

Messiah's Mission

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- [0 : 01] Take your Bibles and turn to Mark chapter 8, the Gospel of Mark. We're looking again in chapter 8.
- I'll read verses 22 to 33. They came to Bethesda, and some people brought a blind man and begged Jesus to touch him.
- He took the blind man by the hand and led him outside the village. When he had 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 looked 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 go into the village.
- [1 : 21] Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way, he asked them, Who do people say I am?
- They replied, Some say John the Baptist. Others say Elijah. And still others, one of the prophets.
- But what about you? He asked. Who do you say I am? Peter answered, You are the Christ.
- Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him. He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed, and after three days rise again.
- He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter.
- [2 : 37] Out of my sight, Satan, he said, You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men.
- Have your thoughts ever clashed with Jesus' words? Peter's did.
- And we get to read his immediate response. Last week, we saw this partial healing of the blind man and the strangeness of it.
- Jesus never did a miracle like that anywhere else that we read. And it was a picture, wasn't it, of the partial understanding of the disciples concerning who he was, who he is.
- The partially healed man saw people as trees walking around. And even so, the disciples who had heard and seen plenty from our Lord about his identity, that he was the Messiah, the Son of God, they acted at times as if they didn't see very clearly at all or understand who he was.
- [3 : 48] The spiritual blindness of Israel as a nation was seen in their wrong views of who Jesus is. Well, he's John the Baptist. No, others said he's Elijah.
- Others said, No, he's one of the prophets. But what they all had in common was that they were mere men. Just men that had somehow come back to life. And then Jesus asked the twelve, But you, who do you say that I am?

And Peter answers for the twelve, You are the Christ. That is, you are the Messiah. This long-promised Savior. And our Lord told him, as we see in Matthew's account, Flesh and blood is not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.

And you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church. Upon this confession of faith that you have just made, that I am the Messiah, the Son of the living God.

So Peter clearly sees more than the general population of Israel. They see mere men. Peter sees the God-sent Messiah, the Son of the living God.

[4 : 58] And we might think, Oh, okay, so he now sees clearly. But we have to hold on a bit, don't we? And read a little further to see that, No, in many ways, he still sees very blurry.

And unclear, as do the rest of the twelve. Peter sees clearly, they see clearly about the identity of Jesus. He is the Messiah. But he cannot see the mission of Jesus.

That he's to suffer and die and rise again. On that score, he's still seeing men as trees walking around. Very blurry. So just three verses today from Mark chapter 8 with three main points.

Number one, Messiah's mission clearly taught by Christ. Verse 31. Number two, Peter's blurry vision and bold rebuke of Christ.

Verse 32. And thirdly, the rebuker rebuked by Christ. Verse 33. So we begin with Messiah's mission clearly taught by Christ.

[6 : 10] Verse 31. Now, we've come to a turning point in the Gospel of Mark. We're about halfway through. And I should say a turning point in the ministry of Jesus.

So far, Jesus has been ministering mainly publicly to the crowds there in Galilee. His miracles and his preaching were meant to answer the question, Who is this man?

Most of the people were left guessing. And they got it wrong, didn't they? But now, with Peter's good confession of who Jesus is, Our Lord now withdraws from his public ministry To focus more on teaching his disciples.

To prepare them for the coming shock of their lives. That the one that they left everything to follow. The one that they have come to know is the Messiah. In about six months, will be hanging on a Roman cross.

Dying in weakness. And so, Jesus is focusing his attention on teaching them. They've now identified him as Messiah correctly.

[7 : 23] He's now going to teach them about Messiah's mission. Why he's come to earth. And you know, it's not enough to know one without the other. To know that he's the Messiah without knowing why Messiah has come.

So, we read in verse 31. Then he, he then, Jesus, began to teach them. You see, this is a new phase in his ministry.

For the first time, he's now teaching them That the Son of Man must suffer many things And be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and teachers of the law And that he must be killed and after three days rise again.

This is just the beginning of his teaching them these things. We'll see him teaching them over and over. And here our Lord tells them that Messiah's mission includes four things.

He must suffer many things. He must be rejected by the elders, The chief priests, who were the Sadducees mainly, And the teachers of the law, who were mainly Pharisees.

[8 : 30] They made up Israel's supreme court. And they would examine Jesus, this proclaimed Messiah, And he would fail to pass their scrutiny. He must be rejected.

And then thirdly, he must be killed. Refers to a violent death. Fourth, after three days, he must rise again. Which they hardly even heard, Because once they heard that he must be killed, It was like they shut it down.

They couldn't understand what in the world Jesus would mean by rising again. We'll see that in the future. So let's notice four things about Jesus teaching. That's Messiah's mission.

Notice four things about Jesus teaching them about Messiah's mission. The first thing, his kindness. For Jesus to forewarn his disciples about his coming death, To prepare them for such a shock.

What kindness. He knows his men through and through. And he's thinking ahead out of concern for them. So that when it happens, they will know, This did not take Jesus by surprise.

[9 : 43] This did not catch Jesus as a helpless victim of Rome or of the Jews. No, he knew it was coming. He told us it was coming.

And he voluntarily went toward Jerusalem with his face set like a flint To carry out the mission of Messiah that his father had given him to do.

Kind of Jesus, wasn't it? To prepare these men. For his mission. And does he not do the same with you? Have you not found that Jesus has a way of preparing you for trials in your life?

Maybe it's a word of scripture that comes to you with power. And it's just what you needed when you didn't know you were going to have this trial. But he was preparing you for it.

He's kind toward his disciples. And we find what a good and kind shepherd he is to these twelve that he's preparing for his death.

[10 : 47] Secondly, we notice that it was necessary. It was not only kind, it was necessary. This mission of Messiah to suffer and die and rise again was absolutely necessary.

It's a tiny word in the Greek. It's translated must. Must. And it speaks of a divine necessity. It must happen this way.

The Son of Man must suffer. He must be rejected. He must be killed. And he must rise again. Now, it was necessary for a couple of reasons.

First of all, it was necessary because of all the prophecies that had foretold it. That he would suffer, be rejected, would die and rise again.

First of all, that he must suffer many things. Isaiah speaks of the suffering servant of the Lord, doesn't he? In one of his suffering servant songs, Isaiah 50 and verse 6, we hear the Messiah say, I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard.

[11 : 58] I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting. Yes, he must suffer many things, Isaiah 50 said. Chapter 53 and verse 5, he was pierced for our transgressions.

He was crushed for our iniquities. And the punishment that brought us peace was on him. And by his wounds, we shall be healed.

Isaiah 53, 10, it was the Lord's will to crush him and to cause him to suffer. Oh yes, the prophecies. There were many that prophesied about him suffering.

And then he must be rejected by the religious leaders. Rejected. Isaiah 53, 10, 3. He was despised and rejected by men.

A man of sorrows and familiar with suffering, like one from whom men hide their faces. He was despised. And we esteemed him not. Psalm 118, 22.

[13 : 01] The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone. Who were the builders? They were Israel's leaders. The elders. The scribes.

The Pharisees. The chief priests. And the builders. Scrutinized Jesus, the rock. And they said, he's not worthy to build upon.

The builders rejected him. But he's become the capstone. God has caused him to be the capstone. So, he must be rejected. It was foretold. He must be killed.

Isaiah 53, 7. He was led as a lamb to the slaughter. Isaiah 53, 8. He was cut off from the land of the living. For the transgression of my people was he stricken.

Verse 9, he was assigned a grave with the wicked. And verse 12 of 53, he poured out his life unto death. Psalm 22, 16.

[14 : 02] They have pierced my hands and my feet. Yes, he must be killed. And then he must rise again. Isaiah 53, 10 and 11. Though the Lord makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days.

After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied. Psalm 16, verses 10 and 11. Messiah says, You will not abandon me to the grave, nor allow your Holy One to see decay.

So, God had gone on record, hadn't he? In his Old Testament, through his prophets, he had gone on record in these prophecies of Messiah, Messiah, that he must suffer, be rejected, be killed, and rise again.

His word cannot fail. Has God said it? Then it must happen this way. It's a divine necessity. His word cannot return.

Boy, he can't send his word out and it comes back empty. No, it must fulfill the purpose for which he sent it. It must. Isaiah 44, 26. I am the Lord who carries out the words of his servants and who fulfills the predictions of his messengers.

[15 : 21] Have my messengers predicted it? I'm the one who goes with it to carry out those predictions. Isaiah 46, 10 and 11.

My purpose will stand and I will do all that I please. What I have said, that will I bring about. What I have planned, that will I do. So, when Jesus is saying it must be like this, it's because it was prophesied that it would be like this.

And God's word simply cannot fail. It must happen this way. But secondly, it must happen this way because it is necessary because this was God's only plan of salvation.

There is no other way to be saved. It cannot be thwarted. The plans of the Lord stand firm forever. The purposes of his heart through all generations. There is no other way for our sins to be forgiven.

John the Baptist said of Jesus, Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. He's the only way to have your sins taken away. And what were lambs for?

[16 : 28] Remember, they had 1,500 years of history of bringing their sacrificial lambs to be slaughtered. Now here is the lamb that must be slaughtered if your sins are to be taken.

It can happen no other way. It must be through the slaughter of God's lamb. The law taught them that without the shedding of blood, there is no remission, no forgiveness of sins.

So Jesus must be killed. Absolutely necessary if we are to be saved. No other way for sins to be blotted out, forgiven and remembered no more.

No other way for God's justice to be upheld and satisfied. No other way for God's wrath to be appeased than for Jesus to suffer it in our place.

No other way for us to be redeemed from the curse of the law than for him to be cursed by God for us. And so Jesus is teaching them that he must suffer and die so that when it happens, they might know that it all happened according to what God's power and will had decided beforehand should happen, all according to God's set purpose and plan.

[17 : 48] Jesus teaching them of Messiah's mission was kind and Messiah's mission was necessary. But it was also thirdly plain.

His teaching was plain. We get this in verse 32. He taught them plainly about this. There was nothing hidden or concealed. There's no symbolic language here.

There's no mysterious parables. His meaning is laid open. It's clear on the face of it. We would say he speaks in plain English. Well, he was speaking in plain Aramaic.

What is there not to understand about suffering, being rejected, being killed, being raised again? So Peter's problem was not so much in understanding the meaning of Jesus' words.

It was plain. Where Peter stumbled was with swallowing what Jesus said. What he was plainly saying will happen. His problem was accepting that it was true.

[18 : 49] So it was plain. But fourthly, though it was plain, it was unthinkable. Unthinkable to Peter and the 12. Before we stone Peter for this, we need to put ourselves in his sandals, as we say.

Imagine that every time you've heard the Bible taught or preached, in your home, in your Sunday school classes, from both pastors and your church, from your favorite internet pastors, every conference you went to, you only heard one thing, that when Messiah comes, he's coming in great power and pomp and glory, and he is going to set us free from the nations that oppress us.

He's going to set us free. That's the way it was. All the leaders of the Jews sang in unison on this point. All the fathers and mothers taught the same idea.

And remember, they didn't, each individual Christian didn't have a Bible to check and to see. Is that really the case, that Messiah can't die? No, they didn't have Bibles.

They learned most of what they heard from mom and dad, passing it down from their mom and dad, and what they heard in the synagogue where the scrolls were kept. And then there are many festivals that they kept, but they didn't have copies of the Bibles like we do.

[20 : 20] And on top of this, they had many centuries of cruel bondage under the heel of foreign nations that would have only raised their hopes and prayers.

Oh, that Messiah would come and set us free from this bondage to the nations. And bring in those glory days of Israel foretold by the prophets that God sent us.

Old heirs don't die easy. Some people are growing up in Muslim lands where from childhood on, they hear that God is Allah and that his prophet is Muhammad.

And that's all they hear all the time, every day, throughout their lives. It's hard to shed that kind of teaching. And it was difficult for these disciples who had been brought up with such brainwashing that there's only glories coming when Messiah comes.

Well, what about these prophecies of God's servant suffering, about the Messiah suffering? Well, there were two baskets of prophecies about Messiah. There were the sufferings of Messiah, and I've quoted them for you.

[21 : 33] And then there were the glories of Messiah. We didn't even have time to start in that batch. More so, the glories of the coming of Messiah. But they didn't see that Messiah's first coming would be sufferings and death, and his second coming, there would be a second coming of Messiah where it would be glories.

Sufferings first and glories to follow. They didn't see that. So they just had the two baskets, the sufferings and glories. And everybody was teaching about the glories.

Before you criticize them about that, do we not see it being done in our day? We have many blessings in the Christian life, don't we? There's the basket of blessing.

There's also words about trials and troubles and hardship. We have people today that believe that God doesn't send hardship and troubles, that God wants for you is just health, wealth, and prosperity.

Oh, they're just dipping into these verses, and they're ignoring Jesus' words, that in this world you will have troubles, and we must go through great tribulation to enter the kingdom. They don't like those baskets of verses, so they pick these.

[22 : 48] And I've even heard of Christians who will only read their New Testaments. Because they like what they read in the New Testament, but they don't like what they read in the Old Testament.

Maybe the Psalms and the Proverbs. What is that? That's saying, I'm going to choose to read God's words that I like and to ignore God's words that I don't.

That's something that was going on in Jesus' day and had gone on for centuries. The glories of Messiah were upheld, and they were blinded to the sufferings of Messiah.

So that though Jesus spoke plainly, like many of the suffering prophecies were plainly spoken, they could not.

They had no place to plug that into their view of Jesus, of the Messiah. And so what you end up with was a Messiah according to how man likes to think of him rather than how God has revealed him to be.

[23 : 54] So a Messiah who suffers and is killed, that is inconceivable to Peter and the Twelve. And Peter, as usual, speaks up as the speaker for the Twelve.

And that leads us to the second point, Peter's blurry vision and bold rebuke of Christ. Verse 32, He, Jesus, spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.

Jesus spoke clearly, but Peter can't see clearly about Messiah's mission. He has no room in his thoughts for a Messiah who's killed.

And here's where we see Peter is still like that half-healed man seeing men like trees walking around.

Blurry vision. He rightly confesses him to be the Messiah, but not the Messiah presented in Scripture.

[24 : 58] His views of Messiah are way off base. His expectations were like the rest of the Jews. He was expecting a Messiah to come in outward pomp and splendor to set Israel free from the oppressive yoke of the Romans.

But for Messiah to be killed, well, that would be his defeat. That would be no victory. That simply cannot wash with our expectations, Jesus. And so impetuous Peter feels so strongly about it that he actually pulls Jesus aside from the others and gives him a good talking to.

He rebukes him. You know, it's the same word that is used earlier in Mark's Gospel of Jesus rebuking the demon. That's what Peter's doing to Jesus. It's a strong word.

I'm going to show him that he's wrong. Whenever your thoughts conflict with God's word, note to self, God is true.

Let God be true and every man be a liar. That's the Scripture's answer, Romans 3, 4. He cannot lie. So if you and Scriptures do not line up, guess who's wrong?

[26 : 16] When God's word says that he is working for all things together for the good of his people, and your thoughts just don't line up with that, and your feelings, and how your situation looks and feels, and, well, who's right and who's wrong?

Well, Peter needs to learn this lesson over. You and I need to learn it over too, don't we? Let God be true and let our feelings be called liars that they are. Matthew was there that day, and he records in his Gospel exactly what Peter said in his rebuke of Jesus.

We don't have it here in Mark, but this is what he said. He said, never, Lord. This shall never happen to you. It's the strongest negation of what Jesus has just said that will be, that must be.

Never. This is Peter the fisherman rebuking the one he's just rightly identified as the Messiah, the Son of the living God.

And he's already forgetting who it is that he's rebuking, as if Peter's right and Jesus got it wrong. Isaiah asked a wonderful question in chapter 40, verses 13 and following.

[27 : 32] Who has understood the mind of the Lord or instructed him as his counselor? Whom did the Lord consult to enlighten him? And who taught him the right way? Well, Peter says, I'll do that.

I'll give him my counsel. I'll correct him. I'll show him the right way. You're wrong, Lord.