

Dr. Mark Jennings, Mark, Lecture 14, Mark 8:14-9:1, Yeast, Blind Man, Peter's Confession

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This is Dr. Mark Jennings in his teaching on the Gospel of Mark. This is session 14, Mark 8:14-9:1, Yeast, Blind Man, Peter's Confession.

Continuing again now in Mark chapter 8, and today this final section we will get to the end of the first aspect, the first major element of Mark's Gospel, which is the presenting of the authority of Jesus, and start to shift to the second, which is that Jesus is going through Jerusalem, the death of Jesus.

Remember this overarching theme of the suffering Son of Man and how those two terms seem almost counterintuitive. So, we left off with verses 11-13, talking about the Pharisees and their request for a sign and how that was connected with disobedient Israelites, a lack of faith, a lack of understanding, and even the declaration of judgment against them that they will not receive a sign. But then we come back to this question of why the disciples seem to not remember, not understand, or not expect Jesus to do the miracle and the feeding of the 4,000.

That question starts to get answered in the next section of the Gospel of Mark, beginning with verses 14 and then through 21. Maybe we'll even pick it up at 13.

Then he left them, got back in the boat, and crossed to the other side. So they're in the boat. The disciples had forgotten to bring bread, except for the one loaf they had had with them in the boat.

Be careful, Jesus warned them. Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and that of Herod. They discussed this with one another and said, It is because we have no bread.

Aware of their discussion, Jesus asked them, Why are you talking about having no bread? Do you still not see or understand? Are your hearts hardened? Do you have eyes but fail to see and ears but fail to hear? And don't you remember? When I broke the five loaves for the 5,000, how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up? Twelve, they replied. And when I broke the seven loaves for the 4,000, how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up? They answered, Seven. He said to them, Do you still not understand? This is an interesting bit of interaction between Jesus and the disciples.

One, I think it actually starts out a little bit almost comical. The disciples are in this boat and the first thing we are told about the disciples is what they have forgotten to do. There is strong evidence of forgetfulness and memory and remembering here.

Of course, the remembering is going to work a little bit differently. The disciples had forgotten to bring bread except for the loaf that they had with them in the boat. So, the picture is that the disciples are talking about how they don't have enough bread.

That they have forgotten, and then Jesus sort of, the scene seems to be that Jesus hears this conversation and says, Be careful. Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and that of Herod.

And they discuss this with one another, the disciples. And so I have this picture in my mind that they are talking about the bread. Jesus kind of pops in and says, Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and that of Herod.

And then the disciples are looking at each other almost with the idea of, Where did that comment come from? And they say, It must be because we are talking about bread. Because we have no bread. And aware of this discussion, Jesus says, Why are you talking about having no bread? In other words, He says, My comment has nothing to do with the fact that you don't have bread.

That's not my comment. Do you not see or understand? Are your hearts hardened? Now, this reference to seeing or understanding, to hearts being hardened, and then the very next two questions: Do you have eyes but fail to see? Ears but fail to hear? I mean, that brings up passages we've already been seeing Jesus interact with. Jeremiah 5:21, Ezekiel 12:2. Of course, conceptually very similar to Isaiah 6.9. Which matches what Jesus said in Mark 4:11-12. And so, here are the disciples concerned about their lack of bread.

And it's that concern, again, on a boat, which we've seen their ignorance happen a couple of times here on boats. What Jesus is accusing them of doing is of being more mindful of things in human terms than seeing the significance of the moment and who they are with what is occurring and the generous supply that Jesus provides for His. So, they're debating and discussing their lack of bread.

The fact that they're debating and discussing their lack of bread indicates that they do not understand the significance of what Jesus has been doing. They are closer to the Pharisees in this respect than to a follower of Christ. They are closer to being hardened, if you will, to having a mindset that is in line with the Pharisees and Herod.

Notice the reference to Herod here. Again, the Pharisees and the Herodians had united in a desire to kill Jesus. That their stress on human traditions and on power and on their way of things had motivated them to want to kill Jesus.

And Jesus had been judging them and expressing how wrong-headed they were. Also, don't forget that Herod had John the Baptist executed. Because he was also

proclaiming something that put him at odds between his human oath and what he knew to be true.

But yet he ended up deciding to fulfill his human oath and keep the honor of his feast mates. So, we have here this rebuke that is occurring on this boat that they are not understanding just what it means to be in the presence of Jesus. In the same way that they didn't understand and Jesus rebuked them on the boat with the storm for panicking.

I was thinking that their lives might be ruined or killed at that point. I think this is a very similar idea. And, of course, even the picture of yeast is interesting because yeast is a small bit that can infect and affect a whole loaf.

So, even setting aside perhaps yeast in terms of leavening and unleavening or what that might mean in Exodus motif. But just the metaphor, the picture of what yeast does, I think, is what is in view here. And when we have then, coupled with this, is this call to remember.

And I don't think we should just brush by that. This call to remembrance, it is a biblical aspect. Something throughout the Old Testament are the stress on remember.

Remember. The covenant that is put in place. The Israelites are to perpetually remember what the Lord did when he brought them out of Egypt.

So, I think this call to remember has that idea in view. Jesus is not simply saying, Hey, did you just forget what happened a few weeks ago? They are not remembering in the way that the people of God are to remember the great acts that God has done. And this act of remembering, in this biblical picture, the call to remember is also coupled with a call to trust in the future.

That you trust in what God is doing and will do because you remember what he has done. And you remember his character. And so, I think there is an implicit rebuke here as well.

And then he even says, you know, the five loaves for the five thousand and the basketfuls are left over. The seven for the four and the basketfuls that are left over. And then, with 21, he ends with, do you not understand? And I think what we are setting the stage here for is that they don't.

They don't understand. They have some understanding, but they don't have yet a full understanding. That their conception of what is happening, if you were to draw a line with a perfect understanding and with hardness and rejection of religious leaders,

that they are closer to that end right now in terms of what they gather than they are in the perfect understanding.

They are not there, but they tilt that way a little bit. And so, when we ask this question, how could they not understand that and why would they, you know, not just assuming Jesus would feed the four thousand. I think Mark is giving us an answer here.

The Pharisees demanded a sign because they had rejected Jesus and who he was saying he was. The disciples also don't quite understand who Jesus is, so they are not expecting these feedings.

They are not expecting this to happen because they are not gathering just who it is that they are with. Of course, this is going to begin to get even more and more pronounced. We talked about in the very beginning of our discussion how the disciples are presenting a very negative light throughout the Gospel of Mark.

We are seeing this continue. So, this then sets up what I think is a picture, a miracle that serves as a picture of the expression of what Jesus has just said to the disciples. And this is in the healing of the blind man.

So, we have been walking through how there have been these feedings, the Pharisees are rejecting it, the disciples aren't quite understanding this. And then we get to verse 22 of chapter 8. They came to Bethsaida, and some people brought a blind man and begged Jesus to touch him. Notice this is a very similar way we have seen miracle stories presented.

Jesus enters into an area, some people hear about it, they bring someone for the miracle. He took the blind man by the hand and led him outside the village. Incidentally, that is not that different from the healing of the deaf man and the mute where he took him aside.

But I think what is important here is always to think in terms of audience. Here, Mark is very careful to tell us that the audience is not the whole town here, that it has been brought outside. When he spit on the man's eyes and put his hands on him, Jesus asked, do you see anything? He looked up and said, I see people.

They look like trees walking around. Once more, Jesus put his hands on the man's eyes, then his eyes were opened, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly. Jesus sent him home, saying, don't even go into the village.

It's an interesting account. We have now the second use of spit, which is interesting. It's also associated with the touching of an organ, like here with the eyes.

But what's even more striking is the miracle doesn't seem to work fully the first time. As a reader of Mark, you are very surprised by that. So, he's entered into this town.

There's been this blind man. He takes the blind man aside and puts his hands on his eyes. He was spit on.

People suggested that maybe what Jesus was doing there was trying to rub the gunk that had developed on the eyes. So, he's doing sort of what my mom did when I was a kid, which is just kind of going at it and scraping. There's nothing in here that I think makes that sound like what Jesus is doing.

Mark doesn't tell us that's what Jesus is doing. We still have that same picture, just as Jesus' spit was used in the healing connected with the deaf and mute. Now, it's with blindness.

So, you might again have this idea that Jesus is wanting you to symbolically show something within him having a miraculous effect. But if we are following Mark, and we are used to seeing Jesus just simply do something, speak something from a distance, lay hands upon, hold up, and immediate restoration. Everything has always had immediate restoration.

From the first miracle, which was Peter's mother-in-law who had a fever and now was fully able to serve. To the man who was paralyzed, whose legs were strong enough that he could carry his mat and walk. All the way through people being able to hear, to speak.

Those who were possessed were immediately in their right mind. The Syrophenician woman whose daughter was fully restored. Even Jairus' daughter, who is dead, now comes back to life.

There's never been a, oops, let me try this again. It didn't seem to work. So then if we then take that Jesus has the ability to heal immediately and fully, and we couple that with Jesus varying purposefully how he does a miracle, with the idea that the manner of which the miracle occurs is as much a part of the message as the miracle itself, we couple those together, then I think that the logical conclusion becomes Jesus purposefully did this in a two-stage miracle.

Not accidentally or unable, an inability. So, what does this mean for us? How then is Mark wanting us to understand this miracle? Well, we're moving here from Jesus just indicating that the disciples don't yet understand really who he is. And even though there's been a passage of time from when he called them to this event, they still do not understand who he is.

We're getting ready to get to Peter's confession, where Peter confirms something about Jesus that is accurate, and then becomes immediately evidence that he doesn't fully understand what he has confessed. That then this healing of this blind man has almost a parabolic function. It creates a picture, and I think that the crowds don't see this, but the disciples do.

Mark has made clear that this man has been brought out. That this healing of this blind man indicates someone who could not see, then saw sort of, but not really completely, and then saw perfectly. This becomes a picture of what is happening to the disciples.

That they could not see, they were called by Jesus, again, Jesus is deliberately doing the acts here, they're called by Jesus, and in the process of being called by Jesus, and being around Jesus, and hearing Jesus' teaching, where Jesus is unlocking the mysteries, they're starting to see, but not clearly. But there's hope. This miracle presents hope that they will eventually see clearly.

That there will be a time when they don't just see people that look like trees. And I also think for the reader of Mark; Mark is saying, I understand if you're not seeing it clearly, but to understand who Jesus is, that that will come, there is a clarity that will come, as even the progression of the narrative takes place. And so, I think the choice of this miracle, and the placement of this miracle, especially the stress of this miracle to happen when it does in the narrative, is very useful to the reader of Mark, as it explains what is actually occurring in the disciples at this point.

And this now brings us to the end of the first half of the first major section of the Gospel of Mark. We've been talking about the authority of Jesus all the way from that first day in Capernaum to the healing of the blind man, where Jesus' authority has been clearly evidenced, as He is the stronger one and the miraculous one. And we're getting now to a major shift, a hinge, if you will, in the Gospel of Mark, where now it isn't the power of Jesus that is on display, but the suffering of Jesus.

We're turning towards the stress of this move to Jerusalem. This hinge takes place here with the Confession of Peter, which is a key moment in this transformation from the first half of the Gospel to the second half.

And we're going to see this confession is followed by a cycle of predictions, of suffering, predictions of what's going to occur in the Passion, of disciples being in error, but also of disciples being taught. There's a focus now that shifts to the disciples very much instead of the crowds, the focus is going to shift to the disciples. It's interesting when we look at this confession, there's been a lot of concern if you will, or arguments that the Confession of Peter and the events and the teaching that surround it are just too perfect to be true, too good to be true.

They have to be the creation of the early Church, because they seem just extremely pedagogical. And so, there's been some question, because of the heavy Christological stress in the Confession of Peter, and then the connection of it to the suffering and the predictions of the Passion, that maybe this was an insertion of the early Church, or even of Mark into it. The problem is there's a lot of evidence for the historicity of this event.

For example, the site is outside Caesarea Philippi. This is not a major city compared to others in the area. It's never mentioned anywhere else in the greater Gospel story.

It doesn't have a huge thematic connection to the story of the Old Testament. There's a negative portrayal of Peter in this. One might have thought that if this was the work of the early Church, Peter wouldn't be presented in such a negative light.

There's the lack of the title of Son of God, which was one of the preferred titles of the early Church. You have the use of the Son of Man language, which, as we know, falls quickly out of favor in the early Church. The events that work through this, there are a lot of anchors that can't simply be explained in terms of a challenge to the historicity.

In fact, there's a lot of things in here that speak for the historicity. The rebuke of Peter and comparing Peter to Satan seems hardly something that would have been created by the Church and inserted in if it didn't actually occur. Even this idea of connecting the Messiah and the Resurrection.

One of the things that is argued, we'll talk about it more in a second in Mark 8.31, that Jesus stresses the Resurrection. There's no indication that it was expected the Messiah would have a unique Resurrection experience. If this was the creation of the Church to bridge, to put the Resurrection as evidence that Jesus is the Messiah, that seems a very strange way of going about it because it wasn't expected that the Messiah would also be resurrected.

And so, this evidence, even of connection, the Messianic idea and Resurrection idea, I think, seems a bit stressed if it's simply insertion and didn't occur. We'll talk a little bit more about that statement in a second, but let's look at the passage beginning with 8:27. Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, Who do people say I am? Now I want to stop there just a second as we work through this.

We've been having lots of questions in the Gospel of Mark. But these have been questions from people about who Jesus is. Who is this one that can calm the storms? Who is this one that speaks to the demons and they obey? Most recently, who is this one that can make the deaf hear and the mute speak? We've been getting questions,

but here's the first time we get a question from Jesus about his own identity, about who people say he is.

So, the first question is, who are the crowds saying that I am? They replied, some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and still others, one of the prophets. This order is very similar to what we saw in Mark 16, verses 14 through 16, in the question with Herod and the recollection of who John the Baptist was. They were like, well, who is this figure of Jesus that Herod is hearing about? Some people say, well, it's John the Baptist or Elijah, and that introduces the story of the martyrdom of John the Baptist.

So, this order is very interesting. And again, how could it be John the Baptist or Elijah? One of the things we've been discussing, and I won't flesh it out completely, but is that people aren't thinking Jesus is actually John the Baptist, but yet the mantle or spirit of John the Baptist now is being carried out by Jesus. I think that's the best way to explain it, or that becomes a very, very absurd idea of an answer that the people might be saying.

Others say Elijah, and here, of course, you have this progression. There is this eschatological belief that Elijah would return to help usher in that Messianic age. And so, you have this sense of whether some people are saying that Jesus is that Elijah figure that has been promised and expected? And so, you have a progression here.

Of course, you as the reader of Mark, and me as the reader of Mark as well, we know he's not taking on the work of John the Baptist because John the Baptist has actually said, this one is stronger than me, I am not worthy. And interestingly enough, we're getting ready to come to the transfiguration, where we will again know that Jesus is not Elijah because those figures are going to be distinct. In fact, the Elijah figure, as we talked about, is more connected with John the Baptist.

So even there's an overlap there. And still others, one of the prophets. Now, there's certainly a reason for thinking Jesus is a prophet.

He's been doing things very similar to the prophets in terms of speaking about what the law means and declaring judgment, things that would have been consistent with the idea of a prophet. And even if you think about it, there was an idea that the prophet, a prophet like Moses, would occur and would come. That can even be hinted at that anticipation.

But regardless, these answers are considered incomplete, whether it's connected with the work of John the Baptist, the eschatological anticipatory figure of Elijah, or one of the prophets or like one of the prophets. Because in verse 29, Jesus comes back with, what about you? And here, the language in the Greek is very emphatic. There's a stress on the you here.

Who do you say I am? And that's the key question of this moment because we've just had Jesus say to the disciples, do you not understand? We've been working through and we've had the disciples explain the parables to us. We've had the disciples seeking understanding. We've had them witnessing so many accounts.

So now we're at this question of wanting to know, do they understand? And the answer becomes first, very affirmative. Peter answered, you are the Messiah. Now, as we think through what's being said about Peter, we must remember Mark has been very clear to present Peter as the leader of the disciples and as the spokesperson of the disciples.

Even recall when Mark did the listing of the disciples, the prominence that Peter was given even in that listing. So, when Peter answers, you're the Messiah, we're to understand that the other 11 are in concert with that statement. Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about them.

It's interesting that we don't have the full-blown conversation here as we do in Matthew and the discussion about how that has been a gift, that confession was a gift of revelation from God and then coupled with the authority of Peter to unlock and lock and the keys and all that. We just get this: you are the Messiah, and Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him. Now, this warning not to tell them, I think, implicitly suggests that Jesus accepts that confession.

Because what he's telling them is not, you are wrong. So, there is an affirmation, I believe, of Peter's words there. Because Jesus doesn't correct them, he says not to tell anyone, which we've been seeing all along.

Typically, what we've been seeing is even in great displays, Jesus wants to connect his messianic identity with great displays of power or with some social or political fervor that might develop. And so, I think what we have is that the confession isn't wrong, but as we're going to see, they don't understand their confession correctly. This is why I think that the miracle of the two-stage healing of the blind man is very informative of what is now occurring.

And even that, lastly, that he warned them not to tell anyone about him as opposed to he warned Peter not to tell anyone, I think connects that Peter is speaking for them when he gave that confession. He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the teachers of the law, that he must be killed, and after three days begin, three days rise again. Now, I think the best way to understand 31 is as a summary statement about the next phase of his teaching, of which I think does happen immediately, but also plays out.

And I think that even that phrasing in verse 31, where he then began to teach them, indicates that there has now been a shift in the focus of his teaching. At the beginning of the focus of his teaching, the kingdom of God has drawn near, repent, and believe, and he's been showing evidence that the kingdom of God has drawn near. He now shifts his teaching to the necessity that the Son of Man would suffer and be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and the teachers of the law, that he must be killed, and after three days rise again.

And of course, now this movement is, we're heading towards the cross much strongly than we have been in terms of the narrative. The passion is going to become much more explicit. We're in a new phase of the gospel.

Notice here, too, one of the things as the shift turns towards what will occur in Jerusalem, the preordained quality of what is about to occur. Jesus teaching, the theme of his teaching is that his death is a preordained occurrence. Jesus is teaching that it's necessary.

Notice it's not even that it will happen. He isn't simply saying the Son of Man. And remember, the Son of Man figure is pulling from that Daniel 7 imagery that we've been talking about, where Jesus has taken the Messiah confession and now blended that Messiah confession in with his identity as Son of Man.

And so, he's taking this, and that corporate representation of Messiah now with the corporate representation of this apocalyptic, eschatological figure, one like the Son of Man from Daniel 7, that he's taking these two huge, ruling, representative figures, one in terms of Davidic line, the other sort of in terms of apocalyptic imagery, and he's bringing them together and then saying, it is necessary, the Son of Man must suffer many things. And I think that's an important distinction from simply saying, this is how it's going to play out. The end game is I'm going to keep talking about this, and they're going to want to kill me for it.

The inevitable result is they're going to want to kill me for it. That's different. Jesus isn't saying the inevitable result is that the leaders are going to want to kill me, the chief priests.

What he's saying is it's necessary that he began to teach them, not that the Son of Man simply will die, but that the Son of Man must suffer, must be rejected, must die, and will rise again in three days. This suffering motif then brings in, not necessarily that the disciples understand this, but in the suffering servant motif of Isaiah. So, you have three figures, I think, being brought in, two explicitly and one implicitly that I think gets fleshed out even more, is that of the Messiah, the Son of Man, and the suffering servant.

And this almost unthinkable idea that the Son of Man figure is somehow also the suffering servant who is rejected. And we get this progression here, and we get this progression of suffering, that he'll be rejected, that there'll be suffering from the elders, rejection from the elders, from the chief priests, and from the teachers of the law, the scribes. And so each group will reject him, and that he must be killed.

And I think here that it's interesting to say killed instead of crucified. I think the reason I point that out is that if this was the product of the early church, scholars have said that they probably would have used the language of crucify instead of killed because of just the significance. You think of Paul, we proclaim Christ in him crucified, who is obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

The crucifixion language probably would have been used there. And even the resurrection, after three days, rises again, instead of what we usually see in later church, early church but later time documents is the idea of on the third day, or at the third day, instead of after three days. That was just a common phrasing.

Now the way time works is conceived of, you can count the days a little bit differently in the ancient world on that. But usually the phrasing, the reason I'm pointing out the phrasing of after three days, is not consistent usually with what we see with early church documents. So, we get this, as we work through this, it says in verse 32, he spoke plainly about this.

Now that's important language, because we've already been talking about the distinguishing, distinguished between how Jesus would speak to the crowds compared to the disciples. And we were talking about the parables. The parables, he spoke to the crowds in parables, but he spoke plainly to the disciples and explained it.

And so here, notice the idea is that Jesus is not masking this in riddles. He's not hinting at the necessity. He is speaking plainly about it.

And so the question, of course, is why they do not understand. Well, Mark has already told us why they're not understanding. That picture of the parable, a picture of the miracle, is there seen, but not yet. I think the idea is it hasn't been fully revealed.

That understanding, I think what Mark is driving at, that perfect understanding of who Jesus is, isn't a possibility even yet. Now, coupled with this, I love, is this hint to remember. I think this call to remember that he instructed to the disciples is that everything here Jesus is saying is remembered and will be a part of the proclamation of the gospel, especially if Mark is drawing much of this from Peter.

I think one of the evidence for Mark bringing much of this from Peter is the fact that we don't get the high language of Peter in this. The reason the elevation of Peter in terms of his authority and the gift and give it to you and the firstness nature of Peter is muted is because Peter probably, my guess, we don't know for sure, is that Peter muted that as well when he thought about this event. This displays Peter's recollection of it.

So, then we move through, and he's teaching plainly about this, verse 32, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. Think of this picture. He has just affirmed Jesus as the Messiah, and yet, the new shape of the teaching doesn't fit Peter's human understanding of who the Messiah is.

That Peter takes Jesus aside and shames him, rebukes him, and deems to correct him. That somehow Jesus can say you're the Messiah yet still find that he should rebuke Jesus for what he is saying. That indicates that Peter's understanding of who Jesus is as Messiah isn't in line with Jesus' understanding of what it means to be the Messiah.

That it's more in line with a human understanding, with an understanding that is closer to what the Pharisees expected the Messiah would be like or the religious leaders expected the Messiah would be like. And we have this audacity to rebuke. Jesus has been rebuking the Pharisees and the religious leaders for not understanding.

Here, Peter is supposedly rebuking Jesus for not understanding. Then, in verse 33, Jesus turns and looks at his disciples, and he rebukes Peter. Now, this turning and looking at the disciples is Mark's way of making sure we understand that the rebuke that is about to come to Peter is extended to the disciples.

And that Peter's actions in rebuking Jesus are also an expression of the disciples' understanding. We shouldn't draw a distinction here between the disciples and Peter, whether Peter is representing the voice of the disciples.

And he says to Peter, Get behind me, Satan. You do not have in mind the concerns of God but merely human concerns. That language, first of all, of the get behind me, Satan.

You know, this is a heavy statement, and you are trying to stand in the way of what is necessary in God's plan. And it's hard to think of a stronger rebuke than get behind me, Satan. When we've been associating, obviously, the exorcisms and the demons with the rule of Satan, with the power of Satan.

And Jesus has been working against them. And now he is associating Peter almost with demonic activity. But even more, You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.

This is almost the exact same statement that Jesus issued against the Pharisees and the religious leaders when talking about their support, their elevation of human commands, oral tradition, and their rejection of the commands of God. He accuses the Pharisees and the religious leaders of being more concerned about human tradition in the same terminology than the commands of God. This is the same rebuke that he gives to Peter and to the disciples whom he is facing.

That your understanding is like the religious leaders who are opposing me. Who would rather promote their own version of Sabbath, who would rather have their understanding of Sabbath, which goes against the intent and the will and the meaning of Sabbath. Those who are plotting to kill me.

That's what Mark has been stressing, that we understand, that the Pharisees and religious leaders are seeking to kill. That those who are plotting to kill Jesus have a closer understanding to Jesus. So, Peter has a closer understanding about that regarding Jesus than not.

And this rebuke, as you're working through the Gospel of Mark, is a stinging rebuke. And it calls into mind, and it makes us realize, that the disciples at this point are not the model for following Jesus. They're not the model of discipleship.

They're closer to the opposition. And it continues to beg the question, what is it that distinguishes the disciples from the crowds? Because it seems they are the disciples of the religious leaders. It seems that they're doing so much alike and similarly. And again, as we always follow through, we'll see that Jesus continues to take the disciples' places.

That the initiative is always with Jesus, Jesus takes them here, takes them there. Jesus never sends them away or departs from them.

So what makes it, at this point in the narrative, that the disciples are different from the crowds or even the Pharisees is nothing about the character of the disciples or their understanding, but it seems to be in the choice and deliberateness of Jesus. Wrapping up, then here, chapter 8. Jesus spoke plainly about this and rebuked. Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said, whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.

For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for you to gain the whole world and yet forfeit your soul? Or what can you give in exchange for your soul? If any of you

are ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of you when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels. And then 9:1, which I think goes with this.

And he said to them, truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see that the kingdom of God has come with power. This move here then where there's been a rejection of discipleship and then there's a turn to everyone and a clear statement of what true discipleship looks like. True discipleship mirrors the path of the king, of the master.

And Jesus has just said he must suffer. That means true discipleship also means an understanding of the necessity of suffering. To follow Christ doesn't mean to gain worldly honor and worldly power or worldly understanding of things, but it means a willingness to reject everything and all concerns here for the sake of Christ, for the sake of the gospel.

And thus, what good does it mean to gain the whole world or forfeit the soul? Jesus is showing the great reversal. He's pointing out how a change in understanding of what it means to be the Messiah and the Son of Man also means a change in understanding what it means to follow. And I think the cross language here doesn't necessarily, again, the argument would be, well, because he mentions the cross, this has to be a later insertion of the church.

Not only that, it requires that. Because the cross itself would have been a huge symbol of shame and also a huge symbol of the political power of Rome. And so in this statement, Jesus says, following me as Messiah doesn't mean a following to the overthrow of Rome and the removal of Caesar and all of his cronies.

It means actually being willing to be under the thumb of Caesar. And it means even being willing to suffer the greatest shame that Caesar can provide. And so, I think the cross language doesn't require an early church insertion, a later insertion by the early church, rather, but actually fits well even within the symbolism of suffering and Messianic overtones.

And then you have in verse 38, if any of you are ashamed of me in my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, and you can't hear adulterous and sinful generation and not think the wilderness generation of the Israelites, not think about the ones who were grumbling and murmuring about the salvation that God had provided and the establishment of the covenant relationship, that Jesus is here saying, anyone who is ashamed of me, anyone who does what Peter just did, which is rebuke me for saying that I must be rejected, killed, must suffer rejection, be killed, anyone who is ashamed of that is a member of the adulterous and sinful generation. That is a member of this generation that has rejected me, that I've already declared judgment upon, which is the continuation of the Israelite rejection of God in the

wilderness, that sinful generation. And then it points forward, though, so that to reject Jesus means the Son of Man will be ashamed of you when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels, and that's apocalyptic judgment language.

And so, Jesus is firmly setting in place that if you reject me, that is, the way I'm telling you what it means that I'm the Messiah and the Son of Man, if you reject that, then you will be rejected at judgment. This is strong language. And then wrapping up here, verse 9-1, truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see that the kingdom of God has come with power.

There's been lots of debate over what that particular verse means. Some have argued that Jesus is simply incorrect, that he anticipated the Son of Man returning in the clouds, that even himself as that Son of Man figure returning in the clouds before that generation died, and it didn't occur, so Jesus was wrong. Others have suggested that this is referring to the transfiguration that is about to occur because he's going to be seen in his power, the kingdom of God, in the great picture, and indeed, the transfiguration is what happens next.

I think, given the context, that neither one of those is an accurate explanation. First, to assume that it's referring to the second advent, that Jesus received it wrong, is to really overly restrict what it means regarding the kingdom of God has come with power. The context seems to indicate Jesus has been talking about what it means to be Messiah, what it means to be Son of Man, refers to suffering, rejection, death, and resurrection.

I think that context needs to be understood in what Jesus is speaking to here. And so I think that then puts two elements more into play. One would be the transfiguration, still as possible.

I think more likely is the resurrection. One of the problems with the transfiguration is to say that some of you won't taste death before this occurs, and then six days later this basically occurs is not really a huge great statement to say there are going to be some here, not even everyone, there are going to be some here who are going to live for the next six days. That just seems to me not to be that fantastic of a declaration.

But I think what he's getting at is that the time that there will be some standing here who will not taste death before the kingdom of God has come with power, is that he's saying that the arrival of the kingdom of God in power is probably referring to the resurrection, that this whole thing is about to take place. And I think that is the reference that he is referring to. We'll pick up now with chapter nine next time and we'll start looking at the transfiguration as we move now into the second major part of the Gospel of Mark.

Thank you.

This is Dr. Mark Jennings in his teaching on the Gospel of Mark. This is session 14, Mark 8:14-9:1, Yeast, Blind Man, Peter's Confession.