

February 5/6, 2005

Study Questions

The Good News About Jesus According to Mark

No Upper Limit

Mark 8:27-9:1

Pastor Andy MacFarlane

Opening

1. In what period of time in your life have you been most fulfilled?

What made that period of time so fulfilling?

2. Would you agree with Brad Pitt that as a culture we are experiencing a numbing of the soul and a complete atrophy of the spiritual being? Why or why not?

Bible Study

1. Are you surprised that, according to Mark 8:28, the people thought of Jesus as “one of the prophets?” Why or why not?

What do you think is Jesus’ purpose behind asking the question of Mark 8:27?

In Mark 8:29, why do you think Peter and the disciples come to a different conclusion about Jesus than the people?

What does it mean that Jesus is the Christ? Particularly in light of Mark 8:27-30, how would you respond to this statement: “The important thing is not what he (Jesus) was or what he wasn’t – the important thing is who people believe him to have been.”

2. In Mark 8:30, why do you think Jesus instructs the disciples not to tell anyone that He is the Christ?

Starting in verse 31, why does Jesus refer to himself as the “Son of Man?” According to Daniel 7:13-14, who is the Son of Man? How does Jesus fulfill this description of the Son of Man?

In Mark 8:32, why does Peter rebuke Jesus? If you had been one of the disciples, how do you think you would have reacted upon hearing Jesus’ description of a suffering Messiah? In Mark 8:33, why does Jesus compare Peter to Satan?

3. In Mark 8:34, who does Jesus direct to take up his cross and follow Him (Jesus)? What does it mean to “take up your cross?”

How do you react to the call to take up your cross and follow Jesus? According to verse 35, why does Jesus call His followers to lose their life? Do you have trouble believing the paradox that you gain your life by losing it for Jesus’ sake? Why or why not? How do verses 36 and 37 relate to the call of verses 34 and 35?

4. Why might someone be ashamed of Jesus and/or Jesus' words? When are you most tempted to be ashamed of Jesus and/or His words?

What do you think is the purpose of Jesus' warning in Mark 8:38? Why do you think Jesus gives the disciples and us the assurance of Mark 9:1? Where do we read of the fulfillment of this assurance?

Application

1. Who do you know in your sphere of influence that does not believe that Jesus is the Christ, God's Anointed?

How do you think God wants to use you in the process of bringing that person to believe that Jesus is the Christ?

What can you do to take the next step in developing a friendship with this person?

2. When it comes to following Jesus, what are your "upper limits?"

Are there any areas of your life that are "off limits" to Jesus? What makes it so hard to turn these areas over to Jesus?

Do you believe that your "upper limits" keep you from experiencing the fullness of life that God desires for you? How do you see God working in your daily circumstances to move you through your upper limits?

Who will you ask to pray for you that God will move you through these "upper limits?"