

29. Jesus Began to Teach About His Coming Death

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain the message of the death and resurrection of Jesus. As they walked on the road to Caesarea Philippi, Jesus told the disciples not to tell anyone who He was. We will see, in this topic, the reason Jesus had asked the disciples who He was, and then, told them not to tell anyone at that time.

Once the disciples understood that Jesus is the Christ, it was then possible for Him to begin to teach them about His coming death and resurrection. Mark 8:31-33 says, “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. He spoke this word openly. Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. 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.’” We see that Jesus began to explain to His disciples that He must suffer many things.

The Old Testament had predicted that Jesus would suffer many things. Isaiah 53:3 says, “He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, *our* faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.” This verse, and many others in the Old Testament, had predicted the rejection and sufferings of Jesus. Before He even reached the cross, Jesus had been scourged, crowned with thorns, and mocked. This suffering had been at the hands of both the Jews and Gentiles, before He was condemned to die on the cross.

The Old Testament had also predicted that Jesus would be rejected. Psalm 118:22-23 says, “The stone *which* the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the LORD’s doing; it *is* marvelous in our eyes.” Here, in Mark, we see that Jesus began to tell the disciples that He would be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and scribes. Mark 14:63-65 says, “Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, ‘What further need do we have of witnesses? You have heard the blasphemy! What do you think?’ And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death. Then some began to spit on Him, and to blindfold Him, and to beat Him, and to say to Him, ‘Prophesy!’ And the officers struck Him with the palms of their hands.” These things all happened before the chief priests even took Jesus to Pilate.

Then, the Jewish religious leaders delivered Jesus to Pilate. Mark 15:12-15 says, “Pilate answered and said to them again, ‘What then do you want me to do *with Him* whom you call the King of the Jews?’ So they cried out again, ‘Crucify Him!’ Then Pilate said to them, ‘Why, what evil has He done?’ But they cried out all the more, ‘Crucify Him!’ So Pilate, wanting to gratify the crowd, released Barabbas to them; and he delivered Jesus, after he had scourged Him, to be crucified.” Here, we see that Pilate became a partner with the Jews, as he chose to please the crowd by condemning Jesus to be crucified.

However, Jesus also promised the disciples that, after three days, He would rise again. Although Jesus mentioned His coming resurrection several times, the disciples did not really hear Him,

because they were expecting Him to chase out the Romans and become the king. After His resurrection, Luke 24:10-11 says, “It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary *the mother* of James, and the other *women* with them, who told these things to the apostles. And their words seemed to them like idle tales, and they did not believe them.” Here, we see that when the disciples heard about the resurrection, they did not believe. Instead, they thought the women were talking nonsense.

Jesus spoke openly to the disciples about His coming death and resurrection. We see that Peter was so upset, he took Jesus aside and began to rebuke Him. The word translated “rebuked” means *to admonish or charge sharply*. This attitude shows us that Peter did not want to even hear what was going to happen to Jesus, and he told Jesus that with strong words. Jesus then turned around so that all of the disciples, as well as Peter, could hear what Jesus said. We see that Jesus gave Peter a very strong rebuke, because Jesus said, “get behind Me, Satan!” Peter had allowed Satan to so deceive his thoughts, that he spoke without ever considering the will of God.

Jesus then told Peter, “For you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.” Here, we see that it is possible for a follower of Jesus to be used by Satan to speak the thoughts of the world, instead of speaking and explaining the will of God. That is why it is so important for us to learn to speak the Word of God, instead of giving our own opinions. Hebrews 4:12 says, “For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” The Word of God will make clear the will of God, while Satan will deceive us through our own opinions, so that we seek to please the world instead of speaking the will of God.

After Jesus spoke to His disciples about His coming death and resurrection, we see that He returned from Caesarea Philippi to speak to all of the people again. Mark 8:34-38 says, “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. 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. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? 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.’” We see that Jesus told the people what it means to be His disciple.

Jesus said that a true disciple is one who makes three life-changing choices. First, a true disciple makes the choice to deny self. To “deny self” means *to forget one’s self and stop seeking his own self-interest*. Second, a true disciple makes the choice to take up his cross. The word “cross” means *“an upright stake or a pointed stake”*. Throughout the New Testament, this word is used to speak of the cross on which Jesus suffered and died, as He paid the penalty for our sins so that we could be set free from that sin. As a result, we see that this goes even further than the choice to forget self. It means to die to self. Paul wrote, in Galatians 2:20, “I have been crucified with Christ; 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 for me.” Here, we see that Paul made the choice to die to self and his own desires.

Third, a true disciple makes the choice to follow Christ. There are many things a person can follow in the world. These include things like money, pleasure, fame, sports, or many other things. 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 says, “For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.” These verses explain what it means to follow Christ. Here, we see that a person either lives for self, or lives for Christ, the One who died for our sins and rose again. He is the One who gives purpose and meaning to our lives.

A person who seeks to save his life by gathering the things of this world will find that he has nothing at the end of his life. At the end of his life, a person who has gained the things of this world will have nothing to take with him to eternity. 2 Peter 3:10 says, “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.” Here, we see that the earth, and its works, will all be burned. In contrast, Matthew 6:19-21 says, “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” These verses show how to have eternal treasures.

Jesus went on to explain to the disciples that a person has gained nothing if he gains all of the things people seek in the world, yet loses his own soul. The soul includes the mind, emotions, and will. Mark 8:36-37 show an even more serious consequence than the loss of the things that people follow because the will of a person has rejected Christ. We see that those who choose to follow the things of this world, instead of choosing to follow Jesus, will experience eternal loss. That eternal loss is described in Revelation 20:12-15, where we read, “And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is *the Book of Life*. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.” Here, we see that the eternal loss includes eternal separation from God in the lake of fire and brimstone.

Those who are ashamed of Jesus, and reject His words, are those who have chosen to live to please themselves and fail to repent of their sin of unbelief, because they continue to choose their sinful lifestyle. Jesus said that He will reject all those who have made that choice. We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to clearly explain to others this choice that all people face. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to clearly explain this choice.