

Good News, Bad News, Great News

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Scripture:

Mark 8:27—9:13

Big Idea:

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Community Group Curriculum
For the week of March 9, 2014
“Cost of the Kingdom (To Jesus)”
Mark 8:27 – 9:13

BIG PICTURE

Mark's account of Jesus reaches a climax in our study this week. Everything Jesus has done so far has hinted as to His identity and the purpose of His mission. We now see Jesus clearly identified as the King and Savior. Peter confesses that “Jesus is the Christ” and, like many of us, his confession was made with little understanding of its implications. Such faith may well be saving faith, but it is certainly not yet informed faith. Understanding comes gradually and Jesus explains the reality of that confession and tells us how we are to live in light of it.

LET'S DIG IN!

Please also read the parallel passages from **Matthew 16:13-17** and **Luke 9:18-26**.

Peter's Confession of Christ (Mark 8:27-30)

1. How does Peter answer Jesus's question regarding His identity? From whom does Jesus say Simon Peter got the answer?

2. How would you answer Jesus' question in Mark 8:29 and what is the eternal significance of this question (John 3:16-17; Romans 10:9)?

3. Jesus Christ is either a legend, a lunatic, a liar, or Lord and God. An abundance of historical/archeological evidence gives overwhelming proof of His existence. How would you respond to the remaining three options: lunatic, liar or Lord and God? How would you explain Jesus to a non-believer?

The Explanation of that Confession (Mark 8:31-33)

1. Jesus calls himself the Son of Man (his favorite self-designation) and it occurs 81 times in the Gospels. Why do you think Jesus refers to Himself by that description (see Daniel 7:13-14)? How is the Son of Man described in the Daniel passage and how does that differ from what Jesus has just told them?

2. What do “Satan” and “things of men” have in common that would make Jesus link them together in the same breath (v. 33)? Was Jesus rebuking all the disciples or only Peter?

The Cost and Reward of that Confession (Mark 8:34-38)

A wrong view of the Messiah results in a wrong view of discipleship.

1. According to Jesus, what is involved in following Him (vv. 34-35)? What does Matthew add (Matthew 16: 24-27) that is not found in the other passages?
2. If you had been in that crowd and had been seriously considering the invitation to follow Jesus, what question(s) might you have asked?
3. Make a list of ways in which people try to "gain the world" and so forfeit eternal life (v. 36). Of those listed are any a temptation to you? If so, ask God for the strength to turn away from them.

The Reality of that Confession – the Transfiguration (Mark 9:1-8)

The word transfiguration in Greek is *metamorphoo*, from which we get our word metamorphosis, a change into another form; here from a natural to a supernatural form. It describes a change on the outside that comes from the inside.

1. What was God's message to the three disciples (Mark 9:7)? Why should the appearance of Elijah have been a source of hope for the disciples (Matthew 17:11-13; Malachi 4:5-6)?
2. How did Peter, James and John react to this and what else did they question about in view of the transfiguration (vv. 10-13)? Does the transfiguration have significance for us today? How?

PRAYER PLEASE

Pray that we would see Jesus as He really is. Pray for those who would not say Jesus is the Christ; that their eyes and hearts would be open. Pray for those who say Jesus is the Christ that they would have a clear understanding of what it means to know Him as Lord and Savior.

SOME FINAL THOUGHTS

Until now Jesus has directed His teaching to the masses; from this point forward he focuses on His disciples. They have heard Him teach, seen Him heal and observed His interactions with authorities. They have traveled with Him, camped out with Him and eaten with Him. Yet, until this moment, they have not been told so clearly Jesus' mission and the cost to follow Him. Now they have been challenged to make a decision about Him. Who do you say I am? That question is as pertinent for us today as it was over 2,000 years ago.