

5.2.B(32a).Servants Share Kingdom Suffering.

Mark 8.32-38

As I'm sure you're learning by now as a Shepherd of the Kingdom, the Kingdom is *counter* to what comes naturally to us as human beings. For that reason, you must cultivate your inner life with the Lord. Spiritually, nothing has changed when, as an *infant disciple*, you clung hungrily to your Lord for new life, and he lifted you gently up. We still need our Lord for everything. Yet, as you bear fruit as a Shepherd, much has changed spiritually, for now you are accustomed to walking with the Lord Jesus face-to-face.

Press in to that kinship, for being a trustworthy servant in the Kingdom of God, especially one who is being given *unprecedented access to the Lord and his Throne Room*, as you now have, is your new reality. For, there are a select few who have

served the Lord, seeking the “things of God” which are on the Lord’s heart rather than the “things of man” which will advance careers, fund vacation homes, and popularize names and reputations in earthly kingdoms that will fade.

But you, a “shepherd after God’s own heart” who knows the burden of “feeding” his people with “knowledge and understanding” (Jeremiah 3:15) are *proven bona fide* in the Kingdom, and the future, with Jesus Mashiach, is yours. For, the reality is that you are already “seated with him in the heavenly place” in Jesus Mashiach (Ephesians 2:6). Your reality simply awaits you.

So, embrace your servanthood with zeal, and give yourself lavishly—all this proves your place near his side, as the Lord goes with you to give you victory after victory until you see your Lord face-to-face!

Read Mark 8:32-38

³² And he said this plainly. And Peter took him aside and **began to rebuke him.** ³ 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.**”

³⁴ And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, “If anyone would **come after me**, let him **deny himself** and **take up his cross and follow me.** ³⁵ For whoever would **save** his life will lose it, but whoever **loses his life** for **my sake** and the gospel's will save it. ³⁶ For what does it profit a man to **gain**

the **whole world** and **forfeit** his **soul**? ³⁷ For what can a man give in return for his **soul**? **Mark 8:32-37**

Background:

While the unredeemed people of this world live exclusively in the *flesh*, disciples of Jesus Mashiach are alive in both body and Spirit—occupying both in the world and the spiritual reality of the Kingdom. But, which world do they truly *abide* in—that is, consider as their true *home* and foundation for their lives?

When these disciples give themselves fully to the affairs of this seen world, viewing this bodily existence as the only reality that matters, as their foundation of life, and their life's priority and ambition, then they are living "in the flesh," as if they belonged to the world and were still enslaved

to its lusts, passions, and endless hunger. Those in the “flesh” serve only one lord, and that is their own “Self-interest.” But, as Jesus teaches his disciples that the Mashiach himself must suffer, be rejected, and then killed to serve his people, Peter immediately responds with a “rebuke” of Jesus and his messianic mission.

By this point in their growth as disciples, Jesus must sense that they are ready to learn this Kingdom mystery, that though the Kingdom of God is a more glorious, more powerful and never-ending Kingdom, its *greatness* is not in sheer scale and value but in this unexpected dynamic, that those who are truly *great* in the Kingdom are those who are guided not by ambition or Self-interest but by Sacrificial Love, fulfilling the Father’s Kingdom mandate that *all* of his family is redeemed and rescued from this world’s danger.

So, to serve his people with the greatest act of redemption they need to be redeemed into the Kingdom of Heaven, Jesus readies himself and his disciples to embrace the Kingdom’s “sacrificial service.” But, Peter rebukes him.

Focusing Mind on World or Kingdom:



Reaching spiritual maturity as a “stage 5” disciple is not just the ability to serve sacrificially. Because this ability to be willing to sacrifice to serve others depends on not just an awareness of the *spiritual reality* of the Kingdom, the disciple’s entire view must shift from a worldly view, focusing on Self-

interest, to a Kingdom view, focusing on sacrificial service. Because Peter views reality from a Worldly View, through a focus on Self-interest, then Jesus's words of suffering, loss, and death are not right and worthy of rebuke. They threaten not only the self-interests of Jesus but his own as well.

Thus, Jesus exhorts his disciples to shift their view entirely from a worldly to a Kingdom view. In the eyes of the Kingdom, sacrifice is wholly acceptable because one lays down his life that his family may live. Thus, to shift from the worldly focus of Self-interest to the Kingdom View of family salvation prepares disciples who are sacrificial servants to experience and glimpse the glory of the Kingdom, known only to those who are willing to forsake earth for the Spirit's life and work!

Mindset: Abiding in Flesh or Spirit.

³¹ So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you **abide** in **my word**, you are truly **my disciples**, ³² and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you **free**.” ³³ They answered him, “We are offspring of Abraham and have never been **enslaved** to anyone. How is it that you say, ‘You will become free’?” John 8:31-33

Note:

We have already established that reborn *disciples of Jesus Mashiach* inhabit two realms simultaneously. Of course, they inhabit this material realm in fleshly bodies. And, they inhabit the spiritual realm as reborn children of

God who are in Mashiach and his life. However, your choices and decisions as a disciple will determine the *realm* in which you actually *dwell*. For, the biblical word “abide” means that you must choose to *dwell*, to ***settle*** in one of these two realms—the realm of the flesh or the realm of the Spirit.

As the Lord Jesus said, it all starts with your “heart” and what you treasure. If you truly *treasure this life of earth*, the sum total of your choices, the sacrifices that you make, and your life direction will indicate a treasure stored up in this world of *human approval*.

Instead, if you truly value the Lord and His Kingdom, your heart will be known by the valuable things of your life. *The sum of your choices* will testify of the Lord’s Work and pleasure in your life, as your way will be affirmed at every step with spiritual and lasting fruit.

Lives changed. Disciples reproduced and bearing fruit. Households strengthened. Your sacrifices will be *overlooked by men*, but precious in the sight of God. And, your life will be valuable to the Kingdom from Heaven's final View.

Setting your Mind on the things of this world:



Set mind on
Things of **man**



Save Life and
Self-interest.



Serve World
and **Satan**

If you choose to *abide*, to *settle* in the world of the “flesh,” your mind will be *entirely preoccupied and focused* on the words, the thinking, and the concerns of this world. That is, by setting your gaze and focus entirely on this world, so that its values, thinking, and pleasures, your mind and life

is set—it *settles* down to “abide”—to dwell in this earthly world as if it was its home. **Setting your mind** on earth blinds you to any life beyond this world, so you will seek to “save” and protect this life on earth as if it is *your only life*. What is the result of *abiding in the World*? If your **mind is set** on this world alone and your efforts are spent **preserving** and advancing your life on this earth, then you will end up **serving** Satan and his purposes. When Simon sought to protect his own and Jesus’s life on earth, Peter was unwittingly advancing Satan’s purpose to prevent Jesus Mashiach from *laying down his life* to redeem His people, thus robbing the Kingdom of its children.

Setting your Mind on the things of God:



Set mind on
Things of **God**



Sacrifice and
lose life and
self-interest.



Serve God and
His Kingdom.

Now, you may be asking yourself, why should I be willing to sacrifice myself for others, for the sake of the Kingdom? In short, “Why die?”

The simple answer is, “Love.” Love is the only reason you should consider pressing on to this fifth stage of discipleship, “sacrificial service.” You should respond to the one who said that He would “suffer, be rejected, be killed” for the sake of serving his family to redeem them, with the only response and love *worthy* of his love—with an equal willingness to *lose all* for his sake.

Ultimately, there is a radical fellowship to which Jesus invites you! He himself has said, “I no longer call you servants... but I call you friends” and “tell

my brothers... I go to my God and your God, my Father and your Father.” To be called “brother” of the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Mashiach himself, is unfathomably impossible.

We cannot achieve this impossibility, so the Lord Jesus himself rebirths us into a new spiritual nature as the sons of God.

But, there is something within our reach we can do as those called to draw near to him. We can give up what we have been given on earth, we can forsake what is fleshly and ensnared to this world and Satan’s evil plans. We can give him our hearts, our loyalty, our love.

So, dear friend, I would encourage you to count the costs. First, consider all that you could gain in this dark world by the flesh. All that you can enjoy through your short life-span on earth. Imagine you gained it ALL—Jesus still says to you,

“What good is it if you gain the whole world but lose your very soul?” Secondly, consider your soul. You have the opportunity to be that soul who serves as he served, to share with him this one intimately rare detail to be like-minded in your sacrificial service to the Father. Be counted in this rare fellowship of those who have *suffered greatly to serve the Lord*.

Consider the great names in the world who did not sacrifice self-interest for the Kingdom but who clung to cultural self-interest, fame, and even unbelief throughout their careers. Those notable men who, at the end of their lives, were shown to still be self-indulgent in the secret things. So, if you truly wish to “set your minds on the things of God,” then be prepared to be *whole-hearted* in your devotion and sanctification. For, this *sacrificial service* which Jesus calls you is given

only to those who offer their whole lives to the Lord (Romans 12:1-2) without reserving any defilement for one's Self-interest or self-indulgence. There are no Achens among those who *serve sacrificially*. And, even though it took Peter a few steps to give up his protective Self-interest, he became known as one of those who served the Lord with a whole-hearted sacrifice!

So, when you turn to "set your mind" on the "things of God," come before him as one fully available to be touched and changed by his glory. For, the Word of Jesus which will fill your mind will



Set mind on
Things of **God**



Sacrifice and
lose life and
self-interest.



Serve God and
His Kingdom.

leave no dark space of your life untouched. So, first, “set your mind” fully on the things of God.

Shifting Mind Set from Man to God: Deny Self,
Take up Cross, Follow Jesus



Deny Self



Take up Cross



Follow Jesus

As a growing disciple, I hope you are seeing that setting your mind on this earth will limit your devotion to the Lord. There will be lines you will not cross, times when you say, “This is unacceptable” when the Lord ask of you your service.

The reality is that the enemy will always have a hold on your life as long as your *flesh* remains enslaved to this world and the *fear* of loss holds

you hostage to Satan and his purposes. So, the Lord has a very clear solution to *free you* from this worldly enslavement: “Deny your Self, take up your Cross, and Follow Him” (Mark 8:34).

- Deny your **Self**:

Your *flesh* is designed to consume to survive. But, when our first parents chose to live apart from God, to freely sin, their (and our) flesh died of its spiritual life and now is forever unsatisfied, *starved of God's presence*. So, the flesh is the ideal *slave* to Satan and his world, for the devil entices our flesh with the hope of a fullness that never comes. The world gorges the flesh with sin, but this sin *kills and steals life*. So, Jesus says, you can *gain the whole world* by letting your *flesh consume* all it wants, but in the end, you will “lose your soul” (8:37).

Instead, the first step to shift your mind's "setting" from the world to the kingdom is to choose to deny your *flesh*—to wake up and realize that your unrestrained Self-indulgence in this world only brings your death.

So, present your "soul"—all of who you are, what you desire, all your needs—present your Self to God as an "offering" to please him and to do His will. By giving yourself to God first, rather than hoarding your life for yourself, you free yourself from the *flesh's enslavement* and "deny" yourself. You *deny* that your Self is all that matters. You *deny* that consuming will make you full and satisfied. You deny that this world and its master, Satan, are your home. By denying yourself, you shift your gaze from this earth-bound horizon to look up to see the Kingdom of God!

- Take up your cross:

Normally, we think of the cross as mainly *suffering*. But, Jesus did not go to the cross only to suffer. Rather, the cross speaks to us of both “death” but also “life”—giving himself to *death*, he brings *life* to his people! So, the cross is the engine of *redemption*—it is activated by the sacrifice of the cross-bearer in order to *give life* to the poor!

So, when Jesus Mashiach tells you to “take up your cross,” he does not simply mean “be willing to suffer.” Just as the Father assigned Jesus his cross as the means of “redeeming,” so, too, your “cross” is the “redemptive responsibility” which the Lord has assigned to you, your costly ministry to bring life to those to whom the Lord has called you!

Of course, only our Mashiach and his Cross are the true and complete means of redemption. But,

to bring this “new life” to others, you will need to “take up your cross” as well.

For, there are people you know who need the *redemption of Jesus*. They are still hostage to the Kingdom of Satan. Dead in their sins. Enchained in their flesh to this defiling world of darkness. And, they will *stay this way*, unless you help them find *redemption* in Jesus Mashiach! To bring them to Jesus and his cross of redemption, you will need to bear your cross, to:

- Give up your rights to serve them humbly;
- Deny your Self-interests to hear what they need and to share with them God’s Word;
- Let go of your freedom to be available to talk, listen, and explain to them the promise of Jesus!

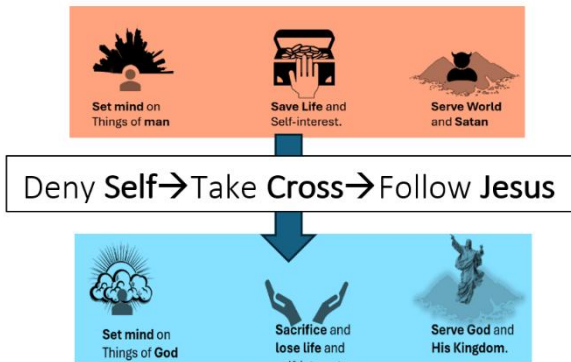
- Give up your isolation to give of yourself to them, to comfort, to pray, to free, to instruct.
- Give up your comfort to take time, effort, and resources to help them find new life!

Thus, to “take up your cross” is to be willing to sacrifice for the sake of others! In bringing “new life” into the Kingdom, you will have to *give up* the selfishness and isolation of your old life. But, as parents can attest, the “cross” of sacrificing to bring new life into the world is exceedingly worth the price of *a lonely life of isolation*.

- Follow Me.

Finally, you do not enter the *new life* of the Kingdom as the *absolute ruler* of all you survey. So, when Peter seeks to prevent Jesus from his Kingdom Mission of suffering and being crucified at Jerusalem, he was unwittingly seeking to sneak

Satan's agenda into the Kingdom to *disrupt* the Lordship of God. Such rebellion is impossible. For, to live in the Kingdom is to live *under* the authority of Jesus as Lord. The disciple must *follow* Jesus, not presume to lead him.



Thus, as a mature servant of the Kingdom, look for signs that indicate that a disciple is still *at the service of the world*. Help them to “deny self,” Take up your Cross: your Redemptive Responsibility.



Calling



Responsibility



Offering



Sacrificing



Serving

C: **Called** to adopt a people as your own. You will know your *redemptive responsibility* when you spend time before the Lord, waiting on him and sitting in his presence. Who are the people he is putting on your heart, the people you feel a “burden” for? Who are the people who need the Lord’s redemption?

R: **Responsible** for their Redemption. While we are called to pray for the *salvation* of all people, for whom will you take responsibility? The process of Redemption means that the Lord will take their “old lives” and will give them a new and “abundant life” in the Lord Jesus Mashiach. Will you be responsible to *take action*, as the Lord leads, that these people find redemption in Jesus?

O: **Offering Self** to the Lord.

Most importantly, taking up your cross is to step up for Kingdom Service, so it is not something you can accomplish by your own fleshly abilities.

Instead, “offer” up all of your Self to the Lord (Romans 12:1-2) to please him and to do His will.

When you offer yourself fully to the Lord, you entrust yourself to him completely, letting him act and speak through you by his divine power. You rely on his righteous life to take hold and bear fruit in your life.

S: **Sacrificial** living gives up what is precious. If your whole life is offered to the Lord, then you will be willing to *sacrifice*—make specific areas of life available to the Lord to do his will. You will give him time that would have otherwise been spent on your own Self-interest and purposes. Instead, this *sacrificial* use of your time allows God to

“redeem” the time, to make it his own, and to work through you to accomplish his kingdom purposes. In this way, all areas of your life can be useful and redeemed for the Lord’s purposes in his plan and time.

S: **Serves** to build House and Kingdom. Finally, to take up your cross, you will serve the people whom the Lord is putting on your heart. Service is to help them find the New Life of the Kingdom Family, challenging them to be reborn into a life of faith. In the Kingdom, serving is to help them grow up as disciples, ensuring their proper feeding and care.

Preference:

- Leadership: Serve not Rule
- Greatness: Last not First
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Deny self, Sacrifice, Follow Jesus: **Kingdom**

World: Save Life, Serve Flesh & Devil

Focus:

1. Self-Protection: fleshly mind set on world/Satan not God. 8:32-33
2. Serving Jesus in Kingdom: deny/crucify self to Follow. 8:34
3. Saving Soul: lose life for Jesus/ Lose all the world. 8:35-37
4. Side with Son of Man: belong to him in glory. 8:38-

Consider:

F

1. Self-Protection: fleshly mind set on world/Satan not God. 8:32-33

Jesus Mashiach started to instruct his disciples of the nature of his mission as “the Son of Man.” However, even Simon Peter was unwilling to know Jesus as Mashiach by faith, speaking entirely in the flesh to “rebuke” Jesus, thinking he was watching out for the “Self-interests” of Jesus. Strikingly, Peter learns that to give in to the *fleshly impulse* of Self-interest. By lapsing into fleshly unbelief, Peter unwittingly put him against the Kingdom and God’s purposes for it. Not only does fleshly self-interest put you at odds with the Kingdom and the very purposes of God, it entrenches you in this passing world and its entrapment to blind people of God’s glory and purpose. And worse, fleshly

people led by Self-interest can be used by Satan to thwart, undermine, or resist the progress of the Kingdom. When Self-interest is seen in the world, it is expected. When it is seen in the Kingdom, it should be rebuked, as Jesus does. For, left unchecked, fleshly Self-interest would have prevented the cross from ever happening, leaving God's people entrapped in Satan's Kingdom and unredeemed.

2. Serving Jesus in Kingdom: deny/crucify self to Follow. 8:34



3. Saving Soul: lose life for Jesus/ Lose all the world. 8:35-37

4. Side with Son of Man: belong to him in glory.
8:38-

Question:

Further Discovery:

