

Mark 8:27-9:13, The Cost of Discipleship
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Overview

1. Review of structure thus far:

- a) 1:1-13, introduction of "the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God"
- b) 1:14-3:6, Galilean ministry:
 - 1) 1:14-15, Geographical introduction
 - 2) 1:16-20, Calls first disciples
 - 3) 1:21-45, Demonstrates power and authority (Chiasm)
 - 4) 2:1-3:6, Opposition from the Religious Hierarchy (Chiasm)
- c) 3:7-10:52, Broader ministry:
Main emphasis here is training of the twelve.
 - 1) 3:7-8, Geographical introduction
 - 2) 3:9-35, Calling the Twelve (distinction from family and Jewish leaders)
 - 3) 4:1-8:26, Boat Rides (Alternation): Training them in Ministry
 - 4) 8:27-10:15, Trip to Jerusalem (Chiasms, Three Announcements): Training them in Suffering. Punctuated with three announcements of his passion:
 - a> 8:31-33
 - b> 9:30-32
 - c> 10:32-34

2. 8:27-10:15 is structured as two chiasms.

- a) 8:27-9:13, moves from past inward to the future, focusing on the cost of discipleship (Lafontaine and Beernaert).

1) Questions about Prophecies (Past)	8:27-28	9:11-13
2) ID of Jesus (Present, Secret)	8:29-30	9:7-10
	Peter	Father
3) Prediction (Future, Peter)	8:31-33	9:2-6
	Passion	Res'n
4) Cost of Discipleship	8:34-9:1	
- b) By contrast, 9:14-10:52, focuses on the need for faith and the simplicity of salvation. (*Details not in first presentation*)
 - 1) Begins and ends with a healing that depends on faith
 - a> 9:14-29, Healing & Faith: Demoniac Boy and his Father
 - b> 10:46-52, Healing & Faith: Bartimaeus
 - 2) Then an alternation between announcement of the passion and the disciples' failure to appreciate the cost (application of the lesson from the initial chiasm)
 - a> 9:30-32, Second Announcement of his Passion
 - b> 9:33-50, Inappropriate Response: Who shall be first?

c> 10:32-34, Third Announcement of his Passion
d> 10:35-45, Inappropriate Response: James and John

3) In the center, 10:1-31, three encounters by the way, illustrating the soils once again, with the good soil in the middle.

c) The overall rhetoric seems to be that our gratitude to Lord for his passion and the freedom of our salvation should lead us to serve him selflessly and with all of our heart.

3. Today: start the first chiasm.

A. 8:27-28, Past: Questions about Prophecies

1. Geographical notice: Caesarea Philippi is at the far north of Israel, the farthest that the Lord has taken his disciples (though his private sojourn to the coasts of Tyre and Sidon took him personally farther). Almost as though he is stepping back so as to cover the entire sweep of the country on his trip south.
2. His question: "Whom do people say that I am?" The first of three identifications of the Lord in this section (the other two are by Peter in 8:29 and by the Father in 9:7). Note that the people have it wrong! Not all opinions about the Lord Jesus are equally valid. One characteristic of the multitudes, the enthusiastic but short-lived rocky soil, is error concerning the person of the Lord Jesus: "an angel" (the gnostics), "a righteous man" (modern liberal theology).
3. 28, cf. 6:14-16. The multitude of that day thought he might be the resurrection of some great prophet of old, even JB. The significance of Elijah is that Mal 4:5,6 anticipates his return before the "great and terrible day of the Lord," the Messianic age. So some saw in Jesus the forerunner; few dared to recognize him as the Messiah himself, who was expected to be a conquering hero, not a peasant.

B. 29-30, Present, Secrecy: Peter's Testimony

1. Unlike the multitudes and the Jewish leaders, Peter (speaking no doubt for the twelve) recognizes Jesus as the Messiah.
2. Why does the Lord command them to keep silent in 8:30? Such commands come in different contexts in Mark, and probably require different explanations.
 - a) The Lord silences demons in 1:25, 34; 3:12, probably because he does not want to be considered their ally and does not welcome their attestation.
 - b) In 7:24, he is seeking privacy with his Syrian disciples; in 9:30, with the Twelve; and other cases may also be motivated by a desire for time with those who are committed to him.

- c) Most cases are in the context of healings (1:44; 5:43; 7:36; 8:26). The key to these is the leper in 1:44, who is enjoined to silence on the way so that he may more rapidly carry the news to the priests "for a testimony unto them." The healings are intended as a testimony to fulfilled prophecy (e.g., Isa 35), but promiscuously announced, they simply attract people to overwhelmingly exhausting free clinics. Publicity is commanded with the Gadarene demoniac (5:19), so long as it is used to emphasize the Lord's greatness and compassion. Matt 12:15-20 explains the silencing in the case of healings as a fulfillment of the prophecy in Isa 42:1-3, which depicts a self-effacing Messiah, in contrast to the Jewish expectation.
- d) 8:30 (Peter's confession) and 9:9 (transfiguration) deal directly with his Messianic claim. Perhaps this cannot be safely proclaimed openly until after the passion, since what his contemporaries expected by "Messiah" was very different from what he came to do; he would at best have stirred inappropriate expectations, and at worst have gotten himself arrested prematurely. When he sends the Twelve out, it is not to publicize himself, but to "preach that men should repent" (6:12, cf. 1:15--commanding repentance, not nationalistic pride in a military Messiah).
- e) *Application*: Contrast these commands with the hunger for publicity manifested by many prominent religious leaders today, even among evangelicals.

C. 8:31-33, Future, Peter: First Announcement of his Passion

An important context for Peter's confession. "Yes, I am the Messiah, but not such a one as Jewish tradition has taught you to expect."

1. 31, announcement of his passion. This is the first of three such very focused announcements, all given in private to the Twelve (9:30ff; 10:32ff).
 - a) Method: When we have something repeated, compare and contrast the repeated episodes.
 - b) Common features: the Son of Man must Die and Rise again. For Paul, this becomes the heart of the gospel (1 Cor. 15).
 - c) Contrasts are in the successive introduction of three villains. Only the third has all three. Each is completely unexpected for the Messiah.
 - 1) The first and third, but not the second, mention the role of the Jewish leaders. Of all people, how could the "elders and chief priests and scribes" of the Jewish nation fail to miss the Messiah?
 - 2) The second introduces for the first time the notion that the Lord will be "betrayed," thus setting the stage for

Judas. How could one of his own disciples turn against him?

- 3) The third introduces the role of the Gentiles in humiliating the Lord. In conventional Jewish thinking, Messiah would destroy the Gentile oppressors, not the other way around!
- d) Note the opening phrase, "the son of man must suffer many things."
 - 1) "many things" is a summary, subsequently expanded to three points:
 - a> rejected
 - b> killed
 - c> rise again
 - 2) Why "must" he "suffer many things"? That which was completely unexpected to the Jewish concept of Messiah, the Lord declares to be absolutely necessary, because (9:12) "it is written of the son of man that he will suffer many things." ("must" in 8:31 but not 9:12) The scripture cannot be broken (John 10:35), and if the Jews had known it as they should, they would not be offended at the sufferings of Messiah (John 5:39).
2. 32a, "He spoke that saying openly." The Lord is trying to make this prediction crystal clear, to prepare them for what is going to happen. No parables, no allusions. As chapters 3-8 prepare them for ministry, so 8-10 prepare them for suffering.
3. 32b, Peter rebukes the Lord. "Took him," an expression of condescension (Swete), (Acts 18:26 Aquila and Priscilla taking Apollos; Rom 14:1,3; 15:7). Like a political handler working a presidential candidate. "Now see here, Lord, you'll never win this election if you keep on this way."
4. 33, the Lord rebukes Peter.
 - a) The rebuke: cf. Matt. 4:10; Luke 4:8, the same that the Lord had given Satan during the initial temptation. Here as there, the Adversary is seeking to shortcut the cross. Mark does not give the details of the temptation in the wilderness, but there as well as here the temptation is the same: no need for the suffering Messiah; just become king directly.
 - b) Notice the vigor of the Lord's response, probably because this was a deeply felt temptation. The more clearly he explains the passion to the Twelve, the more forcefully he must anticipate its agony himself. How wonderful must have seemed the prospect outlined by Peter. He must reject it outright, lest it get a hold of him. "Flee youthful lusts." Can't play around with them, or they will destroy us.
 - c) Explanation of Peter's error: he is thinking human thoughts,

not divine ones.

- 1) "Savor" = "to think, to set the mind." Same word used in Rom. 8:5 or Col 3:2. We need to cultivate God's mind on things, else we will become tools of Satan as Peter does here.
- 2) Compare the emphasis in previous chapters on the need to keep the heart. Peter has not done this, and we are seeing the consequences.