

# NEW TESTAMENT 1

## UNIT EIGHT: WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW THE KING

### FOLLOWING JESUS

(Mark 8:34-9:1)

- The disciples do not fully understand Jesus' messiahship but they have recognised him as such.
- Jesus tells them and the crowd what is expected of his followers, and what distinguishes Christians from non-Christians.
  
- Verse 34 gives three pictures of discipleship.
- A disciple is one who *denies himself*.
- A disciple is someone who *takes up his cross*.
- A disciple *follows Christ*.

- In verse 35 Jesus demonstrates the all-or-nothing nature of discipleship.
- There are two notions of life: *life here and now* and *life to come*.
- Discipleship means a person can have one or the other, not both.
- If physical life is all important people can have it, but that is all they will have.
- If people are prepared to give that up to obey Jesus and the gospel, true life will be theirs.
- Choosing life here and now may gain acceptance in the world, but the cost is enormous.
- A person making such a choice has lost authentic life, and the cost is eternal.
- If someone is ashamed of Jesus, they choose life here and now.

	PROFIT	LOSS
CHOICE A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Life here and now</li> <li>• Whole world</li> <li>• Avoid shame of following Jesus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Salvation</li> <li>• Soul</li> <li>• Son of Man ashamed of you</li> </ul>
CHOICE B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Salvation</li> <li>• Kingdom of God</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deny self</li> <li>• Life here and now due to following Jesus and the gospel</li> </ul>

- It is the perfect obedience and death of Jesus which saves people – nothing else.
- Jesus is not proposing an alternative way of salvation here.
- His death is only effective for those who trust him, and they will take up the cross and follow him.
- There is great encouragement for those who are faithful to Jesus (Mark 9:1).
- Following him will be costly in human terms.
- However, he is the truth and his way is the true one, and this will soon be demonstrated.

## THE FELLOWSHIP OF JESUS' FOLLOWERS

- They are servants (9:33-37; compare 10:35-45).
  - The disciples do not understand Jesus' statements about the cost of following him, instead arguing about greatness.
  - Their attitudes were typical of their culture.
  - Jesus says that the one who wishes to be great will set out to be the servant of all.

- The way to glory is through suffering.
  - Disciples are little ones, dependant, with no claim to greatness.
  - To receive and welcome a follower of Jesus is to welcome Jesus and God himself.
- They are not to be stumbling blocks to each other (9:38-42).
- John narrowly defines followers as those who walk around with Jesus.
  - Jesus says a true follower is one who joins him in obedience to God's will.
  - To receive a person *in Jesus' name* is to receive Jesus, and the God who sent him.
- They are to be at peace with each other (9:43-50).
- If Jesus' followers are truly disciples, all should be well between them.
  - Discipleship involves renouncing all that stands in its way.
  - Family, friends, possessions and life itself should all be renounced if they get in the way of following Jesus.
  - Sinful activity will always get in the way so it must be renounced.
  - Jesus' followers will be living sacrifices, subject to God and honouring him.
  - By being faithful to these points, the disciples will be both peacemakers and at peace with each other.

## BECOMING A FOLLOWER OF JESUS

- The Blessing of the Children (10:13-16).
  - The disciples were sending away children brought to Jesus for blessing.
  - Jesus stopped them, and used the situation to illustrate a point.
  - The kingdom belongs to those who become like children.
  - The child receives and takes, it does not earn.
  
- Riches and the Kingdom (10:17-31).
  - The rich young man asks how he can enter the kingdom.
  - Jesus recites several commandments – not because eternal life can be earned by keeping them but because trying to do so will force people to recognise their hopelessness and they will receive the kingdom as a child.
  - Jesus instructs him to give away all he has – a demonstration of the devotion to God that he claims to have.
  - The young man can not do it – he loves what he has too dearly.
  - It is hard for anyone to stand helpless before God, but harder for the rich who are sheltered from the material harshness of life.

- The disciples have given everything up for Christ and the gospel.
  - Whoever does this shall receive back a hundredfold in the present age, and shall also enter eternal life.
- The Healing of Bartimaeus (10:46-52).
- The last miracle recorded by Mark.
  - Bartimaeus believes who Jesus is, recognises in him the only means of deliverance and calls out for salvation.
  - Jesus heals him, and Bartimaeus follows him to Jerusalem.