



# JESUS' PATH

## FOLLOWING AFTER JESUS

*If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it. 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?*  
(Mark 8:34-37)

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*Discovering Jesus: Studies in the Book of Mark*

**Mark 8:27 – 9:1**

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This time of year we tend to focus on endings and beginnings. Some “endings” of note, in the life of the Grand Central Church, include (1) The Sacrifice\*Serve\*Seek challenge came to an end today; (2) Grand Central Ministries are to complete their goal setting and budget request for 2009 this week; and (3) This lesson is the next-to-last lesson in this portion of the series from the book of Mark.

Some “beginnings” to focus on include (1) The Christmas Project; (2) Providing suggestions for goals and emphasis in 2009 [see the end of this lesson!]; (3) Prayers for more souls to be reached with the gospel of Jesus Christ; and, in less than a month, (4) a new year: 2009.

**Discussion Starter** (just for fun, to help get the discussion going)

Let each member tell of a time when they became “lost” while out-of-town. What happened? How did you get back on track (if you ever did)?

### 1. Read Mark 8:27-30, Identifying Jesus

- Jesus asks two questions in this narrative. What is similar about the two questions? What is different?
- Which of the questions would have been easier to answer? Why?
- What are some reasons for why the questions would have different answers? Does that in any way help explain why Jesus would warn the apostles to “not tell anyone about him” at that time?

### 2. Read Mark 8:31-33, Piece of Mind

- Why did Jesus choose this time to explain what was in his future? How did this relate to Peter’s confession of Jesus as the Christ?
- Peter rebuked Jesus; Jesus rebuked Peter; Why?
- What does this reveal about what can be expected when ones pursues God’s purposes in life?

### 3. **Read Mark 8:34-9:1, Kingdom Power**

- What similarities do you see between Jesus' words about his path (8:31) and the walk he demands of those who would follow him (8:34-35)?
- Jesus' two questions to the crowd and disciples (8:36-37) may help in differentiating between the "things of men" and the "things of God" mentioned by Jesus in his response to Peter (8:33). Describe the contrast being drawn by Jesus in these questions.
- Jesus' words about those who were listening to him (9:1) would seem to indicate the kingdom of God came with power in that time. How would this relate to what Jesus had said earlier concerning his path?

4. **The Road Not Taken** Robert Frost's poem begins famously with the words, "Two roads diverged in a yellow wood". The last portion of this poem, introduced with a bit of dry humor, points to the monumental nature of the choices we make in life. You may wish to read the poem's ending and discuss the way this can be related to Jesus' call to a believer to "take up his cross and follow me" (8:34). How can that decision makes all the difference?

**I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I--  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference.**

### 5. **Wrapping up tonight's "journey"**

- Is there an area of your life where your group can be praying for you as you seek to follow Jesus?
- Could you include a prayer of thanksgiving for God's kingdom and its power in our lives?
- The various ministries are currently drawing up plans and developing proposals for 2009. Let your group discuss some of their ideas for the coming year. What goals should be set? How would these be met? What should Grand Central emphasize?