

## Mark 8:27-35

<sup>27</sup>Jesus went away with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that I am?”

<sup>28</sup>They told him, “John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others say one of the prophets.”

<sup>29</sup>“But who do you say I am?” he asked them.

Peter answered him, “You are the Christ.”

<sup>30</sup>Then he warned them not to tell anyone about him.

<sup>31</sup>Jesus began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things; be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the experts in the law; be killed; and after three days rise again. <sup>32</sup>He was speaking plainly to them. Then Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. <sup>33</sup>But after turning around and looking at his disciples, Jesus rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind me, Satan! You do not have your mind set on the things of God, but the things of men.”

<sup>34</sup>He called the crowd and his disciples together and said to them, “If anyone wants to follow me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. <sup>35</sup>For whoever wants to save his life will lose it. But whoever loses his life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it.”

## Be Bold

### I.

They had been around him for awhile now. They had seen so much. Sometimes they had been servers and busboys, as in one of the recent events. Other times they had just been observers to the work he had done. No matter which kind of situation it had been, they had been afforded the opportunity of circulating among the onlookers.

“Jesus went away with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked his disciples, ‘Who do people say that I am?’” (Mark 8:27, EHV).

As they had mingled with the crowds at the various events, the disciples had been able to people-watch and listen to the comments that were made. Each disciple had seen many, many examples of what Jesus was capable of. Just recently they had seen him restore a man’s hearing and ability to speak with little to no fanfare. The disciples not only heard his speeches at formal events, but also when he sat with them or walked with them and taught just their little group.

“Who do people say that I am?” “They told him, ‘John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others say one of the prophets’” (Mark 8:28, EHV). The buzz in the crowds presented a number of different theories. There was much debate who this Jesus was and where he came from and what kind of future he might bring for them.

So many of those who followed Jesus from event to event had developed very self-serving ideas about who Jesus was or what they could get from him. Jesus was a motivational speaker who could also serve as their pharmacist and their doctor and their grocery store. Those who thought beyond their own personal wants and needs thought he could take care of all the oppression in the world so the Jewish people could live in peace and harmony with the rest of the world—perhaps even *dominate* the rest of the world.

“But who do you say I am?” he asked them” (Mark 8:29, EHV). It was a pointed question to the Twelve. Were they, too, looking for world domination? Was a full stomach and healthy body and mind the extent of what *they* thought Jesus was there to bring?

“Peter answered him, ‘You are the Christ’” (Mark 8:29, EHV). Peter was the bold one.

Peter was often the first to answer; frequently he served as the spokesman for the disciples. I doubt that there was any dissent. Christ is the Greek word for Messiah. Both of them mean the Promised One.

God had promised to send a special person into the world who would save his people. The disciples had identified Jesus as that Promised One. He was more than what the crowds thought he was. He wasn't Elijah, or some other Old Testament prophet. He wasn't the reincarnation of John the Baptist. He wasn't pointing ahead to some future Savior to come—he *was* the Savior. They knew it.

## II.

“Jesus began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things; be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the experts in the law; be killed; and after three days rise again. <sup>32</sup>He was speaking plainly to them” (Mark 8:31-32, EHV).

Time was running out for Jesus to teach his disciples. Yes, he had taught them many things as they traveled from place to place; their little group received much more pointed instruction than what the crowds got to hear. Now, however, it was near the end. It was necessary that Jesus teach them quite plainly about the things that were about to happen.

“Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him” (Mark 8:32, EHV). Just a few moments before Peter had made a bold and powerful confession of faith in Jesus. The same Peter is bold again, but this time it is less than admirable. When Jesus gave a preview of what was soon to happen, Peter was so bold as to chew Jesus out.

Was Peter bold because of the expert opinions of the Old Testament scholars we spoke about last week? The scholarship that every one of the Twelve had learned from childhood indicated that the Promised One would come to restore the nation of Israel to prominence. Jesus' preview of coming attractions didn't really leave room for what Peter wanted to see happen.

“But after turning around and looking at his disciples, Jesus rebuked Peter and said, ‘Get behind me, Satan! You do not have your mind set on the things of God, but the things of men’” (Mark 8:33, EHV). Does it shock you that Jesus would call Peter Satan?

Peter simply loved Jesus. Jesus seemed to speak in a fatalistic way about what was coming. Nobody wants to hear their hero talk like this. Peter didn't really understand what Jesus meant or what he had really come to do. His boldness was a little too rash and a little too quick. Peter had his mind set on the things of men.

It wasn't just Peter. The things of men figure prominently in everyday life. Cars break down and need to be repaired. Houses need constant maintenance. When a person is young, retirement seems far off; as you get a bit older, the 401k balance seems a bit more important. Entertainment options are endless. People talk endlessly and in much detail about their favorite sport, for example.

The political things of men figure prominently, as well. Just like Peter, Christians often want to see Jesus bend the political landscape. We would like our individual lives to be easier and hassle-free. It would be wonderful if Jesus would bring an end to poverty and hunger.

Our focus on these things becomes satanic when we boldly expect and desire Jesus to adjust his promises to suit our desires.

## III.

“Jesus began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things; be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the experts in the law; be killed; and after three days rise again. <sup>32</sup>He was speaking plainly to them” (Mark 8:31-32, EHV). Jesus came for things

much more important than making sure everyone gets a nice meal or experiences no pain in life. He came to make people right with God.

Peter's satanic sin of trying to talk Jesus out of moving forward with the plan was just one of the many sins Jesus had to pay for. Among them were all our sins of focusing on the things of men as we move through life.

Jesus' suffering and death were essential parts of the plan. This all *had* to happen to appease God's anger over sin.

As Jesus says after the Gospel for today: "After all, what good is it for a man to gain the whole world and yet forfeit his soul? <sup>37</sup>Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mark 8:36-37, EHV). The creature comforts of this world pale in comparison to eternal life. Jesus came to do much, much more than turn water into wine or make the deaf hear and the mute speak; he came to pay for sins and give his perfection. There is only one price for heaven; it has never changed: "be perfect," God demands. Jesus came to give you perfection. It was a bold plan.

#### IV.

Boldness seemed to be a character trait in Peter. There were any number of times that it got him into trouble. Once, Peter boldly asked Jesus' permission to join him for a walk out on the stormy waves of the sea. Once he got out there, he realized how irrational that was, and his boldness turned to fear and he began to sink. Soon Peter would draw his sword in the Garden of Gethsemane and cut off the ear of one of the soldiers in a bold move to defend Jesus from those who came to arrest him. Moments later his boldness would fade into fear and he would turn tail and run when Jesus was arrested.

Peter's boldness was nowhere to be seen when Jesus was on trial. Three times Peter denied that he even knew Jesus. After the resurrection Jesus told Peter he would die a martyr's death.

Jesus uses the character traits of his followers, even when we are inconsistent in our own use of them. Jesus was honing Peter for his future. Peter learned what Jesus meant about his suffering and death and resurrection. After his ascension, boldness was what was needed for the tiny early Christian church to stand against the establishment church. Peter boldly continued to preach Christ Jesus and him crucified and risen—even when his life was threatened—even when he was being executed for his faith.

"He called the crowd and his disciples together and said to them, 'If anyone wants to follow me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. <sup>35</sup>For whoever wants to save his life will lose it. But whoever loses his life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it'" (Mark 8:34-35, EHV).

Jesus still calls for boldness.

You have mingled with the crowds. There are many Christians in this area, but no doubt you have rubbed elbows with many non-Christians. No doubt you have also met Christians who try to inject their own ideas and molds into the concept of Christianity.

Never set your faith aside. Never set aside what the Bible says is true. Always keep the central teaching of the Bible at the forefront of your bold confession: Jesus came to pay for sin so that your relationship with God would be restored.

Hold fast to that firm confession, even when it means denying yourself. Never relegate Jesus to second place...or lower. Consider it an honor to be mocked and ridiculed for holding firmly to the teachings of Scripture. Take up your cross. Follow Jesus. Be bold. Amen.