

Home Group notes for the week following 25 February 2018

LENT ONE – FAITH

AS WE GATHER

In chapter eight, verses 31-38, Mark records the interaction between Jesus and His disciples when He revealed what was going to happen in Jerusalem, and their reaction to this.

READING SCRIPTURE **Mark 1:9-15** [optional readings Genesis 17:1-7 + 15-16 Psalm 22:23-32
Romans 4:13-25]

THINKING TOGETHER

When Jesus connected Messiah-ship with suffering and death, His disciples were stunned. They could not reconcile their belief in Him as the Christ of God with rejection of Him by the religious leaders and their mindset that He was the prophesied Messiah who would defeat all their enemies and establish a glorious kingdom for Israel (Mark 8:31-32).

Peter did not accept Jesus' words, and expressed the disciples' very real concern and confusion. His protest (Mark 8:32) was born of his deep love for Jesus and his ignorance of God's will. He did not yet understand the relationship between suffering and blessing / glory, and that Jesus was the fulfilment of God's covenant promises.

[optional readings Romans 4:13, 17 +21; Psalm 22:1 + 23-32]

We too are like Peter – we want the glory promised to the followers of Jesus, but not the suffering / sacrifices involved in discipleship.

What do you imagine Jesus was feeling as He told His disciples of what was to come?

Discuss

What do you think was the reason for Jesus' reaction to Peter's words? Discuss (Mark 8:33)

[optional reading Luke 4:13]

What is your understanding of the relationship between suffering and glory? Discuss

[optional readings 1Peter 1:1-7 + 4:12-16]

Jesus was not only teaching His chosen twelve but also the crowds following Him, when He spoke of what it means to follow Him (Mark 8:34-38).

He knew that His disciples were aware that what happened to Him would also happen to them. A cross in His future meant one in their future as well.

[optional reading - later He gave them the option to continue with Him or not, see John 6:66-68].

There is always a price to pay for true discipleship, but Jesus has never asked anyone to do or face what He was not prepared to face Himself.

What is your personal cross? If you are able, share with the group. Pray for each other.

Anyone following Jesus must constantly say 'no' to self, living only to follow the will of Christ. Nothing must silence the voice of God – not even the voice of love. To serve God we must serve others.

Is your love of God selfless or selfish? Discuss

On what do you put / base your values? Discuss (Mark 8:36-37)

[optional reading Genesis 25:21-35]

What does being faithful to Christ cost you every day? Discuss

How does discipleship reward you every day? Discuss

What do you see as your ultimate reward for being consistently faithful to Christ? Discuss

IN CLOSING

Faith can be described / explained and demonstrated in many ways, as it encompasses many dimensions / aspects of obedience to and trust in, Jesus

It can also be understood as journeying with Christ through suffering to glory.

PRAYER

God of Sarah and Abraham,
long ago you embraced your people in covenant and promised them
blessing. Give us grace to recognise you as our God, to so discipline
ourselves that we may, through Christ, serve you with eager faith and love.

Amen