

SERMON NOTES

Preacher: Kevin Hardy

Date: January 19, 2025

Text: Mark 8:31–9:1

Title: Following Jesus

Big Idea: Following Jesus requires self-denying, cross-shaped discipleship.



I. DISCIPLES OF JESUS MUST DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN THE THINGS OF GOD AND THE THINGS OF MAN (vv. 31-33)

Jesus says four things MUST happen to Him:

1. Suffer many things
2. Be rejected
3. Be killed
4. Rise again

Jesus says that thinking in human terms is not going to lead you to God. In fact, it is actually satanic! We need an entirely new mindset as His disciples.

II. DISCIPLES OF JESUS MUST RECOGNIZE THAT THE WAY OF DISCIPLESHIP IS THE WAY OF THE CROSS (vv. 34-38)

“If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.”

“...we have here a basic condition of discipleship. It is to join Jesus on the way to execution.” – R.T. France

Reasons for taking up the cross and following Jesus:

1. Your life can be saved not by fighting to preserve it but only by forsaking it in favor of following Jesus.
2. It's a poor trade to settle for the world in exchange for your soul.
3. You might save yourself from some discomfort by being ashamed of Jesus momentarily now – but then He will be ashamed of you when it matters most – when He comes again.

“He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose.” – Jim Elliot

III. DISCIPLES OF JESUS HAVE ASSURANCE OF HOPE AND VICTORY IN JESUS (9 v. 1)

Jesus doesn't promise a trouble-free life as we follow Him.

BUT He does assure us of ultimate victory.

Hope is rooted in His resurrection and in His sovereignty.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

To be used for personal reflection and/or sermon-based small group discussion.

www.aplacetobelong.ca/LatestSermonResources

READ Mark 8:31–9:1

Why do you think Peter reacted so strongly to Jesus predicting His suffering and death? How does Jesus' rebuke of Peter help us understand the dangers of prioritizing human perspectives over God's plans?

What does this passage teach us about the necessity of suffering in God's redemptive plan?

What does it mean to “deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow” Jesus? How is this practically lived out in today's world? How might the concepts of self-denial and losing your life for Christ's sake challenge modern cultural values?

What does Jesus mean when He asks, “What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?” How can we avoid being caught up in worldly pursuits that may jeopardize our spiritual lives?

In what ways might people today be tempted to be ashamed of Jesus or His teachings? How can we courageously and lovingly stand for Christ in a world that often rejects Him?

What are some areas of your life where you struggle to surrender fully to Jesus' call of self-denial and cross-bearing? How can you prioritize eternal values over temporary gains in your daily decisions? Have you ever experienced a time when standing up for your faith was difficult? How did you respond, and what did you learn from that experience?

How does this passage challenge or encourage you in your understanding of what it means to follow Jesus? In what ways can we support one another in living out the radical call to discipleship that Jesus lays out in this passage?

PRAY