**A PORTRAIT OF LEADER**

*Mark 8:31-37*

**SERMON SUMMARY…**

Jesus is a leader who wants us to discover that our best life can actually be found in losing our lives in order to follow Him. He is clear that following Him is not for the faint of heart. In fact, Jesus clarifies what discipleship looks like: ***deny, death, follow.*** While this may seem like an ‘extreme’ invitation, notice one glorious truth – Jesus does first what He invites us to follow Him in.

* Jesus denies Himself in the garden – [Mark 14:32-42](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+14%3A32-42&version=NLT)
* Jesus takes up His cross – [Mark 15:24-26](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+15%3A24-26&version=NLT)
* Jesus follows the will of the Father – [John 5:19](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=john+5%3A19&version=NLT)

**BIBLE STUDY & DISCUSSION…**

1. Read the backstory in [Mark 8:27-30](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=MARK%206%3A30-44&version=NLT). Peter and the disciples have been following Jesus for 2+ years before Jesus asks them the question *“Who do you say I am?”* What connection is Jesus seeking to establish between who He is and the invitation He is about to give them?
2. Read [Mark 8:31-37](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+8%3A31-37+&version=NLT) and make some general observations about what Jesus tells his disciples awaits him, the responses between Peter and Jesus, and what true followership will entail. What immediately stands out to you about these verses and why? What questions begin to surface for you, and what do you find to be most challenging about these verses?
3. In [Mark 8:31](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+8%3A31&version=NLT), Jesus begins to talk openly about what awaits him in Jerusalem. Why is Jesus revealing this to the disciples now? Read [Isaiah 53:1-12](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+53%3A1-12&version=NLT). What connections should the disciples be making with what Jesus is saying and what the Old Testament said would happen to God’s Anointed One?
4. What is the correlation between Jesus’ rebuke of Peter and Jesus’ rebuke of Satan in [Matthew 4:10](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+4%3A10&version=NIV). How is Jesus’ rebuke of Peter both firm but invitational?
5. The three words that encapsulate Jesus’ invitation to those who would follow Him are: **Deny** (*give up your own way*) – **Die** (*take up your cross*) – **Follow** (*come follow me*). In your own words, articulate what it means to ‘deny, die, and follow.’ Why are these so crucial to being a follower of Jesus? Where do you stumble with this invitation?
6. ***Mark 8:35*** *– “If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake and for the sake of the Good News, you will save it.”* In what ways do you see yourself seeking to hang on to your life? What does it mean (or look like) to give up your life for the sake of Jesus and His gospel message?

**REFLECT…**

**Flexitarian Follower of Jesus** – this was a phrase used in the message to describe people who follow Jesus, but not 100% of the time. Do you have any ‘flexitarian’ ways in you? If yes, where do you see this happening? What steps might you begin taking in order to fully embrace followership as defined by Jesus {deny, die, follow} all day every day?