

Rethink: Part 4

The Trade

Mark 8:31-37

WE: All have our own interpretations of what it means to follow Jesus...

Whether believe Jesus rose from the dead or not... what's interesting is

Most of us believe our personal agendas are in line with Jesus' purpose... Unfortunately, most of us are wrong (me included).

We have things we are passionate about, whether b/c of personality/culture/upbringing/education etc... and b/c we are passionate about them we just assume and expect Jesus prioritizes those as well... b/c why would Jesus not be passionate about these too?

Whether JF or not...

We expect Jesus to be FOR the things we are FOR and AGAINST the things we are AGAINST...

- R/D's believe he would be R/D...
- Want to change/keep US certain way... well so does Jesus
- I want to marry and have a family... Jesus wants that for me too
- Economics is a good example... Jesus is a capitalist/socialist... both sides FULLY convinced.

We try to fit "following Jesus" into the lives we are already trying to create for ourselves.

But that's not really following is it... at best accessorizing our lives with some Jesus and at worst it's using him.

We need to rethink what it means to follow Jesus in the 21st century...

GOD: Nothing new...

People were constantly trying to force Jesus into their agendas in 1st century too. Some wanted him to bring back proper temple religion. Others wanted a military leader to kick Rome out. Others just wanted someone to feed them.

Even disciples assumed Jesus' purpose lined up with their agendas... perfect example in **Mark**

Peter's eye-witness account.

Background-

Jesus: "Who do these people think/say I am? And you?"

Peter: "You're Son of God/Messiah!"

Jesus: "Awesome! You're right... so here's what that means..."

Mark 8:31

MUST- “This is how this **IS** going to work.”

“I will be rejected and sacrificed to take the rejection and punishment every human has earned through their pride/selfishness... sin. I will save humanity from their sins... and then I will rise to give them new life now and forever.”

- Side Note: Predicting own death and resurrection... actually did it. Several eyewitness accounts in the bible; this “gospel” of Mark is one of them. You should read it, it’s super action-packed!

Disciples did not have a category for this type of messiah... he tells them over and over but just doesn’t compute.

Disciples: Messiah/Son of God is “supposed” to come make Israel great again... bring the Kingdom of God.

Someone like that surely wouldn’t be killed and suffer... they would conquer and then rule. That’s what people establishing kingdoms normally do. However...

Jesus' purpose often looks very different from what we expect.

V. 32

Peter, being Peter and being the spokesman for rest... tries to correct Jesus.

Reprimand- “No no Jesus... you’re supposed to show off your power and conquer. Hard to do when you’re dead”

Just got done telling Jesus he was the ONE and now trying to tell him what he is supposed to do...

We tell Jesus he’s in charge but then tell him what he is “supposed” to do.

They were unwilling to accept that the Messiah would suffer... unwilling to accept that Jesus would identify with our pain and suffering... that his purpose was, not to destroy Rome, but to destroy something even more powerful, sin with his death and resurrection...

We are often unwilling to accept Jesus for who he really is...

Unable to accept a Jesus that doesn’t line up with our agenda...

Unable to accept a Jesus that agrees with some of R’s/D’s positions

Unable to accept a Jesus that doesn’t have the same vision for America’s future that we do

Unable to accept a Jesus that doesn’t have the same goals for our lives that we do.

Unable to accept a Jesus that cares about both the poor and the rich.

Unable to accept a Jesus that requires us to give up our preferences/prejudices to follow him

Definitely unable to accept a Jesus that tells us to love our enemies (more on that next week)

V. 33

That’s harsh!... Not calling Peter Satan.

Satan is using Peter's words to try to dissuade Jesus from his mission.

Peter had good intentions... **Our good intentions can pull us away from Jesus' purpose.**

- Our agendas often come from good intentions... desires to make world better place, make life better (especially for our kids).
- That's what makes them seem like such a good idea

Problem- Seeing things from human perspective, not God's. Our agendas are about what WE THINK will make things better. OUR version of better.

- OUR version of better is usually just life the way we want it...
- Whether its political, economic, life's plans (career/family/finances)
 - Things would be better if I had the job/spouse/kids I want
 - Things would be better if my party in charge

Jesus to disciples: "Look you need to rethink what you thought this was going to take and look like. It's going to require a complete rethinking of your life"

V. 34

"Give up own way. Take Up cross

Offensive! Didn't have the religious/holy connotation we have for it now. Almost the complete opposite. For heinous criminals/public/humiliating/to show that this person is forced to submit to power of Rome

Similar to "give up own way, sit in your electric chair, and follow me..." Offensive.

Good rule of thumb: If the Jesus you're following doesn't offend you once in a while... it's probably not Jesus you're following.

Following Jesus does NOT mean: Not pious self-denial. Not give up stuff you like doing. Or a couple bad habits

- Not denying your personality
- Silently/stoicly bearing life's troubles
- Not being uncomfortable once in a while
- Definitely not having to deal with the consequences of our selfish choices while calling it persecution...

Means: Choosing to say your life is not your own.

Giving up our own agendas.

Giving up our desire to focus our lives on what WE want/think is best.

Giving up our natural inclination to focus our lives on US and try and control/manipulate it.

The YOU that lived for you, your agenda, what you thought was supposed to be/happen is executed in submission to Jesus' purpose... displaying/and telling about his love.

- You dreamed of career/money/easy life... might have different plans
- You firmly believe in a "way" of making culture/country better... maybe Jesus has a better way.

Take up cross- Literal for Peter

“Follow me”- Be following me... ongoing, everyday/moment... following closely behind... loving as he loved

God himself submitted to his purpose. What makes us think we should be any different?

MAIN POINT **Following Jesus requires us to trade our agendas for his purpose.**

At first sounds terrible...” I don’t get what I want? Following Jesus is just suffering and giving things up?”
(No... Go back to Part 2)

But if we really think about it... this trading of our agendas for Jesus’ purpose, is the only way to get what we really/truly/deep down want...

V. 35-37

“In reality... Your agenda gets you nothing.”

“You think fighting/striving for these things will give you the life you want (or your children the life you want for them)... but it won’t.”

Living a life for our SELF, grasping and clinging to whatever we selfishly desire/think is right in our own view... isn’t a life... it’s simply existing as slaves to our instincts... animal existence.

It’s living in a constant struggle with everyone else who is trying to do the same thing

Jesus: “Giving up your agenda and living for my purpose/following me will give you what you are actually looking for. A true/full/purposeful life now an forever”

Jesus’ purpose is infinitely larger and more fulfilling than our own personal agendas.

If we are able to let go... we find something so much better/more... true life. A life of love, joy, peace... that has nothing to do with our circumstances... True purpose larger and longer lasting that we can imagine.

Letting go of life-preserver example

- Let go I have something better for you
- Goes even further... We are all fighting over a tiny piece of wood when we are invited into the boat

YOU:

What are you clinging to/fighting for hoping it will give you the life you’re “supposed’ to have?

What/whose agenda are you living for?

- Is it a dream/hope for a certain future (marriage/retirement/kids/education/career)?
- Is it a country/culture/life that looks like it’s “supposed” to?

Following Jesus requires us to trade our agendas for his purpose... Aligning our lives to his, daily

How do we start?

Read and Pray: Luke 22:42

“So we just never speak up about causes we are passionate about?” Not saying that... saying we need to align our lives/passions/agendas with Jesus' purpose...

Clarify Origin and Motivation

Clarify Origin: Are you passionate b/c Jesus is passionate about it or b/c it's just what you think “should” be done?

- Example- Do you want to be a doctor b/c God gave you a passion to help people or b/c you like the paycheck and prestige that comes with it?
- Example- Do you feel strongly about political cause b/c God gave you a heart for bringing his kingdom to earth now or b/c it aligns with your preferred version of American culture?

Clarify Motivation: Why are you doing it...

- To show love or to win
- To show people the mercy of Jesus or to show people they are wrong and you are right?
- B/c it's your preference or b/c it allows God to use you to show love to one of his children created in his image?

Choose to trust Jesus' heart

- Maybe you realize your agenda, which stems from good intentions, might not align with Jesus' purpose..
- Not a bad thing... getting a certain job, promotion, married, children, supporting causes.
- Jesus' purpose is to show you and the world his love... we can trust that his purpose for us aligns with his overall purpose.. It's out of his love.

If we can trust Jesus with our eternity we can trust him with our immediate future.

WE:

We are invited to live a life of passion and purpose... not focused on our personal agendas, advancing our own views and getting the life we've always imagined...

We are invited to live for the ultimate purpose... to align our lives around Jesus' purpose of inviting our neighbors to discover, enjoy, and share the love and life he offers.

Invited to give up we can't control or keep anyway for a life we can never lose that is held in the hands of our heavenly Father.

When we trade our agendas for Jesus' purpose we find the life we were always meant to live.