment - **A. T. Robertson** said that the first rule of scripture interpretation is that one should ignore chapter and verse divisions as one studies the Word. The chapter division destroys the connection here. In Mk 8:38, our Lord is speaking of the second Advent of the Son of God, not the coming into the air to catch out the Church, commonly called the Rapture, but the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus to the earth itself to set up the Millennial Kingdom. At the Rapture, He is not attended by angels, but in the second Advent angels come with Him from the Glory (Rev. 19:14+ = "the armies which are in heaven"). He speaks of the kingdom of God coming with power. This is the Kingdom of Heaven of Matthew 3:2, 4:17, announced by John the Baptist and the Messiah Himself, rejected by Israel at the first Advent, to be accepted by Israel at the second Advent (ED: AT LEAST BY 1/3 OF THE NATION - Zech 13:8-9+), the mysterious form of the kingdom, Christendom, obtaining during the time Israel is in rejection, the Church Age, and the Christian Church, namely, the Mystical Body of Christ, being included in the term Christendom (Matthew 13). Mark and Luke both use the term "**Kingdom of God**" where Matthew uses "**Kingdom of Heaven**." The probable reason for this is that the first two are writing for the Gentiles, Mark for the Romans, and Luke for the Greeks, whereas Matthew writes for the Jews. But **what did our Lord mean by the statement that some of those standing there would not die until they saw the Millennial Kingdom?** Peter, James, and John are dead. They were standing there. The Millennium is still future. The answer is that what these men saw at that time was an anticipatory picture of the Millennium. The transfigured Lord Jesus is the Messiah glorified in the Millennium. Peter, James, and John are Israel, cleansed, restored, at the second Advent. ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdman Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))