

The Messiah and His Mission

Mark 8:27-33

Amen. So wonderful to sing so many songs centered on one person, Jesus Christ. So fitting because of what we believe and even more so because of what we're studying as we've worked our way through Mark's gospel and continued to focus on Christ in this account that is all about Him. So, we go from singing about Him, praising Him, to now studying Him and understanding Him more and more.

And, really. Christ is so significant (right?) when we think about it. If you think about the concept of what our faith is built upon, the reason that you and I are here, how we got here, how we are sustained and how we continue and how we build together in unity as a body, as a church, we recognize that it all really does start and flow from the good news, the gospel, the good news, the gospel message that we've received. This important and necessary life-giving message that at one point in your life, hopefully, you heard and you came to understand. At some point you believed this message, this good news, and now, since then, you've been making it a point to be built-up upon that good news. You continue and every day you realize you are saved by that good news, and you are sustained by it, and it's your foundation, and you build upon it, and you continue to grow based upon that good news. In fact, you recognize it's so important that you actually go out and tell other people about it because you want to and because we've been commanded to. You proclaim this good news as it was once, hopefully, proclaimed to you, and you say this is a message that more people need to hear. This is for the world, and you treasure this good news. You treasure the gospel so much so that you also keep it pure. You defend it, and if there be any assault or any attack against it, you will rise up at its defense to keep it pure, to keep this message clear and committed to Christ. This is the foundation really, the good news.

This is so important. We have to get this right. You get this wrong, and all Christianity falls apart. It's this good news that Paul was so convinced of as well in 1 Corinthians 15. He stated it this way, "Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel [the good news] I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain." This is the

good news. Paul said you received it and you're standing in it. You're being saved by it, and he summarized it in verses 3-4 of 1 Corinthians 15; "For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures..." This is the good news - the good news that is centered and summed up in the person and the work of Christ - the person and the work of Christ.

And that's what we're going to see today. In Mark's gospel, we come to a pretty monumental point. It's really, as many have called, the climax of his gospel, kind of the peak, the watershed moment here as we get to see these two foundational elements of the gospel come alive - the person and the work of Christ. That's what we see in Mark 8:27-33. So, let's look at our text for the morning and read that now. 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?' And they told him, 'John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets.' And he asked them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Peter answered him, 'You are the Christ.' And he strictly charged them to tell no one about him. 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. And he said this plainly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. 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.' "

Our passage today naturally unfolds in two basic portions, two sections that we look at, where we see these two aspects of the gospel, the person of Christ and the work of Christ. So, let's look at our first section here starting in verses 27-30, and this is where we see the good news of the Messiah the person of the Christ, the good news of the Messiah, the identity of who this is that we have good news from. Our text starts off in verse 27, and it's really a setting of the scene as is so natural and typical in our narrative as we keep working though, we keep seeing things progressing from story to account to event, and as they go Mark will often do this, help us see where this is and where this is taking place. And so, in the beginning of verse 27, we see, "And Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi..." To Caesarea Philippi - this is a different location, more traveling, more talking that's taking place. As we saw more near the

beginning of Jesus' ministry, there was a lot of, just, consolidation and remaining in Galilee, right around the Sea and the Jewish population there and staying there for most of his ministry.

Now, we've been seeing a lot of moving, a lot of traveling. If you just look at the last couple chapters, we've seen Him go all the way up to the coast over there at Tyre and Sidon and Phoenicia which was Gentile territory. We actually saw Him come down and go on the opposite side of the Sea of Galilee, went over to the east side, which is the Gentile side, known as the Decapolis. Right? And now, we see them coming from Bethsaida, which is where we left off, traveling up to Caesarea Philippi; still in Israel, but like the northern most point of Israel is where they are now. So, as they're traveling on their way, this is the scene that's before us - the traveling and an attempt to withdraw. This is what has been happening. There's been all these attempts to withdraw. Jesus doing a lot of ministry with the Jewish people in and around Galilee and now trying to get away from that, trying to get time with His disciples to instruct them and to be able to interact with them individually as a group. And that's what He's doing here. We saw those withdrawals that had already taken place, and this is another, yet another, withdrawal up to the northern point of Israel at that time.

So, after the scene being set, we then look into verses 27-28, and this is where we see the conversation start to build, and this is where we find the supposed identities of Jesus - the supposed identities of Jesus - talk about the person of Christ and here's where we see some speculation about the person of Christ. Continuing in verse 27, "And on the way he asked his disciples, 'Who do people say that I am?' And they told him, 'John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets.'" He starts this conversation. We've seen a lot take place in Jesus' ministry. We've seen a lot of, kind of, action. We've seen a lot of deeds. We've see a lot of work. Even some of the teaching we've seen has been in parables; it hasn't been as clear. But it's at this moment that Jesus, in withdrawing with His disciples, puts the main issue on the table, and He decides let's get some clarity. This is the time to speak plainly as we'll see later in our text. This is the time for us to be clear about what is happening. It's a time for us to actually acknowledge this. There's no doubt that this was a conversation among the disciples. It has to have happened. We even see it; there's other times, as Jesus does His miracles, they often look at each other and say, who is this man? I mean, how do you describe what He just did? We just saw Him stop

the storm. We just saw Him feed the masses. Who is this man? And so, the disciples had this question constantly running through their mind and even amongst each other. So now, Jesus actually engages the discussion. He initiates it actually.

He starts it and says let's get this settled. Let's get a conclusion. Let's get a bottom line on this issue. And He starts it by throwing out there, what are other people saying? What are some of the conclusions that people are coming up with? I've been doing a lot in a couple of years of all this ministry; what are some thoughts? What are people actually saying? We look and we realize that some of the conclusions are not that different from what we saw back in Mark 6; the three answers given here - John the Baptist, Elijah, and a vague one of the prophets. And if we look back in Mark 6:14-16, that's where we saw a similar kind of description of potentially what was taking place but that time in reference to Jesus sending out the twelve. He sent them out to go throughout the cities of Israel and to proclaim and to prepare the way for Jesus to come and preach in the cities, and as a result, people were getting stirred up. Alright?

People were hearing this message, talking about it. So much so, that Herod heard it, and Herod started to say what's going on here? Why is this becoming such a big deal again? Because this is kind of what happened when John the Baptist was doing his ministry, but I killed him. Alright? If you remember, because of Herod's foolishness, he actually beheaded John the Baptist, a man that he respected and just tried to keep safe in prison. He ended up killing him, and so he thought why this stir again? This is only something that John the Baptist did. Where's this coming from? Did he come back from the dead? That's actually one of the beliefs, and here it is, again, showing up in our text that the ministry of Christ and John the Baptist was so similar in how radical it was, how really counter-intuitive, counter-cultural, to the thought of the people, that it did cause a stir. So this continues to be a view. The people continue to say this seems kind of John the Baptist-esque. This is something like him. Is it him? I thought he died. Is this him, back from the dead? What's going on? This becomes one of the potential speculations for Christ. We also have people saying Elijah, and just to be reminded, we've talked about this before in Mark 6, but this idea that it's Elijah is not kind of ill-founded. It's not like they picked a random prophet out of the Old Testament and said, eh, why not him? It's because you look at Malachi and the last prophet of the Old Testament, and you have

this expectation that an Elijah was to come in the future, and he would prepare the people for the Day of the Lord if they did not repent. So, people think, okay, maybe it's this Elijah character; that could be what Jesus is. And then you have this last kind of vague speculation, "...one of the prophets." Okay, we might not know for sure. We're not confident enough to say that it is Elijah or someone like that, but we can say this, he clearly is different. He's got to be a spokesman for God in some way. He's got to be at least some type of prophet; we'll give him that.

So, these are the views that get thrown out there, again, as we've already seen in Mark 6 - all these opinions that are forming of Jesus. I mean, it's natural because it was stirring up the people at that time. The interesting thing is the same discussion still exists today. Alright? This question is still a live question, and the discussion still goes, and people have their way at it, and they make documentaries, and they make programs out of it. They have interviews and they write books and articles about who really is this Jesus? Who is this guy? It's intriguing. It's fascinating, and here we are two thousand years later, and it doesn't matter if you're a Christian or not, people still talk about this; who is Jesus? And there's all these different opinions and beliefs, and some of the speculations that we have now are actually quite different than what we see in our text here. In fact, you probably have been exposed to some of the more common ones in our day. You have just, kind of, this generic, maybe, good feeling about Jesus. Jesus also taught the same religious values as I mentioned earlier - be patient, tolerant, compassionate. This is, you see, the real message in order to become a better human being. Alright? This was Jesus. This was what some people say. They say you can't deny this. He was a good teacher. He said some nice things that were, if you think about it, just better for all of us to take that into consideration to be a better human race. Right? This, kind of, moral, kind of, way that Jesus influenced and, kind of, highlighting that and, maybe, leaving it at that. Right? One of many as the Dalai Lama said and many others have said this. This is such a common view. I'm sure as you've engaged with people, and they have discussions, or you have seen and heard these discussions yourself.

What else? What other views do you have out there? You have this one; "I believe in God, but not as one thing, not as an old man in the sky. I believe that what people call God is something in all of us. I believe that what Jesus and Mohammed and Buddha and all the rest said was right. It's just that the

translations have gone wrong.” (John Lennon) So, there’s this other idea that, kind of, not be so specific about Jesus, but to kind of lump Him in with all the rest of the holy men of old. Right? And say you got all these kind of characters, if you look back in history, and in reality, guys, why are we like dividing over this? Let’s just come together and realize they’re all pointing the same general direction, and it’s all good. Right? This is the theological and philosophical thought of John Lennon. Right? ...great theologian here.

What else? What else we got? Here’s an extended one. I won’t read all of it for you, but I’ll summarize it. Alright? Then there’s this other idea and this speculation of Jesus that’s pretty common, and it’s not good. In fact, it’s very negative. It’s this idea of Jesus that, yeah, maybe I’ll grant you that he existed, but pretty much everything else about him is wrong, that people say. Miracles? Give me a break. Right? All that is a joke. Right? All these details of what people have said and actually staked their life upon, it’s just myth. They use words like legend, fable. Alright? Myth, it’s not real. It’s not history; don’t try and say it’s history, no way. Right? You can’t trust the Bible. You can’t trust these things, and so there becomes this very popular view that you have the skeptics. Right? The skeptics that are out there that say thank you for the enlightenment. Thank you for this time where we can reason and think and not be subjected to the Scriptures, but we can actually put ourselves above the Scriptures and say, umm, not so much and maybe this and probably not that. And this is the view of several still to this day, going back to even some of our own nation’s leaders and Thomas Jefferson (“And the day will come when the mystical generation of Jesus, by the supreme being as His father in the womb of a virgin will be classed with the fable of the generation of Minerva in the brain of Jupiter. [Letter to John Adams, April 11, 1823]”) and others (right?) who had their own way with the Bible and got to edit it however they felt like editing it and reading the parts they like and cutting out the parts they didn’t. Right? This is another very popular view.

This is the discussion. It’s a live discussion. No doubt you’ve encountered it. If you have not, you will. This question is still valid; who is Jesus? We have to get to the bottom of that, and Jesus initiates it so that there can be clarity here. And to get the clear and right answer, let’s go back to the text, and that’s what we find. In verse 29, we see the specific identity... (Oops! Here’s a good one. I’ll say this; “Jesus is the God whom we can approach without pride and before whom we can humble ourselves without despair.”

Blaise Pascal. Right? That's a better view, I'd say, of Jesus) So, looking back at our text in verse 29, this is where we'll find the specific identity of Jesus - the specific identity, the right view, the correct view here that comes forth. We have the speculations of the people of their time. We no doubt are exposed to the speculations of the people of our own time in modernity and what they say. Back in the text, we get the clear answer. Verse 29; "And he asked them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Peter answered him, 'You are the Christ.'" ... "You are the Christ." Jesus now, after allowing for them to kind of consider all the speculations of the people, throw it all out there, here are all the opinions of the modern day as they exist there in Israel, and after all that, Jesus now points the question directly at His disciples. It's actually fronted with the word "you" in the original. You guys, this is what. I want to know; what do you think? Time for you to answer this question.

This is the important question, and you must have an answer for it. "But who do you say that I am? And we get Peter stepping up. As we have actually seen and will continue to see, this is how he tends to interact. He tends to be the bold one. He tends to be the one that steps out, and sometimes it's good; sometimes it's not as we'll see later. Alright? This is what he does; he responds, and his response is great. It's bold, and it's accurate. It's right on. He hits a home run here. It's a wonderful moment for Peter as he steps out in full faith and he says, "You are the Christ." ... "You are the Christ." And it's important for us to hone in on that word Christ. What are we talking about? Because we sing songs, and when we talk about Jesus Christ and the gospel of Christ, we kind of just use it as a synonym, which is good, but at the same time, we might not really consider what Christ even means. It's not some type of name or surname that's attached to the lineage of Mary and Jesus, at all. It's actually a label. It's a title. It's a title, and we forget that sometimes. Titles are informative. They have meaning behind it. There's a doctor or a CEO or a senator or a president, right away, we learn something about them when we hear that title. Alright? We understand more about this person (right?), and they become in a different category rather than someone you just meet and all you get is a name. So, Christ was a specific title with a loaded meaning; we have to remember that. We have to remember that this is a loaded title that Peter states here.

So, what exactly does he mean when he says, "You are the Christ."? What does he mean? This word Christ actually comes from the Greek word which is Christós (Χριστός) and it comes, actually, also from the Hebrew word,

which is Mashiach (מָשִׁיחַ), which means anointed one, the Messiah if you were. The Messiah or anointed one from the Old Testament is known as the Christ, as you see it in Greek in the New Testament, Christós, and so, he's saying You are the anointed one. You are the Messiah. You are the Christ. Right? This is a big statement. This is loaded because they had all these expectations. They had all these thoughts already in their mind. Alright? They had the studying of the Old Testament; they had the teaching of it; it was floating in their head. They were waiting for it, expecting it to come, and so, when he says, "You are the Christ," he's taking all that and channeling it towards Jesus. Some of these expectations - a very small sample size - you start to learn even right from the very get go, right from the beginning, right after the fall of mankind in Genesis 3 in the garden of Eden, God Himself promising that there will be a descendent born of woman. Right? There'll be a seed, someone that will come, an offspring of the woman that will crush the head of Satan. Alright, there's this expectation, okay, there'll be someone that will come, and the whole Testament just does this narrowing effect on who this specific anointed one, who this specific Messiah would be. He would be an Israelite as you learn from Genesis 12, and you move further in Genesis 49, and you start to see He's specifically of Israel. He's from a single tribe, the tribe of Judah, and you go further down, and you start to see that He's a son of David. He's an offspring of David and a recipient of the Davidic covenant, and you see even more that He's born of a virgin, and that's pretty unique, pretty rare. He's born in Bethlehem, and so this narrowing effect is taking place in the Old Testament, but all of it being understood as this Messiah, this anointed one to come and to set up and establish God's Kingdom, and so this is floating in their heads. This is what they knew. This is what they talked about. This is what they were waiting for. This is the hope of Israel, this one person; the hope of Israel riding on the Messiah. So, recognize the significance here and the faith when Peter steps up, and doesn't have the whole story like you and I do, and says You're the Messiah. He believes that. He has full faith in this.

And as I've mentioned before, many have said this is the climax of Mark's gospel, and I think it's rightfully founded because the whole purpose of Mark's gospel is in the first verse Mark 1:1; "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." This is why Mark set out to write. He wants to give the good news of Jesus. Who? The Messiah, not Jesus of Nazareth, Jesus the Messiah, and so, everything that's taken place so far that we've studied has been just wonderful actions and expressions and opportunities

where there's been people just being amazed and worshipping and wondering who Jesus is, but now we have explicit, clear teaching He's the Messiah. Everyone's wondering it; the disciples, no doubt, talked about it, and they thought could this be the One? Is this Him? That was the wonderment as you get all the way up until this point and now Jesus initiates and gives the clarity here that He Himself is that fulfillment. He is the Messiah. This is so crucial.

This is what the gospel is founded upon, the correct, the accurate, the right identity of Jesus, not a prophet, and that's it; not simply just someone, a man of God with wise sayings, not a wise teacher to come, but the Messiah, the One and only anointed One and chosen of God. It's limited to one single person. It's God come down in human form that would save and deliver God's people and restore this earth back to its original form. And Jesus, He is that One, and you have to get that right or else the good news is obliterated. You fudge on that at all, you wiggle at all on Jesus and who He really is, and you start to add more to who He might be or take away aspects of His character, and you've lost the gospel. You've lost the good news, and this is what happens, this is why there are very prominent and aggressive cults and other religions that exist, and they all do something with Jesus. They do something wrong with Him. They take Jesus and they affirm so much of Him, and they would say, oh, we believe like you guys believe, and we actually call ourselves Christians, too. And they say and they uphold so many things, but then when it gets down to it, and you press them and ask them, but who is Jesus? Give me your answer. Who is Jesus? They would not say God; they would not say the Messiah of the Old Testament that is fulfilled in Jesus. They like to change it, and say, aw, he's like a god, or he's got some really divine aspects, kind of like an angel, a really powerful one though. And once you start to do that, you've lost the gospel. You do not have good news anymore. Instead, you have someone that's either just some spiritual entity that can't die for mankind (he has not identified with them), or we have someone that's merely a human that cannot take on the sins of the world. He has to be as the Bible has told us that He is - God in human form, the Messiah promised of the Old Testament.

This question has to be answered, and there's, hopefully, everyone in this room that has come to answer this question. Hopefully, every one of us has answered this with the faith and the boldness that Peter had that, there is no questioning in your mind that you are convinced, and you're certain that

Jesus is the Messiah. He is the One and only anointed One of God, and there's no question about that. You must answer this. Everyone has to, and if you put it off and choose not to answer it now, you will eventually have to stand before God Himself and answer this. For those of you that have answered boldly and faithfully like Peter, you need to consider now your own boldness in taking this message. You need to consider now your own opportunity to communicate about Jesus to the world because, as we've already mentioned earlier, how many opinions are circulating about Christ. There's so much bogus teaching and terrible thoughts about Jesus.

And here we are. We're in a unique country here where we have lots of people that devote their thinking and reasoning to rational ideologies and philosophies, and they're committed to this, and we have an opportunity. We have a chance to come alongside these people and to help them to correct their thinking, to lovingly question and say, but is that really true about Jesus? Are you just believing something because you saw it on the Internet, or are we allowed to have a discussion here where we can talk about what reliable witnesses have said about Jesus and as the Holy Spirit inspired them to write? Can we talk about that? Let's talk about that. Let's talk about who Jesus really is. And it's so important because even as we engage people that are of other religions and cults, it's easy to get caught up in this type of spiritual conversation but talk more about things on the periphery, things on the outside. Well, what do you believe about creationism again? And how do you reason through these ethical dilemmas of right and wrong? And what happens in the afterlife for you? And how many of this? And how many of that? And what's heaven going to be like? And you can get caught up in that, and you can talk about that for days with these people, the differences between what they believe and what we believe, but to get right to the point, to shortcut the conversation, best to say, what do you believe about Jesus? Can we talk about Him because if we can't get an agreement on that, then we believe a completely different gospel. That's where we need to go with boldness, desiring to have this faithfulness to our God who's presented to us the One and only Messiah already, Jesus.

We see not only this specific identity of Jesus, now clearly made known that He is the Messiah, we see the secret identity here in verse 30 - the secret identity that continues to be a theme throughout the gospel. Verse 30 simply put says, "And he strictly charged them to tell no one about him." There He is with this strict and almost kind of like rebuking fashion, this stern way of

saying don't speak of this; "...tell no one..." about me. There's Jesus after this brilliant and wonderful ah ha moment and He's telling them keep quiet. Don't say anything yet. Don't say anything yet. It's a crucial moment because we now have it on the table, and it's identified, and it's clarified, and it's great that there's finally this plain speaking about who Jesus is. He is the Messiah, and yet, He still is charging them hold back. I don't want you to go out and proclaim this all yet. I'm going to hold on to you guys for a little longer. This is what Jesus is doing. He's saying it is great that you now understand who I am, but there's something else that's really important that you need to understand before you take this good news. You need to understand My work. You need to understand what I am doing. You need to understand, not just who I am but what I am doing. You need to understand, not just the person of Jesus but the work of Jesus. The gospel is composed of both the person of Jesus and the work of Jesus, and that is why He says "...tell no one..." You're not ready yet.

And He goes on in the following verses to explain His work. That's what we'll see now in verses 31-33, the good news of the Messiah's mission, His mission, His work. We see the gospel is built and founded upon Jesus and His correct identity as the Messiah, the One and only chosen of God, God in human form, the fulfillment of the Old Testament, but we move a step further now into what Jesus says here in verses 31-33, and the first thing we see is the requirements of this mission according to Jesus in verse 31 - the requirements of the mission. He spells out the requirements, the details of His work. He allows them to come in and to understand now more, not just who He is, but now what He's going to do as He foretells and predicts the future here. Verse 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. And he said this plainly." Jesus is now teaching them the ultimate work and the task for the Son of Man which is another title for the Messiah. The Son of Man is another specific title coming from Daniel 7 for this Messianic figure, the One and only that has been promised from the Old Testament.

And notice the prominent theme in what He says. What is the Son of Man to do? ...reign and rule with all ease and power. No. The prominent themes are suffer many things, be rejected, be killed. He's making a very clear statement here. He's actually functioning as His own downer. He just allowed them to have a wonderful and glorious ah ha moment, to realize for

sure with clarity that He is the Messiah, and then He follows it up immediately with this. What a downer that He's going to die. He's going to suffer and be rejected. Once again we have to think of how this was impacting the disciples as they think of this title and this term the Messiah, and the fact that Peter just said it, and Jesus acknowledges it, and now He's saying that He's going to suffer? What was there, you know, framework? How are they thinking about the Messiah? We saw not just how they're thinking about who He is, but they had thoughts even of what the Messiah would do. And this is a simple and small sampling from the Old Testament once again, but think of this. Look at these things that permeate the Old Testament that were no doubt all in their minds as they're interacting with Jesus now. Yes, this Messiah that's going to come crush the head of Satan (Genesis 3:15). And He's going to bring blessing to all the nations (Genesis 12:3). He is going to reign as the King, specifically in Jerusalem (Genesis 49:10). Alright. He's going to rule forever on the throne of David (2 Samuel 7:12-16). This is wonderful. Really, he's going to trample all the enemies that have done wrong to Israel, finally bringing justice (Isaiah 63:3-6). He's going to establish God's Kingdom, and there's going to be peace, righteousness, justice throughout the earth (Isaiah 9:7). The Old testament is filled with this, and so this is what their minds are filled with, this truth about the Messiah and His work, what He would do, and yet here is Jesus saying I am the Messiah, and I'm going to die.

I mean this doesn't square up with them. It's not something that they're ready to hear. That's not something that they're thinking at all. I mean, it's the same idea as we talked about these titles or someone that has the label, and then they don't act the way you would think they would. Someone's a doctor, but they don't practice at all. They're a lawyer; they've gone through all law school, but they choose not to practice in any form. Someone that's run a successful campaign in politics, and now they're president, and they step down, and they don't want to do it. This is what they're thinking. Wait you qualify in every regard. You're the Messiah, but You're not going to act like it? You're going to die? This doesn't make any sense. It's clashing with their understanding.

I mean no doubt though in our text, Jesus does mention the resurrection, doesn't He? He does say that He would rise after three days, but this just goes right past them, and all they can think about is the suffering. What? What are You talking about? This isn't for the Messiah to do. And this was

not something that Jesus was trying to throw out there in a cryptic fashion. Right? This wasn't parable time. This wasn't a time to just kind of float it out there and realize, you know what? Later on, they'll come back, and they'll go, oh, I get it now. I've solved His little riddle. No. This isn't a riddle. Verse 32 says, "And he said this plainly." He's being as open and as simple as possible. Guys, this is what's going to happen, and it has to happen. It must happen. He's speaking plainly to them that they would understand this. This is significant. This is the work of Christ that has to be understood, just like if you mess up and confuse the person of Jesus you completely abandoned the gospel, in the same way, the minute you start to tamper with the work of Jesus, either adding to it or taking away from it, you've lost the gospel as well. And some people will do this. They'll talk about the cross, and they'll say, you know, it's just a bummer. The cross is just the biggest let down because Jesus here He was, a guy with a lot of hope, a lot of potential, and then Rome overpowered Him. Oh, bummer, and He got crucified. Ahh, just too bad. Or, some people say no, no, let's look beyond that. The cross had a significance to it, and that was nice display of morality and love, and that's it. Right? I mean, yeah, Jesus went to the cross, and it's a bummer that happened, but through that, there's love now, and there's an understanding of what sacrifice is and how that's a good moral thing, and that's the whole point of the cross. Not even close. Right?

Both those fall so far short because Jesus here is stating it with confidence that's why He says, "...the Son of Man must..." - "...the Son of Man must..." He "...must suffer..." Jesus is not saying, guys, My hands are tied. This is going to happen. I don't know what to do about it. It's just what is coming. Instead, He's saying this has to happen. This is in fulfillment of God's plan for the Messiah, and I'm in conjunction. I am aligned with it. I'm in agreement with My Father on this. The Son of Man must suffer and be rejected and killed. This has to happen. And we know the significance of the cross. We know what Jesus was thinking. We can understand. We can cheat. We can look ahead, and we know what takes place in the rest of the gospel. We know what takes place in the rest of the New Testament. We know what the apostles tell us about the cross and how significant it was. We can just look a little further in Mark 10, and we can see even Jesus's own further description and teaching on this when He says, "...the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life..." Why? "...as a ransom for many." He reveals the sacrificial nature of this, the kind of idea of Him being a substitute, taking sin, taking punishment in your place, in my place,

as Peter will state clearly in 1 Peter 3:18; “For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous [Jesus] for the unrighteous [you and I], that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit...” Just the glorious significance of the cross, the beauty and the wisdom of God’s plan, but the disciples are just veiled, and they can’t see it in this moment, but Jesus begins to plainly teach this to them, and He’ll continue to do it.

This is now the transition in Mark’s gospel. Now it will go in this direction where Jesus will continue to pound this into them. They’ve been pounded with His identity, that He’s the Messiah. Now they’re going to get pounded with His mission, that He must go to the cross, that this is what has to happen. Without this, no good news, no gospel. Of course, because of the disciples and their position, they’re in a spot where they’re not too happy about what Jesus is saying, so there’s resistance - their resistance to the mission in verse 32 - the resistance to the mission. As we saw in the beginning of verse 32, we already see Jesus was saying this plainly to them, “And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.” Wow! Yikes! Talk about highs and lows. Alright. Peter had his high and his low in the same day. Alright? The high of being the one disciple that finally nailed and aced the exam of who Jesus was and then being the low of following it up with being called Satan. Right? Bummer! Tough day for this guy, though we saw 1 Peter, 2 Peter, he recovered, and God used him mightily.

Think of this. You know, this is just... when we look back to the work of the Messiah from the Old Testament and how that filled Peter’s mind and all the disciples, and as Jesus then is talking about this suffering, they think this cannot be. There’s no way! And Peter feels so strongly about this that he’ll actually go up to Jesus and say hold on a second here. You’re wrong. Right? You can tell Jesus You’re wrong. You’re mistaken. Maybe You didn’t read it right. Maybe You don’t know exactly God’s plan Peter’s saying. Even though Jesus talks about the resurrection, Peter doesn’t even hear that. He doesn’t even listen to that. He just talks about the suffering and says You need to kind of realign Your thinking on this, Jesus - a bold move in the wrong direction. And it’s interesting because I think we can kind of sit here as spectators again and look and say, aw, bummer, here’s another person in Scripture making a mistake. Here’s another person in Scripture being dumb. Alright? Come on, you can do better than that. You should’ve known. If I were there, I would’ve done the right thing. Really? Is that true? How often

we do the same thing though. There's a plan of God, and here comes our reasoning in to alter it and change it to what we think would be better. Peter hears God's plan through Jesus teaching them, and here he comes to rebuke the Messiah and tell Him, no, do it this way instead. Really, we do the same thing, God tells us to wait on Him and we force our own will and way. God tells us to obey, and we bargain for a later time. How about not now? God tells us to abstain from the flesh and sin, and we say, aw, just one more time. How about catch me in a month and we'll work on this? And we're just like Peter. Here's God's plan, and here we come altering it because we got something better. We got a different idea. God has spoken, but somehow, we exalt ourselves to say we got a better plan than God does. Why would we dare resist God's plan that's been revealed in His Word? Why would we do this? Jesus here has spoken words of suffering, and He's taught this. This is what must take place, and Peter is trying to emphasize and force his own way; it's the same thing we do.

Obviously, Jesus has the last word here in verse 33, and this is where we find the resolve - the resolve of the mission. The mission's been laid out. There must be suffering. There has to be a suffering Messiah for mankind to be saved from His sins. Peter challenges this and does not want anything to do with that. He wants a political revolutionary king to rule. Now Jesus has to confront that; "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.'" This is a moment here, and I think there is an option here for Jesus. As He's getting rebuked by Peter, He potentially was thinking He'll just be patient and forbearing as He's been over and over again with the disciples. Think of how many times they were asking Him questions and proposing things, and He was just probably thinking, goodness gracious, what're you guys talking about? Right? You have no idea. And yet Jesus was patient with them, and so this is potentially another one of those moments where Jesus could say, you know what? I know what Peter's trying to do, and I'm just going to give him some time and wait, and we'll deal with this later, but our text says, "But turning and seeing his disciples..." Jesus is not just taking this earful from Peter, but He's looking and seeing the crowd that's there of His own disciples.

He's realizing that it's not just Peter feeling this way, but it's all of them, and He needs to respond for the sake of His own. So, He rebukes Peter and says, "Get behind me, Satan!" And immediately, why so strong? Why such a

harsh rebuke? Because what Peter was saying and proposing is on the same level of what Satan did tempting Jesus in the wilderness. So, you remember when Jesus was at the beginning of His ministry, and He's fasting in the wilderness for forty days, and Satan comes over and over to tempt Jesus, and in that, one of his greatest temptations, is this idea of allowing Jesus to just fall down and worship him, and he would give Jesus all the kingdoms of the earth. And you think, so what was the significance of that? The whole point of that was Satan offering to Jesus the end product, the result, be king now and forget about the suffering stuff, forget about the being rejected and dying for the sins of mankind, just worship me and get the kingdoms. Get it now. Be king now. Obviously Jesus rebukes Satan, and now He is here rebuking the same type of thinking and reasoning that Peter's expressing. Peter is offering, again, a shortcut; don't go to the cross. Why would You? You're the Messiah. You don't need to suffer. That's ridiculous. And Jesus has to respond with this harsh and strong of a response, "Get behind me, Satan!" It's on the same level of what Satan was trying to do.

How so? "For you are not setting your mind on the things of God..." but you have a greater ambition in mind "...the things of man." Peter, you have brought your reasoning and you have exalted it over against the reasoning of God and His plan. You think you have something better. It is man's way to avoid suffering and the cross, and it's God's way to use suffering and the cross for His glory and for the good of mankind. It's man's way to alter the plan of God by his own reasoning. It's God's way to do all that He has said for our good and His glory and the fulfillment of His perfect plan which He established before the foundation of the world. Are we really going to try and be God's counselor, come in with our own reasoning, our advice for God? It's ridiculous, as was Peter's rebuke of Jesus.

We have an amazing gospel message; it's the foundation; we stand upon it. It's the good news by which we were saved. It offered to us life, saving our souls. We now turn around, and we proclaim it to others because it is that good. It is that amazing. It's what the world needs. It is the good news of Jesus the only One, the Messiah, who did the only work that needed to be done of going to the cross for mankind. We proclaim that good news, and even more so, we defend it. We protect it. We keep it pure. We're close to the Word of God. We want to make sure we do not go astray in any way, and so, we defend this good news. I hope that that is the ambition of our church as we continue to press forward in maturity, that the good news will

remain good to us, and that it will be pure as it is fixed and founded upon the person of Jesus and His work and suffering on the cross for our behalf.