**BCM Bible Study – Oct. 6/7, 2021**

**Mark 8:27-9:50**

This section includes what has been dubbed by many to begin Jesus’ “Great Discipleship Discourse,” (Akin) as the disciples acknowledge him as **Messiah** and he begins to teach them about some of the different challenges of the life of the Christian disciple.

**Read Mark 8:27-33**

* “Caesara Philippi is an unlikely location for the first human proclamation of Jesus as the Messiah. It represents the outer regions of paganism, idolatry, and hostility to the Hebrew faith. We are at a crucial turning point.” (Akin)
* Why might Jesus have chosen to wait until the group is separated from much of their familiar society to ask them these questions? (In some way, it symbolizes the way in which Jesus is not a Messiah just for the Pharisees or those who feel they are doing well religiously, instead being one for all people. The timing of this declaration is also something which he probably didn’t want many to know right now.)
  + When has God taken you out of your comfort zone to teach you something?
  + What is telling about the answers of the crowds to who Jesus is?
* With Jesus admitting that he truly is the Messiah, why would he continue to prevent the disciples from telling people who He is at this point? (They don’t truly understand what this means)
* When have you, much like Peter, sought to use Jesus for your own goals or desires as opposed to those of God?
  + We cannot be certain, but there is a chance that Jesus was rebuking not just Peter but also the rest of the disciples for **thinking** in a similar fashion to Peter, but just not voicing it.
* Have there been any moments where culture informed some aspect of your relationship with Jesus more than the Jesus found in Scripture?

**Read Mark 9:2-13**

* “For a brief moment, the veil of his [Jesus’] humanity was lifted, and his true essence was allowed to shine through. The glory that was always in the depths of his being rose to the surface for that one time in his earthly life.” (Hughes)
* Even as Elijah and Moses are standing before the disciples, God the Father says to “Listen to,” Jesus. How does this uniquely glorify Jesus?
  + “Jesus is the ultimate expression of truth! Peter, James, and John were to listen to what Jesus said about the necessity of his death and of their embracing the paradox of the cross… We need to listen to Jesus’ words about all of life.” (Hughes)
* How does the placement of the Transfiguration between multiple passages about the Messiah’s coming suffering serve to broaden the way that you think about the Messiah?
  + How would this moment then impact these three disciples and their picture of Jesus as Messiah?
* How does the supremacy of Jesus shine through in this passage?

**Read Mark 9:14-29**

* Why were the teachers of the law arguing with the other group of disciples?
  + What does it seem that the law teachers' primary purpose in this disagreement was?
* Put yourself in the shoes of that father. He is truly desperate and deeply concerned about his son’s well being as he has been **for years**. Surely he has tried many other things to heal his son and now he finds himself at his last option.
  + Reread v. 17-18, 21-24 and imagine that this was your child or someone whom you care deeply about. How likely are you to ask God to take pity on you?
  + His cry in v.24 is filled with desperation, yet also clings to hope. While for the disciples and Pharisees this was about authority, it was so much more for the father. It was about his son’s life and any hope that he had for him.
  + Have you ever experienced this desperation where you would give anything for the help of God?
    - “While we debate who is right, who is wrong, and who is at fault, the world stands by helplessly in the grips of evil.” - Garland
  + How should this passage impact the focus which we have upon the world?
  + It is clear that Jesus does not require a perfect faith of those who believe in him. How should this impact how we interact with others?
* How can we make sure that we are trusting in God and what he has given us at all times as opposed to relying upon ourselves?
* What areas of your life can you be praying for God to “help me overcome my unbelief?”

**Read Mark 9:30-41**

* How does Jesus’ prediction of his death in this compare to the one earlier in the study?
  + What do you notice about the reaction of the disciples?
  + We have here the advantage of hindsight and being on this side of the cross. Yet, what does this show about the honesty of Jesus in his discipleship and teaching? What about how God keeps his promises to us?
  + How can this impact the way that we minister to and disciple others?
* Even as Jesus speaks of the painful death which awaits him, the disciples are still having very human arguments about which of them is the best, so Jesus takes this opportunity to teach them.
  + In what ways were v. 36-37 revolutionary in that time period? How are these verses still revolutionary today?
  + How should we then think about our own success and status? What about that of others?
* Based on Jesus’ teaching in v. 39-41, how should we think about Christians outside of our traditions or comfort zones?
  + What was most likely in play in the disciples’ motivation in stopping this person? Was it jealousy for Jesus or ultimately for themselves?
  + Let us then check our heart for the same things when we interact with others.

Challenge: Spend some time over the next week examining what areas of your faith have unbelief in them. Pray and ask God to help you in them.

Extra Notes

8:34-9:1

* After instructing the disciples about his death and what awaits him, Jesus tells the whole crowd about the difficulty and challenge associated with following him.
* This is part of Jesus’ discipling everyone who follows him, not just the twelve. He does this with a call for them to be willing to suffer and deny themselves as well.
* This passage is one that as Christians it is very easy for us to be familiar with, but let us make sure to genuinely feel the weight and gravity of what Jesus is saying here.
* “The one who plays it safe and considers his existence more important than Jesus will lose both Jesus and eternal life. In contrast, the one who gives his life for Jesus and the gospel will actually save it!” (Akin)
* 9:1 is meant to serve as a promise and encouragement after all that Jesus has just said.
  + There is debate over when Jesus was truly referring to, with several options being: the Transfiguration, Jesus’ resurrection, or Pentecost.

9:42-50

* Jesus continues what he was saying in 9:36-41 and takes a turn with it, as he speaks of what will happen to those that cause someone to stumble.
* This should challenge us to not do anything that would potentially cause other believers to stumble in one way or another.
* This is meant to encourage humility and it continues Jesus’ teaching to the disciples.
* 9:49 - Everyone will experience this “in a manner consistent with their relationship to Christ. For unbelievers it will be the perpetual fires of final judgment in hell. For the disciple it will be the preserving and refining fires of trials and suffering that mark the road to true greatness.” (Akin)