

Lesson 7- Teaching Disciples: Part I

Read for This Week's Study

Mark 8:22-38; Matthew 20:29-34; John 12:25; Mark 9:1-50; Luke 9:30-31; Malachi 4:5-6.

Memory Text:

“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” (Mark 8:34).

Sabbath Afternoon

5 Important Points:

1. **The Identity of Jesus:** The focus is on recognizing Jesus as the Messiah.
 - *Mark 8:29:* "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered and said to Him, "You are the Christ."
2. **The Prediction of the Cross:** Jesus begins to teach about His coming suffering.
 - *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."
3. **Spiritual Insight:** The healing of two blind men illustrates the journey of spiritual understanding.
 - *Mark 8:22-26:* The gradual healing of the blind man signifies the gradual understanding of the disciples.
4. **The Cost of Discipleship:** Following Jesus involves self-denial and bearing the cross.
 - *Mark 8:34:* "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me."
5. **The Eternal Perspective:** The value of gaining eternal life over worldly gain.
 - *Mark 8:36:* "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?"

Discussion Questions with Answers:

1. **Why did Jesus emphasize self-denial in discipleship?**
 - *Answer:* Jesus emphasized self-denial because true discipleship requires prioritizing God's will over personal desires, symbolized by taking up the cross (Mark 8:34).
2. **What is the significance of Jesus asking His disciples who they think He is?**
 - *Answer:* Jesus' question reveals the turning point in the disciples' understanding of His true identity as the Messiah (Mark 8:29).
3. **How does the healing of the blind man reflect the disciples' spiritual journey?**
 - *Answer:* The two-stage healing represents the gradual process of spiritual enlightenment that the disciples are experiencing (Mark 8:22-26).

Sunday - Seeing Clearly

Important Points:

1. **Two-Touch Healing:** Jesus uses a two-step healing process to illustrate spiritual growth.

- *Mark 8:24-25*: The blind man first sees men as trees walking, then clearly after a second touch.
- 2. **Gradual Spiritual Insight**: Just as physical sight was restored in stages, spiritual sight also unfolds gradually.
 - *Mark 8:18*: "Having eyes, do you not see? And having ears, do you not hear?"
- 3. **Confession of Faith**: Peter's declaration of Jesus as the Messiah.
 - *Mark 8:29*: "You are the Christ."
- 4. **Misunderstanding of Messiahship**: The disciples' incomplete understanding of Jesus' mission.
 - *Mark 8:30*: "Then He strictly warned them that they should tell no one about Him."
- 5. **Teaching Through Parables**: Jesus often uses physical healings to teach deeper spiritual truths.
 - *Mark 4:34*: "But without a parable He did not speak to them. And when they were alone, He explained all things to His disciples."

Discussion Questions with Answers:

1. **Why did Jesus heal the blind man in two stages?**
 - *Answer*: The two-stage healing symbolized the gradual process of gaining spiritual insight, much like the disciples' growing understanding of Jesus' mission.
2. **What can we learn from Peter's confession of Jesus as the Christ?**
 - *Answer*: Peter's confession highlights the importance of recognizing Jesus' true identity, but also reflects the incomplete understanding that needed further growth.
3. **Why did Jesus instruct the disciples to keep His identity secret?**
 - *Answer*: Jesus wanted to avoid the political and military implications of the term "Messiah" at that time, focusing instead on His true mission of suffering and redemption.

Monday - The Cost of Discipleship

5 Important Points:

1. **Jesus' Prediction of His Death**: Jesus openly teaches about His impending suffering and death.
 - *Mark 8:31*: "And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things..."
2. **Rebuke of Peter**: Peter is rebuked for trying to prevent Jesus from fulfilling His mission.
 - *Mark 8:33*: "Get behind Me, Satan! For you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."
3. **Call to Self-Denial**: Discipleship requires denying oneself and following Jesus even unto death.
 - *Mark 8:34*: "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me."
4. **The Paradox of Life**: Losing one's life for Jesus' sake results in finding true life.
 - *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."
5. **The Value of the Soul**: The soul's value surpasses all worldly gains.
 - *Mark 8:36*: "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?"

Discussion Questions with Answers:

1. **What does it mean to take up your cross and follow Jesus?**
 - *Answer:* Taking up the cross means accepting the cost of discipleship, including self-denial, sacrifice, and following Jesus even in suffering.
2. **Why did Jesus rebuke Peter so harshly?**
 - *Answer:* Jesus rebuked Peter because his attempt to prevent Jesus from suffering was contrary to God's plan of salvation.
3. **How does the world's view of life contrast with Jesus' teaching about losing one's life?**
 - *Answer:* The world values self-preservation and success, while Jesus teaches that true life is found in self-sacrifice and commitment to God's will.

Tuesday - The Transfiguration

5 Important Points:

1. **Revelation of Jesus' Glory:** The Transfiguration reveals Jesus' divine nature to Peter, James, and John.
 - *Mark 9:2-3:* "He was transfigured before them. His clothes became shining, exceedingly white, like snow, such as no launderer on earth can whiten them."
2. **Appearance of Moses and Elijah:** These two figures represent the Law and the Prophets, confirming Jesus' fulfillment of both.
 - *Mark 9:4:* "And Elijah appeared to them with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus."
3. **Divine Affirmation:** God the Father's voice affirms Jesus as His beloved Son.
 - *Mark 9:7:* "And a cloud came and overshadowed them; and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, 'This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!'"
4. **Misunderstanding of Peter:** Peter's suggestion to build three tabernacles shows his misunderstanding of the event's significance.
 - *Mark 9:5-6:* "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."
5. **The Disciples' Silence:** The disciples are told to keep the vision private until after the resurrection.
 - *Mark 9:9:* "Now as they came down from the mountain, He commanded them that they should tell no one the things they had seen, till the Son of Man had risen from the dead."

Discussion Questions with Answers:

1. **Why were Moses and Elijah present during the Transfiguration?**
 - *Answer:* Moses and Elijah represented the Law and the Prophets, respectively, showing that Jesus was the fulfillment of both.
2. **What is the significance of God's voice during the Transfiguration?**
 - *Answer:* God's voice affirmed Jesus' identity as His beloved Son and emphasized the importance of listening to Him above all others.
3. **Why did Jesus instruct the disciples to keep the Transfiguration a secret until after His resurrection?**
 - *Answer:* Jesus wanted the full understanding of His divine glory to be revealed in the context of His resurrection, ensuring that His mission was understood correctly.

Wednesday - Coming Down from the Mountain

5 Important Points:

1. **The Need for Faith:** The disciples fail to heal a boy because of their lack of faith and reliance on prayer.

- *Mark 9:19*: "O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him to Me."
- 2. **The Boy with a Mute Spirit**: The disciples encounter a challenging situation that reveals their spiritual inadequacy.
 - *Mark 9:17-18*: "Teacher, I brought You my son, who has a mute spirit...but they could not."
- 3. **Jesus' Power Over Evil**: Jesus rebukes the unclean spirit, demonstrating His authority over the forces of darkness.
 - *Mark 9:25*: "When Jesus saw that the people came running together, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, 'Deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and enter him no more!'"
- 4. **The Importance of Prayer**: Jesus emphasizes that certain challenges can only be overcome through prayer and fasting.
 - *Mark 9:29*: "So He said to them, 'This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting.'"
- 5. **A Lesson in Humility**: The disciples learn that spiritual power comes from dependence on God, not from their own strength.
 - *Mark 9:28*: "And when He had come into the house, His disciples asked Him privately, 'Why could we not cast it out?'"

Discussion Questions with Answers:

1. **Why were the disciples unable to cast out the demon?**
 - *Answer*: The disciples were unable to cast out the demon due to their lack of faith and failure to rely on prayer and fasting.
2. **What does Jesus' reaction to the faithless generation teach us?**
 - *Answer*: Jesus' reaction highlights the importance of faith and trust in God's power, showing frustration with spiritual complacency.
3. **How does this event illustrate the importance of prayer in overcoming challenges?**
 - *Answer*: The event illustrates that prayer is essential for spiritual power and overcoming challenges that cannot be faced with human strength alone.

Thursday - Who is the Greatest?

5 Important Points:

1. **The Disciples' Argument**: The disciples argue among themselves about who is the greatest.
 - *Mark 9:33-34*: "Then He came to Capernaum. And when He was in the house He asked them, 'What was it you disputed among yourselves on the road?' But they kept silent, for on the road they had disputed among themselves who would be the greatest."
2. **Jesus' Teaching on True Greatness**: Jesus teaches that true greatness is found in humility and service.
 - *Mark 9:35*: "If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all."
3. **The Example of a Child**: Jesus uses a child as an example of the humility required to enter the kingdom of God.
 - *Mark 9:36-37*: "Then He took a little child and set him in the midst of them. And when He had taken him in His arms, He said to them, 'Whoever receives one of these little children in My name receives Me.'"
4. **Rebuke of Exclusivity**: Jesus rebukes the disciples for their narrow-mindedness in preventing others from casting out demons in His name.

- *Mark 9:38-39*: "Now John answered Him, saying, 'Teacher, we saw someone who does not follow us casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow us.' But Jesus said, 'Do not forbid him.'"
- 5. **The Principle of Inclusiveness**: Jesus emphasizes that anyone who is not against Him is for Him.
 - *Mark 9:40*: "For he who is not against us is on our side."

Discussion Questions with Answers:

1. **Why did the disciples argue about who was the greatest?**
 - *Answer*: The disciples argued about greatness because they were still influenced by worldly concepts of power and status.
2. **What does Jesus' use of a child as an example teach about true greatness?**
 - *Answer*: Jesus' use of a child teaches that true greatness is characterized by humility, innocence, and a willingness to serve others.
3. **How does Jesus' response to the disciples' exclusivity challenge our understanding of ministry?**
 - *Answer*: Jesus' response challenges the idea that ministry is confined to a specific group, emphasizing that God can work through anyone who acts in His name.

Friday - Further Thoughts

5 Important Points:

1. **Reflection on Discipleship**: The week's lessons emphasize the challenges and rewards of following Jesus, including self-denial and spiritual growth.
 - *Luke 9:23*: "Then He said to them all, 'If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.'"
2. **The Role of Suffering in the Christian Life**: Suffering is an integral part of the Christian journey, leading to deeper faith and reliance on God.
 - *2 Corinthians 4:17*: "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."
3. **The Importance of Spiritual Discernment**: Like the disciples, believers need to grow in their understanding of spiritual truths and discern God's will.
 - *James 1:5*: "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him."
4. **Humility as the Path to Greatness**: True greatness in God's kingdom is achieved through humility and service to others.
 - *Philippians 2:3*: "Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself."
5. **The Transfiguration as a Foreshadowing**: The Transfiguration serves as a preview of the glory that awaits believers who remain faithful.
 - *2 Peter 1:16-17*: "For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty."

Discussion Questions with Answers:

1. **How can we apply the lessons of self-denial and taking up the cross in our daily lives?**
 - *Answer*: We can apply these lessons by prioritizing God's will over our desires, embracing sacrifice, and serving others with humility.
2. **What does the Transfiguration teach us about the nature of Jesus and the hope of believers?**

- *Answer:* The Transfiguration reveals Jesus' divine nature and provides a glimpse of the glory that believers will share in the resurrection.
3. **In what ways can we cultivate humility and a servant's heart in our interactions with others?**
- *Answer:* We can cultivate humility by valuing others above ourselves, seeking to serve rather than be served, and recognizing our dependence on God's grace.