

## **LENT 2021 - Who Do You Say That I Am? "A Different Kind of King"**

February 21, 2021

**Overarching theme:** John 20:21, Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.' In 2021, as DISCIPLES, we are SENT with the peace of Christ to share with others!

**Instructions:** When using this material as teacher, feel free to pick and choose the point you want to emphasize in the lesson. The format of the curriculum is designed to have an abundance of information in which to refer as desired.

**Core Passage:** Mark 8:27-38 NRSV

*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?"<sup>28</sup> And they answered him, "John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets."<sup>29</sup> He asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Messiah."<sup>30</sup> And he sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him.<sup>31</sup> Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.<sup>32</sup> He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.<sup>33</sup> But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."*

*<sup>34</sup> He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.<sup>35</sup> For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel,<sup>[a]</sup> will save it.<sup>36</sup> For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? <sup>37</sup> Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? <sup>38</sup> Those who are ashamed of me and of my words<sup>[b]</sup> in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."*

### **Commentary:**

A saying about the suffering Son of man sparks a new exchange between Jesus and Peter. As does the previous exchange (vv. 27-30), this episode concludes with a rebuke (v.33). The parallelism between the rebuke in v.30, "not to tell anyone" and v. 33, "get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine

things but on human things,” suggests that the second rebuke explains the first. When Peter hears Jesus explain that the Son of Man must suffer, Peter has the audacity to take Jesus aside and rebuke Jesus! Clearly, Peter attaches significance to the title “Messiah” that exclude suffering.

The disciples have participated in Jesus’ ministry of preaching and healing (6:7-13,30), and perhaps Peter was convinced that this dual ministry alone usher in the Kingdom without the need of additional sacrifice. But the disciples are soon to learn that they must also participate in the ministry of suffering.

Confronted with the necessity of suffering, most people react exactly like Peter. The necessity of suffering is not simply a pious desire to imitate Jesus; much of what is truly worthwhile can be accomplished only by those who are willing to trust Jesus’ word that suffering belongs to God’s plan. In a “pain killer” culture, a balanced understanding of suffering is difficult to achieve. Jesus sets out the challenge for us to think as God does, not as human beings normally do. Jesus’ healing miracle and his compassion of the crowds at the feeding miracle make it clear that God does not delight in human suffering. The disciples were sent out to heal as well as to preach the gospel. Yet danger lies in concluding that suffering and self-sacrifice are always undesirable.

– adapted from the New Interpreter’s Bible, Vol VIII p. 624-628

### **Questions to Ponder for accountability in the group:**

1. Had you been with Jesus prior to this pivotal Caesarea Philippi moment, experiencing what the disciples experienced, how might you have responded to Jesus’ question, “Who do you say that I am?”
2. Peter responded “You are the Messiah” (Greek – *Cristos* or in English, *Christ*. The ‘messiah’ referred to the long anticipated deliverer or ‘Anointed King’). Re-read verse 30. Why would Jesus issue this stern warning?
3. Review verse 31. What did Jesus begin to teach them? Why do you think this teaching was necessary? Why do you think Jesus said that the “Son of Man” must suffer?  
NOTE: ‘Son of Man’ was one of Jesus’ most common self-designations – See Daniel 7:13-14 for OT background
4. Why do you think Peter rebuked Jesus? Why in turn did Jesus rebuke Peter?
5. In a world in which we are often encouraged to ‘look out for #1,’ why would Jesus ask his followers to “*deny themselves and take up their cross.*” What would ‘*the cross*’ have meant to people in that day? What might it mean for you today?

**Activity for the life of a disciple:**

1. Remember to find encouragement for the day by reading the daily devotional and spend time pondering and meditating on the challenge.
2. Ponder and pray on this scripture this week: Mark 8: 35-36  
*For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life?*
3. As this challenging pandemic continues, what might Jesus desire most for your life during this Lenten journey? Prayerfully reflect or journal on this question.