

Daily Bible Study

“The ‘Original’ Invitation” Part-1

Mark 8:34-9:1

October 24 - 30, 2010

THE LORD’S DAY & MONDAY – We come this week to a particular portion of Marks gospel record that may arguably be called the **most** important part of this entire book of Mark. I say that because in this text of Holy Spirit inspired Scripture; namely, **Mark 8:34-9:1**, we (human beings) are given an invitation by God Himself in the person of The Lord Jesus Christ to follow Him and find eternal salvation. There is no more important matter in all of life than to follow Jesus, be saved from your sin along with its penalty and be prepared for the final judgment and life in the eternal state which will go on forever. Our title is “*The ‘Original’ Invitation*” because it not only predates all the “invitations” we find given today in many evangelical churches, but it is quite different from many of them in its content and call as well. As you see we are taking this portion in two parts as it will take us a couple Lord’s Day’s to cover the text. This portion of Sacred Scripture is at the heart of the Christian faith for in it, Jesus so openly, honestly, frankly, and in great detail, tells it the way it is; He warns mankind of false and faulty understandings of salvation, calls mankind to come to Him to be saved, tells them how to be able to stand in the final judgment, and finally assures this all to be in fact true by stating there will be an observable proof. Read our text: **Mark 8:34-9:1** “*When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, “Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s will save it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.” And He said to them, “Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power.”*”

(Meditate)What is God teaching me from His Word today? (Apply)How can I put it into practice?

Suggestion for Prayer: *Father, give me ears to hear You speak from Your Word this week. Please help me understand this important call of Jesus to follow Him & give me faith & strength to obey it.*

TUESDAY – **Mark 8:34 - 35** “*When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, “Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s will save it.”* As we begin to slowly go through this passage, make a conscious effort to listen and hear the honesty of Jesus as He so clearly explains what is necessary

to *come after me*. Many people argue that Jesus is not speaking about coming to Him for salvation here but rather speaking about following Him merely in a post conversion state. Although it is very true that saved men will act the way Jesus here describes in the text, there is no credible reason to “separate” the call to come to Jesus for salvation from the call to continue in obedience to Him once saved. They are one in the same. The Bible often speaks of our “being saved” in terms of process (**1 Corinthians 1:18, 2 Corinthians 2:15, 1 John 3:2**). We do understand that in a moment of time we by faith are “justified” (pardoned and accepted as righteous for Christ’s sake) by God the Father (**Romans 5:1**) and yet our lives and salvation continues as we then begin the process of “sanctification” (becoming more Christ like in behavior and growing in Him) by and through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit (**Philippians 2:13**). Two things immediately catch my attention in the text which helps us see this as a call to salvation...period. The first is found in that Jesus called *the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, “Whoever...* This is an invitation to everyone, or maybe it would be better said, to sinners. Second, in **verse 35** Jesus speaks of *saving or losing* your life. These are much higher stakes than merely getting in on a few of God’s “extra blessings” to the already converted Christian. With that said, please understand the already converted Christian will continue in this type of life and behavior described by our Lord.

(Meditate)What is God teaching me from His Word today? (Apply)How can I put it into practice?

Suggestion for Prayer: Father, thanks for being so open & honest in Your call to salvation. Help me hear, desire, and obey. Thank You that it is actually in Your power that I persevere in this life.

WEDNESDAY – Mark 8:34 - 35 “*When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, “Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s will save it.”* We have established that this is an exhortation to all people; everyone should become a disciple of Jesus. Here Jesus is telling us what a person must do in order to be a “TRUE” disciple; that is, to be genuinely born again, saved, a child of God. Previously in Mark 8:31 Jesus told them He would suffer and now He tells all who would follow Him into genuine salvation they to must prepare and be willing to suffer. *Whoever desires to come after Me...* After seeing the vastness of the call to everyone we see the first qualifier in the word *desires*. Literally *thelo* in the Greek which means “to will, to intend, to be resolved or determined, to purpose, to desire, to wish, to love, to take delight in, have pleasure”. Jesus’ invitation is for those interested and determined in following Him. Only those who are convicted by The Holy Spirit of their sin and feel the burden of its weight (**Matthew 11:28**) are in a position to *desire* to find forgiveness in Jesus. To be a Christian you need to *thelo* (*desire*) Jesus. I would just briefly point out that we *desire* to follow *after* (behind) Jesus as well. Being a Christian is ultimately about Christ, His person and work...not ours. We must take ownership of our sin and realize that is all we can bring to Jesus and then fully trust in Him alone, the sinless Savior. We then read that a person must *deny himself*. This is a comprehensive requirement. The word *deny* in the Greek literally means “to affirm that one has no acquaintance or connection with someone, to forget one's self, lose

sight of one's self and one's own interests". These two Greek words could be read as, "Let him say no to himself, forget himself, and abandon himself". In order to *come after Jesus* a person must say good bye to *himself*; abandon his sin and sinful thoughts, self-righteousness, will, effort, ambitions and trust and depend on Jesus alone for salvation. A man who *comes after Jesus* for salvation must give up his "independence" and embrace by faith, "dependence" on Christ alone. Read **Galatians 2:20, Philippians 3:7-11**.

(Meditate)What is God teaching me from His Word today? (Apply)How can I put it into practice?

Suggestion for Prayer: *Father, thank You for convicting me of my sin and need of Jesus righteousness. Thanks for sending Him to be my sinless, sufficient Savior. Help me to now and always abandon my self-righteousness and sinful self-sufficiency and depend on Jesus alone.*

THURSDAY– **Mark 8:34-35** “*When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, “Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s will save it.”* Not only is an individual who would *desire to come after Jesus* called to *deny himself* but Jesus then goes on to say that he must also *take up his cross, and follow Me*. The obvious picture in the minds of these original hearers and what we should also see in this command is the horrible image of a condemned man who is forced to carry his cross to the place of his execution. This is no picnic and certainly is not what you read on the back of a lot of modern day gospel tracts or hear in the invitations of so many churches. What is different however is that a man sentenced to die is FORCED to carry his cross while a man who comes to follow after Jesus is carrying his WILLINGLY. These people new of the horror of crucifixion even before they witnessed Jesus’ as they had most likely seen thousands of crucifixions carried out by the Romans in their lifetimes. Jesus is here telling them that He is headed to death and anyone who *desires to follow after Him* must be willing to face the same. He is more valuable than life itself for He is life itself; true life. Jesus is making it clear that following Him will expose a person to shame, pain, and persecution and these will be *his*, a man must take up *his cross* and in love and loyalty follow Christ. We also notice that Jesus is speaking about a *following after Him* that remains throughout ones life. This is not about getting behind Jesus for a while and then bailing out when times get difficult. A true believer in Jesus begins to follow Him and then just keeps on following Him. Please be careful not to see salvation through one’s own strength of self denial and discipline here in Jesus words. Although Jesus is placing emphasis here on human responsibility HE was quite clear in His teaching and preaching that it is only in the power of The Holy Spirit that a person can even understand the Kingdom of God or see it (**John 3:3-5**). You don’t strong arm your way to salvation by being more disciplined than the next guy. You realize your inadequacy and fall on Jesus for salvation and He empowers and enables you through the Holy Spirit to do what otherwise you could not do. These verses of Scripture are not a list you cross off until you catch up to Jesus as a “mature believer”. Rather, they show us the logical outworking of the true disciple of Jesus, a true converted individual; life long sanctification. Read **John 15:14, Ephesians 5:1-2, 1 Peter 2:21**.

(Meditate)What is God teaching me from His Word today? (Apply)How can I put it into practice?

Suggestion for Prayer: *Father, The call to follow Jesus is clear and yet it is impossible for me to follow and obey in my own strength. Help me by Your Holy Spirit and Your almighty power to have faith in Jesus and be “kept for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (1 Peter 1:5).*

FRIDAY & SATURDAY – Mark 8:34-38 “When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, “Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s will save it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.” We can only introduce the thoughts contained in this next portion of our text and will have to finish Lord willing next time we are in Mark. Notice that in the remainder of the passage we find verses that begin with “For”. There are three of them which I have underlined. These “For” verses help to elaborate on the full meaning of this call of Jesus. They point out and illustrate the reward in following Jesus as opposed to the folly of trying to find salvation in something other than Him; for instance material possessions, “*gaining the whole world*”. There is seen in these verses a paradox that in living in a way that appears to be losing in the eyes of the world, a person is actually winning in the eyes of God. Beloved, the road up is the way down, the way to exaltation is humility and servant hood and the way to the crown is through the cross (**Hebrews 12:2**). This matter of the cross remains the main focal point of the entire text. Remember the context of **Mark 8** which is of most importance. After years with Jesus, the disciples finally get it; that He is The Messiah and now Jesus explains how The Messiah, The King, establishes His Kingdom and defeats His enemies; not through earthly, political, and even necessarily visible means but through the cross (**Colossians 2:14-15**).

(Meditate)What is God teaching me from His Word today? (Apply)How can I put it into practice?

Suggestion for Prayer: *Father, Thanks for Jesus death, burial, resurrection, and ascension for me!*