A BETTER WORD

THE GOSPEL OF MARK

A Study Through the Life of King Jesus | with Pastor Nick Gatzke

The Call of the Savior and the Saved

Mark 8:22–9:1

THE BIG IDEA

A Christ without a cross isn't the true Christ, and a disciple who won't suffer isn't a true disciple.

SERMON SUMMARY

Peephole driving — scraping a pizza-sized hole in a frosted windshield and pulling into traffic anyway — is an apt picture of moving through life with a limited view of who Jesus is. At Mark's halfway point, Jesus heals a blind man in two stages: first he sees people who "look like trees walking," then he sees everything clearly.

Then comes the question on the road to Caesarea Philippi: "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answers rightly — but partially. When Jesus explains that the Christ must suffer, be rejected, be killed, and rise, Peter rebukes him and hears the harshest words Jesus ever spoke to a follower: "Get behind me, Satan."

Isaiah described the Messiah's suffering long before — he was pierced for our transgressions, and with his wounds we are healed. Then Jesus turns to the crowd, and declares that what is true of the Savior proves true of the saved. Deny yourself. Take up your cross. Follow.

DIGGING DEEPER

1. The healing at Bethsaida is the only two-stage miracle in the Gospels, and Jesus asks a question he already knows the answer to. Read Mark 4:12, 6:52, and 8:17–18. Why does Mark place a man with partial sight just before Peter's partial confession?

2. Jesus first asks what the crowds say, then makes it personal: "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answers, "You are the Christ" — a title meaning anointed one, not a last name. Why won't Jesus let that question stay a matter of public opinion?

3. Peter's confession was real, yet he could not stomach a suffering Messiah. Read Isaiah 53:2–5. Why is a Christ without a cross not the true Christ, and what does the rebuke "you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man" expose in us?

4. Jesus names two actions that follow real belief: deny yourself and take up your cross. Pastor Nick draws a careful line — taking up your cross is not enduring whatever hardship

comes, but the cost of actively following Jesus at work, in your speech, in resisting sin. Where does that land in your life?

5. Kierkegaard warned that admirers of the truth become traitors when danger appears, and that Christ never asked for admirers but for followers. What are you suffering for your faith?

LIVING IT OUT

If you never look beyond yourself — if you drive your days with your face pressed to the glass because a pizza-sized hole is all the visibility you have — you have no idea where you will end up. Partial vision leads to partial recognition of Christ and a life that never gets past itself.

Heart Check: Which diagnostic question exposes you? If you are too scared or too apathetic to tell others about the King who saves sinners, will you take up a cross when suffering comes? If you won't give generously when things are good, what will you do when they get hard?

This Week: Name one specific cost — your reputation, your comfort, a relationship, your money — and take one concrete step this week that actually costs you that thing for the sake of following Christ.

REFLECTION & PRAYER

"But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed."

— Isaiah 53:5

Thank God that the plan of suffering and glory did not happen to his Son against his will, but was the plan all along — then ask him for courage to move from proclaiming Jesus as the Christ to following him as the Christ.

Your Prayer: