

Exegetical Notes, Mark 8:34-9:1
“Deny Self! Are You Crazy?”

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Mark 8:34-9:1

Verse 34

Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.”

- After having privately rebuked Peter for allowing Satan to speak through him, Jesus called together the entire crowd including his disciples.
- Jesus told them all several things of importance. First he said that his followers must “deny themselves.” This meant that they needed to stop making the most important thing in their world themselves. Second, he told them to “take up their cross.” The picture is of a person who has been found guilty by the Roman court and is condemned to death. Such a person had to carry the heavy cross beam of his cross to the place where he/she would be crucified. Third, he told them to “follow him,” for he himself would be condemned in human courts and forced to carry his own cross to the place of execution.

Verse 35

“For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it.”

- Jesus points out that those who put self first and who work to preserve their own life and play it safe, will ultimately lose all they have worked to save.
- But those who put him first and who take the required risks to tell others about him, though they lose everything, will have eternal life with him in glory. In so doing, they will save their life by losing it.

Verse 36-37

“What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?”

- Jesus asked two rhetorical questions. The questions are designed to point out that the most important thing is not the accumulation of wealth or worldly prizes. The questions point out that no accumulation of wealth provides enough to buy one’s way into heaven because heaven is not for sale.

Verse 38

“If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father’s glory with the holy angels.”

- The method of Jesus’ death, being executed as a common criminal, apparently caused Peter to feel shame. How could he serve someone who was to die in such a way? Jesus says that anyone who is ashamed of him, who will not acknowledge that he is their Lord while they are here on earth, should not expect him to speak for them to the Father on the day of judgment

Verse 9:1

And he said to them, “I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God come with power.”

- Jesus promised that some of those who were there that day would not die before they saw him in the glory and power of God’s Kingdom.

(These exegetical notes are the foundational study for the sermon entitled *Deny Self! Are You Crazy?* They have been prepared by the Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen, Senior Pastor at Cornerstone Fellowship, Coatesville Pennsylvania. All rights are reserved by *Cornerstone Fellowship* & The Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen. They are used here by permission.)