

SESSION 19

JESUS IS THE ONLY DOOR TO ETERNAL LIFE

Mark wrote that Jesus and his disciples left Galilee. They went north to the area around Caesarea Philippi. This was a town at the base of Mount Hermon. As they were walking, Jesus asked them a question.



MARK 8:27-30

²⁷ Jesus and his disciples left Galilee and went up to the villages near Caesarea Philippi. As they were walking along, he asked them, “Who do people say I am?”

²⁸ “Well,” they replied, “some say John the Baptist, some say Elijah, and others say you are one of the other prophets.”

²⁹ Then he asked them, “But who do you say I am?”

Peter replied, “You are the Messiah.”

³⁰ But Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him.

Jesus already knew the answer to his question. He asked the question so that his disciples would think about who he really is.

The disciples told Jesus that some people had said that he was *John the Baptist*. This was the one who had baptized people in the Jordan River and that King Herod had killed. These people thought that John had come back to life after Herod had killed him. Other people had said that Jesus was Elijah. Elijah was an Old Testament prophet. The disciples said that some other people had said that Jesus was another prophet. Jesus had clearly said that he was God’s Son. He had shown people his great

HIS STORY: THE RESCUE

power by the many amazing things he had done. But still, many people did not believe that Jesus was God's Son.

Then Jesus asked his disciples, "*But who do you say I am?*" Jesus was asking the disciples if they believed what he had said about himself. Jesus had told them that he was the One that God had sent. They had also seen all the amazing things he had done.

So Jesus asked who they thought he was. Peter said "*You are the Messiah.*" Before, Peter's name was Simon. He was one of the fishermen that Jesus had asked to follow him. But Jesus said now his name would be Peter. Peter said that Jesus was the Messiah. Remember that *Messiah* means the Chosen One from God, the One that God had promised long ago? Messiah means the Prophet, the great High Priest and the eternal King from the family of David. Peter was just a fisherman from Capernaum. But he had been with Jesus for some time now. He had seen the life of Jesus every day. He had heard Jesus explain things about God. He had seen the amazing things that Jesus had done. So Peter and the other disciples knew who Jesus really was. They knew that he was the Messiah. But the Jews had been waiting for the Messiah to come to be a great king on earth. They did not understand the real work that God had given Jesus, the Messiah, to do.

Jesus told them not to tell anyone about him. He didn't want people to follow him just because they wanted a new king on earth. He didn't come to do the work of a king on earth. He wanted people to know who he really was - the Lamb of God. Then Jesus started to tell his disciples what would happen to him.



MARK 8:31-33

³¹ Then Jesus began to tell them that the Son of Man must suffer many terrible things and be rejected by the elders, the leading priests, and the teachers of religious law. He would be killed, but three days later he would rise from the dead. ³² As he talked about this openly with his disciples, Peter took him aside and began to reprimand him for saying such things.

³³ Jesus turned around and looked at his disciples, then reprimanded Peter. "Get away from me, Satan!" he said. "You are seeing things merely from a human point of view, not from God's."

Jesus called himself the Son of Man. Remember how he used that name for himself because he is the Son of God who came as a real man? Jesus told them clearly that he would suffer many things. He said that the Jewish religious leaders would reject²⁰⁸ him and then kill him. He said that they would kill him but three days later he would rise from the dead. Jesus meant that he would come to life again after three days.

Peter took Jesus aside and started to reprimand²⁰⁹ him. Peter was telling Jesus not to say the things he was saying. He knew that Jesus was the Messiah but he did not know what that meant. Jesus was telling them what it really meant. They thought the Messiah would be a great king on earth. But Jesus was telling them that he would have to suffer and die.

208. **reject** - to not listen to someone, to not like or love someone, to not agree with someone or to say that what someone says is wrong

209. **reprimand** - to tell someone to stop what they are doing

SESSION 19: JESUS IS THE ONLY DOOR TO ETERNAL LIFE

When Peter told Jesus not to say those things, Jesus reprimanded Peter. He said, *“Get away from me, Satan! ... You are seeing things merely from a human point of view, not from God's.”*

Jesus spoke very strongly to Peter. He did that because Peter was saying things that Satan wants people to believe. Satan wants people to think that they are not separated from God. Satan wants them to think that somehow everything will be OK. Satan doesn't want people to know that they have been born into a world of sin and death.

The only way to get back to a real relationship with God is if there is a payment of death for sin. This is the only true and real way that people can come to God. People must know that they are separated from God by their sin. And they have to believe that only God can help them. That is the truth about the way that things really are. But Satan wants people to think that they can come to God without any payment for sin. That's not how things really are in God's true rescue story. It isn't true. People must come to God in a real way, and understand how things really are. God loves people and wants to save them from death. But they have to come to him in the way he made for them to come; there is no other way.

That is why Jesus spoke strongly to Peter. Jesus had come to earth to do the work of God. That work would mean that he would suffer and die. So Jesus would not listen to any other way of doing things. He did not want to be a great king on earth with many followers. He just wanted to do the work that God had given him to do.



MARK 8:34-9:1

³⁴ Then, calling the crowd to join his disciples, he said, “If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me.

³⁵ If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake and for the sake of the Good News, you will save it. ³⁶ And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul? ³⁷ Is anything worth more than your soul? ³⁸ If anyone is ashamed of me and my message in these adulterous and sinful days, the Son of Man will be ashamed of that person when he returns in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”

^{9:1} Jesus went on to say, “I tell you the truth, some standing here right now will not die before they see the Kingdom of God arrive in great power!”

Jesus called over a crowd of people to listen to him speak. He wanted to tell them what it really means to be one of his followers. He said that people who followed him would have to give up many things. They would have to stop doing what they wanted in their lives. They would have to believe what he said about himself. They would have to decide to follow him. Jesus said, *“if you give up your life for my sake and for the sake of the Good News, you will save it.”* He meant that if people believed what Jesus said about himself and followed him, their lives would be saved.

Mark wrote about something that happened six days later.

HIS STORY: THE RESCUE



MARK 9:2-10

² Six days later Jesus took Peter, James, and John, and led them up a high mountain to be alone. As the men watched, Jesus' appearance was transformed, ³ and his clothes became dazzling white, far whiter than any earthly bleach could ever make them. ⁴ Then Elijah and Moses appeared and began talking with Jesus. ⁵ Peter exclaimed, "Rabbi, it's wonderful for us to be here! Let's make three shelters as memorials—one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." ⁶ He said this because he didn't really know what else to say, for they were all terrified. ⁷ Then a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my dearly loved Son. Listen to him." ⁸ Suddenly, when they looked around, Moses and Elijah were gone, and they saw only Jesus with them. ⁹ As they went back down the mountain, he told them not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead. ¹⁰ So they kept it to themselves, but they often asked each other what he meant by "rising from the dead."

Jesus asked Peter, James and John to walk with him up a high mountain. God's story doesn't say which mountain this was. But some people say it was Mount Tabor in Galilee. While they were there on the mountain, Jesus *was transformed*.²¹⁰ His clothes became very, very white and were dazzling.²¹¹ Then, Peter, James and John saw Moses and Elijah talking with Jesus.

The disciples were terrified. Peter was amazed and afraid. He did not know what to say. So he said that they should build three tabernacles on the mountain. He thought that people could come to worship Jesus, Moses and Elijah in that place. Right then, a cloud came over them. A voice came out of the cloud and said "*This is my dearly loved Son. Listen to him.*" When they looked again, only Jesus was there. On their way down the mountain, Jesus told them not to tell anyone about what had happened. He said they should wait until after he had risen from the dead.

Peter, James and John had seen who Jesus really was. Before, he had just looked like a man to them. But they had seen that he was also the Son of God living in a human body. And God had spoken to them from the cloud. God the Father had said that Jesus was his Son and that they should listen to him. They did not tell anyone what happened, just like Jesus had said. God's story says that they talked about what *rising from the dead* meant. They did not understand.

Jesus wanted people to understand who he really was. He wanted them to know what work God had for him to do. He used many examples to try to help people to understand these things. John wrote about one example Jesus used.



JOHN 10:7-11

⁷ So he explained it to them: "I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep. ⁸ All who came before me were thieves and robbers. But the true sheep did not listen to them. ⁹ Yes, I am the gate. Those who come in through me will be saved. They will come and go freely and will find good pastures. ¹⁰ The thief's purpose is to

210. **transformed** - to change very much

211. **dazzling** - so bright that it is hard to look at

SESSION 19: JESUS IS THE ONLY DOOR TO ETERNAL LIFE

steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.

¹¹ “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd sacrifices his life for the sheep.

Jesus said, “*I am the gate for the sheep.*” The people there knew what he was talking about. They had many sheep in their area. So they knew how sheep were looked after. The shepherds would take their sheep out to graze. Sometimes they took them far away from the towns and villages. At night, the shepherd would put the sheep inside an area with a stone fence around it. A good shepherd would not leave the sheep alone at night. He would stay there with them. He would sleep in the doorway of the stone fence. He would do this so that the sheep could not get out and thieves²¹² could not get in. The sheep would be safe inside at night.

So the people there knew what a good shepherd was. They knew what Jesus was talking about when he said he was *the gate of the sheep*. But Jesus wasn’t talking about real sheep. He was talking about people. He was saying that people are like sheep. They need a shepherd to take care of them. And Jesus said that if people “*come in through me*”, they would be saved. Jesus was saying that he is the way to come to God. He said that anyone who came to God in that way – through him – would be saved. God would take care of them and they would be safe from God’s Enemy. Jesus said, “*My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd sacrifices his life for the sheep.*”

Jesus also said that he would *sacrifice his life for the sheep*. He meant that he would die to rescue people. Jesus was saying that he loves people so much that he would die for them.

A little later, John wrote about something else that Jesus said about himself.



⁶ Jesus told him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.

When he said this, Jesus was speaking to his disciples. Jesus said that he is *the way* that people can come to God. He said that there was no other way to come to God except through him.

Jesus also said that he is *the truth*. Jesus is God’s Son and he came to earth as a man to do the work that God wanted him to do. That is the truth. God always speaks the truth and Jesus always spoke the truth. Jesus always lived in a true way. He said he was the truth. People must understand who Jesus really was so they can understand the truth about God and everything else. If they don’t know who Jesus was they cannot understand the truth.

Jesus also said that he is *the life*. Jesus meant that real life can only happen because of him. People are alive for a short time on earth. Then they die and will be separated from God forever because of their sin. But God wants people to live forever with him. God wants people to have real life – eternal life. Jesus said that he is the life because he would be the only way for people to come to God and have a real, eternal life with God.

212. thieves - people who take things that belong to other people

HIS STORY: THE RESCUE

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1. Why did Jesus ask his disciples, “Who do you say that I am?”
2. Why did Jesus reprimand Peter?
3. What did Jesus really mean when he said, “I am the gate for the sheep”?
4. What did Jesus mean when he said, “I am the way, the truth and the life”?



This lesson has been adapted from the book *His Story: The Rescue, The Bible message from Genesis to Christ in easy English* (ISBN: 978-0-9944270-4-5)

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