

Jesus Foretells His Death and Resurrection

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[0 : 00] Jump back into Mark. If you got your Bible, open up to Mark chapter 8. Last week, Jesus asked an important question to his disciples.

He brought them aside privately and he said, Hey guys, who do men say that I am? Who do the people say that I am? And they responded and they said, Well, basically they think you're one of the prophets or some kind of a prophet.

Then he asked them the question, Well, who do you say that I am? Peter was the one who responded. Peter usually is kind of a spokesperson for the group. He's the one who's the most outspoken, sometimes too quick to speak as we see sometimes.

But he says, You're the Christ. You're the Messiah. You're the one the prophets spoke of. We know that you are him. And so, Jesus is using this as an opportunity to emphasize his identity of who he is.

Jesus tells them strictly, Don't tell anybody about this. I want this just between you and me for the time being. Today we're going to read, This is the same conversation.

[1 : 24] It's just continuing on with this private conversation that she actually opens up partway through to some of the other people that were following him. But Jesus is going to talk about death.

He's going to talk about his own death. And then he's going to talk about the potential death of those who follow him. This is a very, very serious, you know, subject matter.

And he's going to warn about the cost of following him. And there's going to be a few questions that arise as we go through this.

One, we're going to look at, well, what is the message of the gospel? What's the message of a gospel? Two, what is required to follow Christ?

What's required to follow him? And three, what's required to be saved? What's required to be saved from the judgment to come? And we're going to take some time as we go through this to compare and contrast in context what Jesus is talking about to really how to answer these questions in the age in which we live.

[2 : 38] So let's go ahead and we're just going to read through these verses and then we're going to go back one by one. So Mark chapter 8 verse 31. When he had called the people to himself with his disciples also, he said to them, Whoever desires to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospels will save it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation of him, the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

And so Jesus starts out in here in verse 31 and he begins to teach his disciples something that they have yet not really heard, not clearly anyway.

He's telling them what's about to come. Here in Mark chapter 8, we're a good way through Jesus' three-year ministry. He's actually getting ready to head down to Jerusalem where he'll have a confrontation with the Jewish leaders and ultimately be put to death.

[4 : 27] Primarily because of his claim to be the Messiah. He says that he's going to suffer, that he's going to be rejected by the Jewish leaders, that he's going to die, and that he's going to rise again.

This is, like I said, this is the first time that he has plainly spoken about what's going to happen. And the disciples, up to this point, did not know that this was part of the plan.

And one of the reasons we know that is based on Peter's response, right? Peter didn't say, oh yeah, you told us that before, right? Peter's response is, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, hold on a second.

That doesn't sound right. And so the first thing I want to address here is about this subject matter of what is the message of the gospel?

You know, as a church, when we want to reach out to others and we want them to experience the same kind of new life in Christ that we have, we present to them what the Bible calls the gospel message.

[5 : 40] Literally, the good news. That's what gospel means, the good news. And what is that message? Well, the message is actually, the gospel message is described explicitly in 1 Corinthians 15.

1 Corinthians 15. You can go ahead and turn there just so you can see it for yourself. 1 Corinthians 15. Well, we'll start with verse 1.

And it says this, 1 Corinthians 15, Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel. He's saying, Hey, listen, I'm declaring to you the gospel, the good news that we're trying to get to everyone in the world, which I preach to you, which also you received, and in which you stand.

This is the good news that you received from me, that you heard from me, you accepted it, and it's the gospel, the good news that you stand in today. Your salvation is from this good news.

By which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. If you're holding on to this word, this is the word, this is the message of your salvation.

[6 : 52] Verse 3, For I deliver to you first of all that which I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the scripture, and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.

Those two verses, like, right there, describe in basic terms, right? There's a lot more to it you can dig in, but in basic terms, the gospel message is this, the good news is this, to the whole world. Jesus died for you. Jesus died for your sins. And not just that, but three days later, he rose again. He did something for you, and then he rose again to make sure that that work would be accomplished. That's the gospel message.

Now, as we've been going through Mark, we see that Jesus has been preaching the gospel, right? We've read that. And then he also sent out his disciples to preach the gospel, the good news.

[8 : 04] Now, when we first read about it, and in many places, it's described as the gospel of the kingdom. The gospel of the kingdom. And the gospel of the kingdom is good news.

But the question to ask here is, well, if Jesus just now told his disciples that he was about to die, and the gospel that we just read here in 1 Corinthians is that Jesus died for the sins of the world, then what was it that Peter and James and John and Jesus himself were preaching to the people? Was it that Jesus died for the sins of the world? Well, no, it wasn't because, one, it hadn't happened yet. And two, the disciples didn't even know it was coming.

And so, it's important for us to make a clear distinction between this gospel of the kingdom, as it's called in the gospels, and then what is actually explicitly referred to as the gospel of the grace of God that we read later in the New Testament, specifically in Paul's epistles.

The gospel of the kingdom is called such because it is a message about the kingdom. And what was the message? Jesus, it says this in Mark, in the very first chapter, I believe, repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand.

[9 : 33] That was the message, repent. Israel, and it was geared to, remember, Jesus told his disciples, don't go to the Gentiles, and don't even go to the Samaritans. They were half Jew, half Gentile.

He said, go only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel and preach this message. Repent. Turn back to God. You have left your God.

You've left Jehovah. He is your father. You are his people. Turn back to him because the kingdom of God is right at hand.

And that was the message to Israel. So, a lot of times, we can get these two messages confused. The gospel of the kingdom and the gospel of the grace of God. And it's important to make a clear separation between those two. They're both good news. One is good news to Israel, right?

[10 : 29] And the other is good news to both Jew and Gentile, we find out. And there's this whole plot line of what happens in between the gospels and later on where Paul comes and he introduces this gospel of grace.

There's this plot line of God's working with Israel and then they reject him. And it says in Romans 9, 10, and 11 that God decided, okay, I'm going to pull back from Israel.

I'm going to actually cut them off as a people group. Not individually, but as a people group from the promises and I'm going to turn to the Gentile people.

And in order to make the Jews jealous, I'm going to offer them a gospel of grace. Remember, the Jews were under what?

The law. The law of Moses. Which is tough. There's a lot of rules in there. But for the Gentiles, he offered, and again, not just the Gentiles, but any Jew who wanted to join by grace as well, come to God by grace as well, all you have to do is trust in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ and you can have eternal life with God.

[11 : 43] Incredible. But making a distinction between the gospel of the kingdom and the gospel of the grace of God. In verse 32, back to Mark chapter 8, verse 32, it says this, he spoke this word openly.

And just by reading that, you might think, well, he spoke this like openly, like out in the open. But that's not actually what it means. The word openly here just means, in fact, some translations say plainly.

He was plain about it. He didn't couch it in like mysterious terms like he does with a lot of, there's a lot of times where Jesus does that. In fact, he says that he speaks in parables to keep certain things hidden from certain people.

And so, in this case, he's not mentioning like Jonah in the belly of a whale like three days and three nights, right? That's kind of a mysterious language. Here, he's speaking to his disciples, just his disciples, and he's speaking plainly, frankly, without any kind of ambiguity at all.

He wants them to know clearly what's about to happen to him. And then it says this, that Peter took him aside. And Peter hears this, and this is new information to Peter and to all the disciples.

[13 : 06] And remember, Jesus, Jesus asked, who do you say that I am? And they said, well, you're the Messiah, and the Messiah is the coming king. The ones that the prophets of old had spoken of for many years, thousands of years, who would come and conquer the enemies of Israel and establish a kingdom on the earth.

That's the Messiah. And so, that's what they're thinking. That's where their mind's at. Jesus is going to be king of Israel and really king of the world.

So, Peter, it says, he took him aside, and it says he began to rebuke him. So, Peter actually, try to imagine this, kind of beckons over, hey, Jesus, come over here.

And it says that he began to rebuke him. That word rebuke, a lot of times when we think of the word rebuke, we think about like a harsh rebuke, you know, ah, no, no, no, don't do that. But rebuke just means correct. You can have a gentle rebuke, right?

Like where you just correct somebody's, maybe somebody's grammar or something like that, right? It's just gentle. Oh, I don't think you mean that, you mean this. It's just a correction. And I would imagine that Peter is not, you know, wagging his finger at Jesus.

[14 : 20] He's just being gentle. He's being humble about it. But he wants to provide a correction to what Jesus just said. And so he takes him privately to the side, probably not too far.

There are probably the disciples over here. And Peter's like, Jesus, come here. Let me, let me talk to you. And he thinks, you know, Jesus is dealing with a lot.

He probably hasn't been getting much sleep, right? I mean, there's all these crowds and people constantly vying for his attention. Things haven't been going well.

The people have not been listening. You know, a lot of people have been rejecting his message. These scribes and Pharisees and the Jewish leaders, they've been antagonistic towards him.

He's probably just allowing these negative thoughts, right? Jesus is allowing these negative thoughts to come in and, you know, Jesus is probably just dealing with depression and anxiety and negative thinking.

[15 : 23] So let me, let me help point him back in the right direction. And so he, he brings Pete, he brings Jesus over and he says, you know, Jesus, don't be so negative.

You're the Messiah. We just talked about that. You're going to become king. Yeah, we would never let that happen to you.

And here is Jesus' response. It says, but when he had turned around and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter.

So he corrected, Peter corrected him and now he's correcting Peter right back. Notice, notice kind of the, if you can imagine in your mind, Peter brings Jesus over, the disciples over here and Jesus is talking to Peter and before Jesus responds to Peter and says, get behind me, Satan, he turns around and it says, he addresses this to his disciples.

Peter's back here and he turns around and he says, get behind me, Satan. And who's behind him? Peter.

[16:45] That's, that's some tough cookies. get behind me, Satan. Now he uses the phrase, Satan, you know, it seems as if he's calling Peter Satan.

That's kind of what he's doing. The question is, does he think that, you know, Satan has possessed, you know, Peter? I don't think that's the case at all or that any, some kind of demonic influence has afflicted him.

No, but the point that he's getting at is he's saying, hey, Peter, the direction of your thinking is against my plan. It's against my will.

In the same way that Satan is opposed to my plan as opposed to my will. And that needs to, I need to put that behind me.

Remember that for Jesus, is he looking forward to his death with a smile on his face? This is hard for Jesus.

[17:57] It's maybe hard for us to imagine. A lot of times we think, oh, Jesus, you know, he just dealt with all these things and he's God, so, you know, no problem. But we see specifically in the garden, right?

And remember, we'll read about that in the future. This was difficult. And he certainly doesn't need Peter to be, you know, telling him, well, oh, no, Jesus, you don't need to do that.

That's not going to happen. And he says this, you are not mindful of the things of God but of the things of man. Peter's mindset was wrong.

His mindset was focused on a conquering king which was what the prophet said would come and will come later. But for right now, there's a different mission.

An important, an eternally important mission where he needs to get his mindset changed. And so there's this somewhat of a shocking and a harsh rebuke of Peter that needs to be instilled and needs to be instilled not only in Peter but in all the rest of the disciples which I think is why Jesus addressed his disciples directly when he responded to Peter.

[19:10] Verse 34, it says, when he had called the people to himself with his disciples also, he said to them, whoever desires to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

So notice here, Jesus is talking privately with his 12 disciples and now he just transitioned. Now I don't know exactly what this looks like but there was evidently a crowd somewhere in the vicinity and he's talking privately about him as Messiah and that he's going to die and that he's going to rise from the dead and that was not to the crowd, that was only for his disciples to know and to understand.

But now he's ready to address the larger crowd of people who are following him. These are people who are interested in his ministry but they're not part of the small group of disciples that have been with him for the last three years.

By the way, as a side note, it's so important as we study our Bibles that we pay attention, close attention, to who's being spoken to, to the audience.

We have that great quote that sometimes we've shared from Miles Coverdale who's one of the original translators of the English Bible or I should say one of the early translators of the English Bible who says, and I won't get the quote exactly right, but he says, hey, it will be very fruitful for you if when you read the Bible you pay attention to basically the context.

[20:44] Who's being spoken to? Who's the one speaking? At what time? What season? What's going on before? What's going on after? All those things are important because if we don't pay attention, we can just take verses right out of their context and use them however we please and that's not what the scriptures are meant to be used for or not how they're meant to be read.

Context is king, as some would say. But Jesus here is talking about the cost of following him. He just said, I'm about to go to my death. And to wrap up the next few verses, he's saying, if you follow me, you're probably going to die too.

That's very encouraging. But, he wanted to make it clear what the cost would be. When we pursue some kind of difficult challenge or effort, it's important that we, as some people say, count the cost, right?

Before, in fact, the Bible speaks to this in other places. Before you build a home, you've got to make sure that you have enough money to kind of get the whole thing accomplished, right? If you only have \$500 and it's going to cost you \$200,000 to build your house, you're not going to finish, right? You've got to count the cost. What's it going to take to accomplish this goal? And what Jesus is explaining here is this is what it will cost to come follow me.

[22 : 23] Now, going back to our comparison between the gospel of the kingdom and the gospel of grace, it's important to make a distinction here too. Because so many take these passages and the things that Jesus said here to his disciples on what it will cost to follow me, and we'll talk in a second about what he means by follow me, to what is required to be a Christian.

What is it required to be saved? Is it the things that Jesus is talking about here, or is it something different? There's a book written well during World War II, or I think before World War II, by a man named Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

He was a German scholar, a, what do you call it, a theologian, and a pastor, I believe, of a church in Germany.

He was actually well-known, famous for opposing the regime of Hitler and ultimately paid with his life for trying to undermine the Nazi regime and was a hero because of that.

But he wrote this book called *The Cost of Discipleship*, which many read because of his fame. And in it, he talks about all the things that are required, all the things that you must do in order to be a real, true disciple of Christ.

[23 : 48] And a lot of the things he points to here is the ministry of Jesus. For example, what is described here. This is the cost of being a follower of Jesus. If you want to be a real Christian, not just one of those fake Christians, but a real one, this is what you will do.

It's caused a lot of confusion because we read, for example, in the book of Ephesians by Paul, Ephesians 2, 8, 9, for by grace you have been saved.

Grace means a free gift. Through a free gift you have been saved. For by grace you have been saved through faith, just by believing.

Not of, what? Not of works, not of doing anything, not of accomplishing something, not of persevering through difficulty, but through faith alone, lest anyone should boast.

That is how we come to the Lord today. It's by grace. Just by grace. We don't have to become better people. Now, we should, right?

[24 : 52] We should become better. We should be changed in our lives to be more like Him, but that's not a requirement to be a Christian, to be saved. But here, Jesus is talking about the cost.

But He's talking in a specific context. Jesus is on His way to Jerusalem. And He just told them what's going to happen to Him.

They're coming after me. I'm going to suffer. I'm going to be a target to the Pharisees, to the scribes. And listen, if you want to come with me, you're going to be a target too.

And they're going to come after you. And I want you to count the cost. Now, it'll be worth it. But I want you to know what's going to happen.

And so He says three things. You're going to have to deny yourself. One, you're going to have to deny yourself. And some people look at this when they try to kind of put this into general Christianity and how you become a Christian or become a good disciple of Christ as a Christian in this day and age.

[26 : 09] Deny yourself, it means you've got to avoid the cookies and the other pleasures of life and maybe not watch too much television or whatever.

And you have to deny yourselves these certain things. I think about the asceticism of the monks of old and even now, right? Who they would sleep on the hard floor and only sleep for four hours and only eat plain food and all these kinds of things.

And that's a way of denying themselves pleasures of life. Of course, we should always deny ourselves sinful pleasures, the Bible says. But when it comes to these other things, well, that's not

part of living a good Christian life.

We can have plenty of times where we feast and enjoy each other's company. In fact, those are things that are both in the Old and New Testament. But when he says deny yourself, what he's saying is that you have your normal life where you have a job and an income and a family and family time and safety and comfort and all those things are good things.

But if you're going to come follow me, you're going to have to forget all those things. That's not going to be your life. You're not going to have safety. You're not going to be safe. You're not going to be comfortable. You're probably going to be hungry a lot of the times.

[27 : 38] And you're going to be a target. So you need to deny this kind of standard, normal way of life. The second one, take up your cross. What does that mean?

Take up your cross. Well, you know, you've heard the phrase, oh, we all have our cross to bear, right? And people think about your cross as maybe the regular trials of life or doing maybe hard things for the Lord.

And all those things are fine. We do have to go through trials, right? whether believer or not. And it's good to do hard things for the Lord. But to the disciples, when they heard that, they had no idea. They didn't know Jesus was going to die on the cross. In fact, he didn't even tell them how he was going to die. He just told them that he would die. So to them, what was their context of the cross? Well, they were very familiar with the cross, right? They had seen people up on that cross. And it was not a pretty sight. This was the primary means of execution of guilty criminals.

[28 : 49] And so when Jesus said, you need to take up your cross, remember, just like Jesus carried his cross to the hill at Golgotha, that was a common thing that they did with criminals. They would carry their cross to their death.

That's what Jesus was telling them. if you're going to follow me, you need to be prepared to carry that cross to your death. You need to be prepared to die. Are you willing to do that?

Are you ready to do that? And then he said, and follow me. And a lot of times we use this kind of language for what it means to be a Christian.

Oh, well, I'm a follower of Christ, right? And that's okay. That's fine to use that phrase. We follow the teachings of Jesus. We follow the Bible. We follow, you know, we're followers of Jesus.

But that's not what Jesus is talking about here. He's not saying, I want you to follow my teachings. What Jesus is saying is if you're willing to do all these things, if you're willing to put your life on the line and suffer with me, then let's go.

[29 : 55] We're going down to Jerusalem. We're going to go take on the enemy face on. Come follow me like one foot in front of the other. Physically.

That's what Jesus was talking about here. Then he says this, verse 35, for whoever desires to save his life will lose it. But whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospels will save it.

And this is a funny phrase, right? Well, if you want to save your life, you'll lose it. But if you are willing to lose your life, you'll save it. Like, what's he talking about?

We're saying, hey, listen. There is a physical, mortal life, temporary life, temporal life as you might call it. And then there is an eternal life. He says, if you're willing to put your mortal, temporal life on the line, you can gain an eternal reward that will be yours.

But if you go down with me and your focus is on saving your own skin, that's not going to work. But if you're willing to give up your own life in following me down to Jerusalem, then there will be a great reward for you in eternity.

[31 : 26] Verse 36, for what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? He's saying, hey, there's profit in the world, right?

You can gain profit, you can gain riches. There's things that the world has to offer. But when it comes to eternal life, spiritual things, is there any comparison comparison with what the world has to offer, with what is offered by God in eternity?

There is no comparison. And so, I want you to be willing to exchange what is temporal for what is eternal.

Would you be willing to do that? this is a great verse to use for anybody, especially somebody who doesn't really think about spiritual things.

It's so important. The number one thing that anybody should be thinking about is their eternal soul. How many people don't? They get, you know, the next Netflix show to watch or, you know, the next party to go to or whatever it is.

[32 : 39] good things, bad things, but they're focused only on temporal things and don't have a mind towards eternity.

This is a great verse for someone like that. What will it profit, a man, if he gains the whole world, not just one good little thing, but all the good things in the world, and yet you lose your own soul?

Focus on eternal things. Focus on your own eternal soul. Moses, the Bible tells the story of Moses in the book of Hebrews and it lists all these people in what we call the hall of faith, people who had faith and it says this about Moses.

Hebrews chapter 11 verse 24, by faith Moses when he became of age refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. Remember, Moses was adopted by Pharaoh's daughter.

He had access to all kinds of worldly pleasures, money, resources, but he refused to be called her Pharaoh. He ran away from that life, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God.

[33 : 52] He allied himself with those who were slaves rather than enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ, greater riches than the treasures in Egypt, for he looked to the reward.

Instead of having his eyes focused on the here and now, he looked ahead to eternity. He said, this is what's most important. So he was willing to give up so much in this earthly life looking to a heavenly reward.

in the last verse, for whoever is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him, the Son of Man also will be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

He's saying, listen, come with me, but there's going to be tribulation, there's going to be trials. If you're going to be the kind of person that's going to run away, that's going to be ashamed of me, that's going to run away from me when trouble comes, well, if you put yourself in that position when the Son of Man returns, he will likewise be ashamed of you when he comes in the glory of his Father.

Do you know we have actually an example of at least one person in particular where this happened, right? Somebody who was ashamed of Jesus down in Jerusalem.

[35 : 29] Remember Peter? Jesus was arrested and three times people said, hey, you're one of those guys that travels around with Jesus and what did Peter say?

That's right, that was me. He was ashamed. No, it wasn't me, that's somebody else. Three times. It says this, Mark 14, verse 71, this is the last time, on the third time. It says, nope, that's not me, and then it says this, then he began to curse and swear, I do not know this man of whom you speak.

That was Peter. Peter, Jesus warned here, if you're going to come follow me, be willing to pay the price. Don't, don't be ashamed.

Don't deny me. But was that the end for Peter? No.

[36 : 32] God is so merciful and loving, isn't he? For those who are willing to humble themselves. Even this age of law and kingdom and these requirements put on the disciples, when Peter and Jesus connected again in the future, did Jesus say, well, I'm ashamed of you, Peter.

No, in fact, there's an interaction in the book of John. I think I wrote it down. The very last chapter of John, there's this interaction between Peter and Jesus and Jesus says to Peter three times, Peter, do you love me?

Peter says, yes, Lord, I love you. Peter, do you love me? Yeah, you just asked me that. Third time, Peter, do you love me?

That really broke Peter up. Jesus was showing his love for even those who he warns here, don't be ashamed of me. Even though Peter was ashamed.

God's love and his mercy and his grace endures forever. He's willing to give someone like Peter and the rest of his disciples.

[37 : 47] Was it just Peter that kind of ran away? It was all of them, right? We just focused on Peter because of that three times. So here's how I'd like to end.

we see here one of the requirements for Jesus' disciples and the greater group of disciples to follow Jesus. It was intense.

Be willing to die. Be willing to suffer persecution. And through these things, you can have a great place and a great position in the kingdom of God.

In fact, I think it's the next chapter after this, Peter says, Hey Jesus, we've left all these things. What do we get in the kingdom? And Jesus talks to them about what they'll get. We'll talk about that in a few weeks.

But they had to do all these things in order to gain entrance into the kingdom. To persevere through great trial. But today, in the age of grace in which we live, what are we required to do to gain entrance into God's family?

[38 : 52] Believe. Just believe. So, for those people at that time, for his disciples, they were looking forward to a kingdom.

And they were looking at works and things that they had to do to gain entrance into that kingdom. Today, in the age of grace, as we call it, we look back.

We are looking forward to heaven, but we look back to a cross. Something that was accomplished for us. And we trust in that work that was accomplished for us.

And we look at that cross with great wonder and astonishment and awe at the love that was outpoured on that cross.

And we're transformed by that love. Our hearts and our minds are conformed to his heart and his mind. As it says in Philippians 2, let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, did not consider robbery to be equal with God, but he made himself of no reputation and he took the form of a slave and he came in the likeness of men.

[40 : 09] And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. So we look back at the cross of what Jesus did, he humbled himself, he became a man, he gave up his glory in heaven.

He died for us. And he didn't die just for the good people, he died for the rotten ones. Under the law, under this kingdom program, they were looking forward of all the things they had to do to make it there.

Under grace, we look back and we see what God accomplished so that we could be a part of his family and we are right now as believers. We belong to his family.

We are safe. We are secure. And so there are no requirements for us now to make it into that kingdom, that heavenly home.

Yet, even without those requirements, how many believers have we seen throughout the history of the last 2,000 years who decided to lay down their life, their physical life.

[41 : 23] Not because they had to. Not because if they did so, they could receive a reward, which would be a great reward. But they chose to lay down their life for him.

They chose to face the lions of the Colosseum. or whatever it might be, the persecution that came because they looked back at that love demonstrated on that cross.

So that is a life that I want to emulate. That's how my life ought to be. And those people, and I pray that we would allow that love of Christ to overflow in our hearts that we would be like him.

Amen? Let's end in a word of prayer. Father, I pray today that these words would sink in our heart, that we would make a clear distinction between what was required of those disciples and the abundance of grace that you have given to us, and that our hearts would be filled today and tomorrow and the next day with the love that you demonstrated on that cross.

And that we would give up of our own lives whether it's serving our spouse or our children, serving others in the day-to-day life, or even giving up our own physical life if need be.

[42 : 54] Not because we would receive a reward, but because of the great love that you have put in our hearts. Help us to grow in that love each and every day in Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen.