

Unexpected Sacrifice

September 20, 2020



Reading/Group Discussion

Begin with prayer

As you begin your gathering, designate someone to pray the Holy Spirit would lead and guide your time together. Before they do so, spend a few moments together in prayerful silence. Then, after a few seconds of quiet and centering, have the specified person pray for the group.

Read this overview

During this 13-week series, we are going to be opening up the book of Mark together to study the life of Jesus—The Unexpected King. During this series, we will gain a better understanding of who Jesus is and what it really means to be his disciple.

This past weekend Emerson preached on **Mark 8** and Jesus' Unexpected Sacrifice.

Scripture + Discussion

The goal of your discussion this week is to discuss the sacrificial nature of Jesus' kingship and the sacrificial nature of being a disciple of Jesus.

Take turns reading through all the way through **Mark 8:22-38**. Then, use the questions below to guide your discussion to hit on the above objectives.

Here are a few questions to guide this time:

- Who is someone in your life who sacrifices their own preferences, desires, wants, and wishes well for the betterment of others?
- What elements of American culture are at odds with Jesus' call to deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow him? What barriers do people have to this invitation? In what ways do you find those elements at work to keep you from heeding Jesus' invitation fully?
- When was a time in your life you stepped out of line as Jesus' disciple and got ahead of him? When was a time when you "got in Jesus' way" by pursuing self-interest?

- In this sermon Emerson quoted a pastor named John Mark Comer saying, “The cross isn’t just something Jesus did FOR us, it’s something we also do WITH him.” Do you agree or disagree? Explain.
- **Read Galatians 2:20.** On a scale of 1-10, how much would you say you are in solidarity with Paul in what he says here? Why?
- **Read Philippians 2:5-11 and 1 Peter 2:19-23.** What sort of posture do these passages exhort Christians to follow and have towards others? What would it look like for you to embody this in your marriage? In parenting? Towards your employees? Towards co-workers?
- **Re-read Mark 8:35.** What is your gut reaction to hearing Jesus’ statement of reality here?
- What from this sermon especially challenged you or deepened your love for Jesus?

For extra study this week...

- *Spend time reading **Mark 9:30-37** and **Mark 10:32-45** and ask yourself how these passages hit on the same theme of self-denial, sacrifice, and cross-like living for Jesus’ disciples. How does that apply to your own life?*
- *THEN, read **Mark 8:22-26** followed by **Mark 10:46-52**. What do you think Mark is trying to show his readers by sandwiching teachings on discipleship and suffering and following Jesus in between these two different healings of two different blind men?*

Accountability + Challenge

Take some time this week to split your group into smaller or gendered groups and share your answers to the accountability questions below and go over the challenge for this week. Be sure to follow up on anything that was shared last week.

Memorize **Philippians 2:5-11** as a group this week and ask each other the following questions:

- In what ways have you pursued self-interest or given into “the flesh” this past week?
- What’s one specific way you plan to imitate Jesus by denying yourself and bearing your cross for another person (spouse, roommate, friend, co-worker, etc.) this week?

Finish with prayer

Finish your group session with prayer. You might designate someone in your group to write down everyone’s prayer requests and then send them to the whole group for everyone to be praying about through the week.

- What is on your heart that you need prayer for?
- Who in your life needs prayer?

Have someone close your time together by interceding for the requests that were shared