

Count the Cost of the Cross

VBS "20-20 Vision" - being planned...
Meeting April 5 and see Sign-up sheet!



Mark's account of the Good News of Jesus shows His might and movement! The key word in Mark's Gospel is "immediately," used 43 times. Mark is the fast-pace approach and the shortest of all Gospel accounts. It has less of His sermons and parables - highlighting the activity of Jesus. In fact, Mark has been called "The Action Gospel." Picture it...

How many days after the tops of the mountains appeared did Noah wait before he opened the window of the Ark?

Christ's teaching in Mark 8:34-38 is the setting. He calls His disciples in close and wants to make something clear about following Him. We could restate what Jesus instructed here to 3 basic challenges: So, you want to be a disciple of Christ, do you? 1) Start with self-denial. 2) The second is "cross-bearing." And 3) is follow Me!



Take a look at "cross-bearing", verse 34, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross." It seems to have lost some significance among "casual Christians." Some minimize what Jesus meant and say "Oh, I have this cross to bear," or "This is my cross to bear," equating this statement to something like poor eyesight or a vehicle older than we'd want.

Jesus knew what was coming and IS coming for those determined to follow Him. He knew the disciple is not greater than the master. If they persecuted Him, they would do the same to them. He knew there would be times of discouragement.

There would be times when friends would seem more like enemies. And so He warned them to understand and "count the cost of the cross."

This is NOT some isolated, one-time challenge. Jesus often spoke this way: In Matthew 10:32 "Everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven." Then He said, "Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth. I didn't come to bring peace, but a sword." In John's account He says, you better be willing to "hate your own life" (John 12:25). Coming to Jesus is demanding. The cost is very high!

Back to Mark 8: What does it mean to bear your cross? Note that Jesus had told them He's going to suffer and die, but He hadn't told them about His crucifixion yet. When He talked about a cross, they would think of one thing...death by crucifixion. They were used to seeing crucified victims. The Romans put crosses along the highways for everybody to see. It was a reminder that the Romans were in charge. The disciples had seen men "bear the cross." They knew exactly what it meant when Jesus said "take up your cross." They knew the victims had to drag the cross to the place of their OWN execution.

What was Jesus saying? If you want to follow Me, you're going to have to follow My suffering too. Real discipleship is not all about meals and miracles. I'm headed toward death! And to speak plainly, if YOU follow me, so are YOU! He's saying "count the cost of the cross."

Jesus asks us to consider a valuable gift—salvation. Would you give up everything even to the point of death? Not every Christian will die in persecution, but what are we willing to suffer for His cause: rejection by family, by relatives, by the people we work with, and by people we care about? There is hostility toward those who are faithful Christians. Christianity lived purely is a rebuke to the world. If you come to Me, He's saying, you will endure persecution, rejection, reproach and shame. They were very familiar with crucifixion and knew exactly what He was saying. Following me IS going to cost YOU everything. Christian, YOU will have a cross to bear.

To all our visitors: *Please feel free to participate!*

You should expect to hear singing with voices only, a few "family" announcements, prayers spoken, and see the Lord's Supper offered, then free-willed giving, and Gospel preaching from the Bible.

Any response is up to you and will be kindly received.

We are glad you decided to worship God with us!

Bday/Anniv Lunch: 2nd Sunday—today :-)

Friday Bible Study: 7—8PM. Consider your study of God's Word (2 Timothy 2:15)

Ladies Day: in Whitesboro (3/14) Union Street at 9AM "The Rose" ...lunch provided

3rd Thursday Night Singing: here (3/19) at 7PM ... joyfulness!

Fellowship Evening: here (3/22) after PM

Men's Day: at Howe (3/28) beginning at 9AM "The Bride of Christ" - Ephesians 5

Ladies Day: in Bonham (3/28) Northside at 8:30AM "Are You Practicing Half Hearted or Whole Hearted Love for God?"

Shannon Worship Series: begins Sunday (3/29) at 7:30PM "The Acts of Scriptural Worship" - Kevin Shimp speaks about Singing!

NMCCH: collecting aluminum foil and kitchen trash bags (pick up will be Friday 4/3)

Please look at the bulletin board for future events being posted—THANK YOU for reading!