

QUESTIONS JESUS ASKED

Discussion Questions **LEADER GUIDE**

Week of 3/3/24

Text: Mark 8:27-38

Icebreaker: What happens when our expectations are unrealistic or different than what we have experienced? If you're able, share about a (humorous) time when this happened to you.

It might be helpful if you can think of a way to answer this question ahead of time and then go first with your answer. Keep this as lighthearted as you'd like. "I thought we were going to Wendy's—and dressed for it—but ended up at a Michelin Star restaurant."

1. Read Mark 8:27-38. What stands out to you from these verses or from the sermon you heard this week? Why?

2. Verses 27-33 are a big contrast for Peter! What kind of expectations does Peter seem to have in his mind for Jesus, "the Christ"? What are Jesus's own expectations?

Peter doesn't seem to have a category for the kind of Christ (a.k.a, "Messiah" or king) that Jesus is. Peter is expecting a victorious ruler but instead Jesus describes a future of suffering and defeat (when viewed from a worldly perspective).

Application: What expectations do you have for what following Jesus should be like?

3. Verse 34 says that Jesus gathered "the crowd to him with his disciples" and then spoke what follows. What do you think the crowd's reaction would have been?

This is anything but a happy-talk sales pitch! Mark doesn't tell us how the crowd responds, but we can imagine it would have at least been surprising or even stunning to them.

Application: Deny yourself. Take up your cross and follow. Lose your life. What are examples of how we might do these as we follow Jesus today?

4. Verse 36 is this week's question. Given the context of this passage, what message is Jesus sending by asking this question?

Jesus is using the language of commerce to make the point that the value of the eternal (the soul) is far greater than that of the temporal (the whole world). Whatever temporal cost we pay is worth it for the eternal value of God's kingdom.

Application: What does it look like for a person today in one of our communities to try to "gain the whole world"? In what way could this lead them to "forfeit their soul?"

5. Verse 38 underscores the contrasts of the passage. Based on what he has just said in the previous verses, why might someone be "ashamed" of Jesus?

This links back to Jesus's dialogue with Peter. Being a follower of Jesus—being someone who's willing "to lose your life"— could subject a person to a loss of respect or even ridicule in the eyes of others (see 1 Cor 4:8-13). Peter wanted Jesus to use his power to achieve victory in the here and now, but Jesus's plan was to achieve a victory through a means and of a magnitude that Peter could not imagine at that moment.

Application: What challenges or encourages you in this passage? Take time to pray that each of you in your group would grow in "setting your mind on the things of God" (v. 33).

*Building Christ-centered communities of people fully devoted
to loving God and loving others.*