Following Jesus: Lessons from His First Death Prediction



Explore Jesus' first prediction of His death and how He prepares disciples to embrace faith and sacrifice in Mark 8:31–38.





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Introduction

Welcome to this seven-day journey through a pivotal moment in the Gospels where Jesus first foretells His death. This passage from Mark 8:31–38 is rich with meaning and calls us to reflect deeply on what it means to truly follow Jesus.

In these verses, Jesus not only predicts His suffering and death but also reveals the cost and commitment involved in discipleship. It can be challenging to grasp at first, but it is essential for understanding the heart of the Christian life.

Our study will guide you through Jesus' words and actions, highlighting His preparation of the disciples for the difficult journey ahead. As we walk through this passage day by day, you will encounter Jesus' call to deny oneself, take up one's cross, and follow Him with unwavering devotion and courage.

This passage challenges us: Are we willing to sacrifice our comfort, face opposition, and bear the costs that come from following Christ faithfully? Jesus invites His followers to live with purpose and on mission despite hardships or societal rejection.

Throughout the week, you'll explore not only the historical and theological significance of Jesus' prediction but also practical ways to apply His words in your life today. Get ready to deepen your faith, discover profound truths about Jesus' mission, and be encouraged to live boldly as His disciple.







Let's open our hearts to understand Jesus' profound love and the invitation to share in His mission—even when it demands sacrifice.

















Your Verse

Mark 8:31 - "He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things... and be killed, and after three days rise again."

Supporting Scriptures

- Luke 9:22 "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected... and be killed, and be raised on the third day."
- Matthew 16:21 "From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer... and be killed."







Devotional: The First Glimpse of Jesus' Sacrifice

Jesus openly shares for the first time the difficult truth about His mission—His suffering, death, and resurrection. This announcement was likely shocking and confusing for His disciples, who expected a triumphant Messiah instead.

Yet Jesus didn't hide the reality of the cross; He prepared them for the cost ahead. His prediction teaches us that the path of following Jesus includes challenges and suffering but ultimately leads to new life.

As we begin this study, reflect on your own expectations about faith. Are you prepared to accept difficult truths about sacrifice? Jesus' courage to proclaim His mission inspires us to live transparently and with purpose, no matter the cost.







Reflect and Apply

| | How might the disciples have felt hearing this prediction for the first time? |
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| | What surprises you most about Jesus openly sharing His coming suffering? |
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| 3. | What costs do you think faith in Jesus might demand from you? |
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Journaling Prompts

| 1. | Write about your initial thoughts on Jesus predicting His death. |
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| | Describe any fears or doubts you have about following Jesus through hardships. |
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| 3. | List ways God's love gives you strength to face difficult situations. |
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Prayer for Today

Lord Jesus, thank You for Your honesty and courage in sharing the path You would walk for our sake. *Help me embrace the realities of faith with courage,* even when the journey is hard. Give me strength to trust Your love and follow where You lead. Keep my heart open to sacrifice and grace, knowing You are always with me. **In Your name, Amen.** \bigwedge









Day 2: **(**) The Call to Deny Yourself









Day 2: ① The Call to Deny Yourself

Your Verse

Mark 8:34 - "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me."

Supporting Scriptures

- Luke 9:23 "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."
- Matthew 10:38 "Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me."







Day 2: ① The Call to Deny Yourself

Devotional: Embracing Self-Denial in Discipleship

Jesus calls His followers not just to believe but to actively deny themselves. This means putting aside selfish desires and submitting our whole lives to Him.

Taking up the cross symbolizes acceptance of suffering, humility, and surrender. It's a daily commitment, reminding us that discipleship involves continual choice and sacrifice.

What areas of your life might need to be surrendered to Jesus? Are there personal plans, ambitions, or comforts Jesus asks you to lay down? Denying self can be difficult but is the foundation of a life fully alive in Christ.







Day 2: **(**) The Call to Deny Yourself

Reflect and Apply

| 1. | What does it look like in practical terms to deny yourself today? |
|----|--|
| | |
| 2. | How do we balance self-care with Jesus' call to take up the cross? |
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| | In what ways can embracing sacrifice deepen your relationship with Jesus? |
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Day 2: **(**) The Call to Deny Yourself

Journaling Prompts

| 1. | Identify one personal desire you feel called to deny for Jesus' sake. |
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| 2. | Write a prayer asking for strength to follow Jesus' call to self-denial. |
| | |
| 3. | Reflect on a time when saying no to self turned out to be a blessing. |
| | |







Day 2: The Call to Deny Yourself

Prayer for Today

Gracious Father, teach me what it means to deny myself and truly follow Jesus. Help me surrender daily my desires and take up my cross with courage. Strengthen my heart to trust Your plan and forgive me when I cling to comforts above Your will. Thank You for walking with me every step. Amen.























Your Verse

Mark 8:35 – "For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it."

Supporting Scriptures

- Luke 14:27 "Whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple."
- John 12:25 "Whoever loves their life will lose it, while whoever hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life."







Devotional: Gaining Life by Losing It for Jesus

Following Jesus comes with a paradoxical promise—losing your life to gain true life. It's a radical call to realign our values around God's kingdom.

The cost might include sacrificing comfort, reputation, or even relationships. Yet Jesus assures us that entrusting Him with our lives secures eternal reward.

Consider what it means for you personally to lose your life for Jesus. What are you holding onto that might hinder your wholehearted commitment? What rewards does Jesus offer that surpass worldly gain?







Reflect and Apply

| 1. | What does 'losing your life for Jesus' look like in your daily decisions? |
|----|---|
| | |
| 2. | How do you balance earthly concerns with eternal priorities? |
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| | What fears come to mind when thinking about the cost of following Christ? |
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Journaling Prompts

| 1. | Write about something you may need to let go of to follow Jesus fully. |
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| 2. | List blessings or changes you anticipate from following Jesus' way. |
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| | Pray through any fears or doubts about the sacrifices discipleship requires. |
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Prayer for Today

Lord, help me understand the true cost and blessing of following You. Give me courage to surrender what holds me back and faith to trust the life You promise. *May I never cling to temporary things but seek Your eternal kingdom above all.* Guide my steps and remind me that in losing myself, I find You. Amen.

















Your Verse

Mark 8:38 – "If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them..."

Supporting Scriptures

- Romans 1:16 "I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes."
- 2 Timothy 1:8 "Do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord."







Devotional: Boldness in Following Christ Publicly

Jesus warns about the consequences of being ashamed of Him. To follow Jesus means publicly standing with Him, even when culture opposes our faith.

True discipleship isn't private or hidden but bold and visible. This call challenges us to reflect on how we represent Jesus in our words and actions.

Are there times you hesitate or hide your faith? What freedom and strength might come from embracing Jesus openly? Remember, He stands with those who stand for Him.







Reflect and Apply

| 1. | In what ways do you feel pressure to hide your faith? |
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| | How does knowing Jesus will not be ashamed of you encourage boldness? |
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| 3. | What practical steps can you take to live openly for Christ? |
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Journaling Prompts

| 1. | Recall a moment you shared your faith openly and what that felt like. |
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| | |
| 2. | Write a prayer asking for boldness to live unashamed for Jesus. |
| | |
| 3. | List fears that cause you to hold back from witnessing to others. |
| | |







Prayer for Today

Jesus, give me courage to live boldly for You. Help me to never be ashamed of Your name or Your words, regardless of what others think. Let my life reflect Your love and truth clearly, and may I be a shining witness in this world. Thank You for Your presence and promise. Amen. \triangle









Day 5: P Living the Gospel Daily









Day 5: V Living the Gospel Daily

Your Verse

Mark 8:33 – "But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter... 'Get behind me, Satan!'"

Supporting Scriptures

- James 4:7 "Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."
- 1 Peter 5:8-9 "Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls... Resist him, standing firm in the faith."







Day 5: Q Living the Gospel Daily

Devotional: Responding to Challenge with Faith

Peter's reaction to Jesus' first death prediction shows how easily misunderstanding leads to spiritual struggle. Jesus' sharp rebuke reminds us to keep our focus on God's plan, not worldly thinking.

Following Jesus each day requires spiritual alertness, resisting temptation, and reaffirming our trust in God's will. Discipleship is a daily battle as much as a lifelong journey.

How do you respond when God's path challenges your hopes? Today, commit to staying close to Jesus, listening to His correction, and resisting the enemy with faith and prayer.







Day 5: 🖓 Living the Gospel Daily

Reflect and Apply

| 1. | When have you misunderstood God's plan and resisted it? |
|----|--|
| | |
| 2. | How do you react to correction or unexpected challenges in your faith? |
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| 3. | What spiritual practices help you stay alert and resist temptation? |
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Day 5: 🖓 Living the Gospel Daily

Journaling Prompts

| 1. | Write about a time God corrected your thinking and what you learned. |
|----|--|
| | |
| 2. | List ways you can strengthen your spiritual vigilance daily. |
| | |
| 3. | Pray asking God to help you respond with faith, not resistance. |
| | |







Day 5: V Living the Gospel Daily

Prayer for Today

Father, keep my heart and mind focused on Your will. Help me resist worldly distractions and temptations, and teach me to listen when You correct me. I want to walk faithfully and humbly, trusting Your plan above all else. Thank You for Your guiding hand and strength. Amen. \bigwedge T

















Day 6: F Growing in Christ's Example

Your Verse

Mark 8:36 – "What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?"

Supporting Scriptures

- Matthew 16:26 "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul?"
- Psalm 119:105 "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."







Day 6: F Growing in Christ's Example

Devotional: Choosing Eternal Value Over Earthly Gain

Jesus contrasts worldly success with the value of the soul. Our culture often measures gain in material terms, but Jesus teaches us to evaluate by eternal significance.

True growth happens when we prioritize our spiritual health and align our lives with God's Word. Following Jesus means cultivating character, love, and faith—things that last beyond this life.

Reflect on what 'gaining the world' might mean for you today and whether it's competing with your commitment to Christ. How can you nurture your soul and grow closer to Jesus daily?







Day 6: 🎖 Growing in Christ's Example

Reflect and Apply

| 1. | What are the 'worldly gains' that tempt you to lose focus on Jesus? |
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| | |
| 2. | How can God's Word guide your daily decisions and priorities? |
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| 3. | In what ways can you nurture and protect your soul this week? |
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Day 6: 🎖 Growing in Christ's Example

Journaling Prompts

| 1. | Write about a time you chose spiritual values over material things. |
|----|---|
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| 2. | List practical ways you can prioritize your soul's growth. |
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| 3. | Pray for guidance to keep eternal perspectives in daily life. |
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Day 6: 🍞 Growing in Christ's Example

Prayer for Today

Lord, help me value my soul above all else. *Guide me to reject fleeting pleasures and embrace what truly lasts—Your presence and truth.* Let Your Word illuminate my path and transform my heart each day. I desire to grow in You and reflect Your love. Amen. \bigwedge \blacksquare \bigcirc

















Day 7: 6 Committing to Follow Jesus

Your Verse

Mark 8:37-38 - "For what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? If anyone is ashamed of me... the Son of Man will be ashamed of them."

Supporting Scriptures

- Philippians 1:21 "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain."
- Hebrews 12:2 "Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith."







Day 7: (Committing to Follow Jesus

Devotional: Renewing Your Commitment to Jesus

As our study concludes, Jesus' poignant question lingers: what are you willing to give in exchange for your soul? This challenges us to examine our deepest commitments and loyalties.

Following Jesus fully means wholeheartedly embracing His mission, even in a world that may reject or shame us. True discipleship is a lifelong journey of focus, faith, and fearless devotion.

Today, reflect on your commitment to Jesus. Are you ready to follow Him with a fearless heart? Let this be a day of renewed dedication and trust in the Savior who gave everything for you.







Day 7: 🖰 Committing to Follow Jesus

Reflect and Apply

| 1. | How strong is your commitment to follow Jesus in all circumstances? |
|----|---|
| | |
| 2. | What fears or doubts need surrendering to trust Him fully? |
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| 3. | How can you live more boldly for Christ starting today? |
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Day 7: 🖰 Committing to Follow Jesus

Journaling Prompts

| 1. | Write a personal pledge committing your life to Jesus. |
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| | |
| 2. | Reflect on the areas where you want to grow in boldness and faith. |
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| 3. | Pray for strength and courage to follow Jesus wholeheartedly. |
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Day 7: (Committing to Follow Jesus

Prayer for Today

Jesus, I commit my whole life to You. Help me to follow You fearlessly, trusting Your love and grace through every challenge. Strengthen my faith and renew my courage to live for You daily. May my heart always align with Your will. Amen. 🙏 📑 🐧 🖤







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