

Mark 8:27-38

²⁷Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" ²⁸And they answered him, "John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets." ²⁹He asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Messiah." ³⁰And he sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him.

³¹Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. ³²He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. ³³But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."

³⁴He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ³⁵For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. ³⁶For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? ³⁷Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? ³⁸Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

James 3:1-12

¹Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers and sisters, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. ²For all of us make many mistakes. Anyone who makes no mistakes in speaking is perfect, able to keep the whole body in check with a bridle. ³If we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we guide their whole bodies. ⁴Or look at ships: though they are so large that it takes strong winds to drive them, yet they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. ⁵So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great exploits.

How great a forest is set ablaze by a small fire! ⁶And the tongue is a fire. The tongue is placed among our members as a world of iniquity; it stains the whole body, sets on fire the cycle of nature, and is itself set on fire by hell. ⁷For every species of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by the human species, ⁸but no one can tame the tongue—a restless evil, full of deadly poison. ⁹With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse those who are made in the likeness of God. ¹⁰From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this ought not to be so. ¹¹Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and brackish water? ¹²Can a fig tree, my brothers and sisters, yield olives, or a grapevine figs? No more can salt water yield fresh.

Mark Questions:

- What are you hearing in this text?
- How has your understanding of Jesus changed throughout your life?
- What did it mean for Jesus to be Messiah?
 - What did it mean that the disciples articulated it?
- If you were Peter, affirming who Jesus was as the Messiah, and Jesus began speaking of what was to come, would you have responded any differently?
 - How many of us respond without processing? *Read, listening to respond not to understand*
- Why do you think Jesus responded to Peter in the way he did in v 33?
- What does it mean to deny one's self and carry the cross?
 - How do we do it today?
- I love Peter, one minute he's got it, the next he's lost. How are we like Peter in this respect?
 - When have you experienced this?
- How might we summarize vs 34 – 38 today?

James Questions:

- What sticks out in this text?
- Why are teachers held to a higher standard?
 - What's at stake?
- Starting in verse 2, James begins discussing the evils of the tongue. In what way is this related to verse 1 on teachers?
- Explain the phrase "Anyone who makes no mistakes in speaking is perfect, able to keep the whole body in check with a bridle."
- Why is the tongue such an important piece in this James text and the James text from a couple weeks ago?
 - What does the tongue signify?
- How does understanding Jesus as God's "better word" help us better understand how we should use our words?
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