



SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2017

## 360 DISCUSSION GUIDE

# A STAGGERING DEMAND

MARK 8:27-38

The question that Jesus asks his disciples, as they are making their way through the villages of Caesarea Philippi, is the most important question anyone can ask or answer.

He starts the conversation with an easy question. He asks the disciples, “Who do people say that I am?” The crowds were deeply impressed with Jesus. The buzz about Jesus might have been flattering at any other time, in any other place, to any other teacher. But this is Jesus, and as flattering as popular opinion might have been, it falls far short of who Jesus really is.

The disciples had a few more pieces of the puzzle. They not only heard Jesus teach, but they had enjoyed leisurely walks and late night discussions that would have been the envy of anyone in the crowd. They had seen the powers of darkness relinquish their strongholds. They had seen the wind and waves stop dead in their tracks. They had even begun to ask the right question, “Who is this, man?”

But now it is Jesus who is asking “What about you? Who do you say I am?”

Peter’s answer is at the same time brilliant and woefully inadequate. At one moment Jesus is praising him for his sensitivity and insight, and in the very next moment rebuking him for a particularly human point of view. Jesus is indeed the Messiah, but he is not the kind of Messiah that Peter has in mind.

Jesus enlarges the disciples’ vision of who he is, and in the process makes a demand that is so staggering that it could only come from his lips.

## AN ALL IMPORTANT QUESTION (vv. 27-28)

*VERSES 27-30: Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, "Who do people say I am?" <sup>28</sup> They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets."*

1. In what ways are the popular opinions about Jesus extremely flattering?
2. How are they woefully inadequate?
3. What do your friends and co-workers think of Jesus?
4. How are they woefully inadequate?
5. What do you make of the fact that many people have a high view of Jesus but a low opinion of his followers?

## A FAR BETTER BUT STILL INADEQUATE ANSWER (vv. 29-33)

*VERSES 29, 31-33 "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "You are the Messiah."*

*<sup>31</sup> He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again.*

*<sup>32</sup> He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. "Get behind me, Satan!" he said. "You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns."*

1. How was Peter's opinion of Jesus a huge improvement over the popular opinion of his day?
2. How does Peter's view of Jesus miss the mark?
3. What does Jesus rebuke Peter for?
4. What are some of the ways we tend to elevate human concerns over God's concerns?
5. What are some of the lies Satan would like us to embrace about who Jesus is and what it means to follow him?

## A STAGGERING DEMAND (vv. 34-38)

*VERSES 34-38 Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me."*

*<sup>35</sup> For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. <sup>36</sup> What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? <sup>37</sup> Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?*

*<sup>38</sup> If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels."*

1. What is staggering about Jesus' demands in these verses?
2. How are these demands at odds with the popular views of what it means to follow Jesus?
3. What are some ways you may need to deny yourself in order to follow Jesus?
4. What do you think it means to lose yourself for Jesus and the gospel?
5. What are some of the times and places you might shy away from openly identifying with Jesus?
6. While this passage can be a bit overwhelming, it is called gospel for good reason. What is the good news of this passage?
7. How does what we gain in Christ more than compensate for anything we might be called to give up?
8. What is the best way to respond to the demands of this passage?

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