



CONNECT GROUP NOTES

Sunday 17.09.23

“Follow After Jesus”

Preacher

Rev Dr Adam Dodds

Scripture

“And they came to Bethsaida. And some people brought to him a blind man and begged him to touch him. ²³ And he took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village, and when he had spit on his eyes and laid his hands on him, he asked him, “Do you see anything?” ²⁴ And he looked up and said, “I see people, but they look like trees, walking.” ²⁵ Then Jesus laid his hands on his eyes again; and he opened his eyes, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly. ²⁶ And he sent him to his home, saying, “Do not even enter the village.”

²⁷ And Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. And on the way he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that I am?” ²⁸ And they told him, “John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets.” ²⁹ And he asked them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered him, “You are the Christ.” ³⁰ And he strictly charged them to tell no one about him.

³¹ And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again. ³² And he said this plainly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. ³³ But turning and seeing his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind me, Satan! For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.”

Mark 8:22-33

Thought

In this passage, the disciples were beginning to see Jesus, but not yet clearly. The miracle He performed on the blind man served as an 'acted out parable' to describe the situation of the disciples and their blindness to who Jesus was. As Christians, we incrementally grow our understanding of who Jesus is.

Romans 12:2 speaks of incremental revelation, a renewing of the mind that leads to incremental transformation. Like going to the gym or learning a skill, we see great progress made through consistent and incremental growth.

The disciples tried to pin down who Jesus really was and put Him in a box based on their experiences. Likewise, we often try to categorise and describe Jesus on our own terms. The reality is, when we box him in, we can undermine who He can be to and for us. Jesus' antidote to this was to ask the disciples, "who do YOU say I am?". Peter answered, "You are the Messiah." When we remind ourselves of who the Lord of the universe is, the more His reality changes everything in us.

However, just like Peter when he reprimanded Jesus, we can sometimes get it spectacularly wrong. We often don't understand or obey His ways. But, the way we respond after falling short is key. Maturity in Christ is incremental but it is also an upward spiral. We often feel like we are going back to the same thing time after time, but we must remind ourselves that we are still climbing! V33 and 34 show us that although we may trip up and fall, we know who we need to follow. Our job is to merely get behind him, follow, repent, and let him correct our thinking. When we do this in obedience, each step we take behind him is like a brush stroke on a canvas. Slowly, our Christian journey paints a profound picture of who Jesus is, stroke by stroke.



Discussion Points

1. In what ways have you seen Jesus more clearly recently?
2. What areas of our thinking might need some correction from God?
3. What does it look like to follow Jesus well in the everyday?

Personal application + Prayer

Father,

Thank you for Your Word today. We ask that You reveal more of Yourself to us so we may see You more clearly. Teach us this week what it means to follow You well.

Lord Jesus, we invite You to correct our thinking. Remind us that You are Lord and that You are the one in charge. Thank you that even when we fail, still we gradually climb upwards toward a better place with You.

Amen.