



Rockbridge Church Small Groups Lesson 9

Mark 9 – Real Jesus (Read Mark 9)

Questions:

1. What do you see in Mark 9 that helps you know what Jesus is like?
2. In what ways do you see Jesus hard at work, on a mission, with a purpose, loving people?
3. What one thing about Jesus stands out to you in this chapter? (What about Jesus astonishes you, amazes you, challenges you or comforts you?)
4. In Mark 9, who encounters Jesus, and how do they respond to Him?
5. How are you responding to the Jesus you encountered in Mark 9?
6. What was most instructive, and what did you appreciate most from Sunday's sermon?

Check out the additional notes on **The Cross of Christ** on the next page.

The Cross of Christ

For Jesus was teaching His disciples and telling them, "The Son of Man is to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him; and when He has been killed, He will rise three days later." But they did not understand this statement . . . — Mark 9:31-32

In Mark 9 we find Jesus' second of three plain predictions of His own death (Mark 8:31-33; Mark 9:30-32 and Mark 10:32-34). The time in Mark 9 is probably the same time when, according to Luke, Jesus *"resolutely set out for Jerusalem"* (Luke 9:51). He was determined to fulfill His mission, the very reason for which He had been born — *"Behold, I bring you good news of great joy which shall be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord"* (The angel to the shepherds — Luke 2:10-11).

Jesus knew He was heading to Jerusalem, to His violent yet purposeful death. Although Jesus knew He must die, it was not because He was the helpless victim either of evil forces arrayed against Him, or of any inflexible fate decreed for Him, but because He freely embraced the purpose of His Father for the salvation of sinners. Jesus got it — *"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many"* (Mark 10:45).

The Cross shaped the perspective of Jesus on His own death. What dominated His mind was not the living but the giving of His life. Our perspective of who Jesus is should follow His — for the only authentic Jesus is the Jesus who died on a cross.

Central to understanding what took place on the cross is this: When Jesus died on the cross, **He died for our sins**. And when He died for our sins, **He died our death**.

Christ's death and our sins are linked. *"The wages of sin is death"* — and we deserved that penalty. But on the cross, Jesus endured in His innocent person the penalty our sins deserved. Jesus died our death, taking our place. So Jesus became the divine substitute for sinners — the substitute bears the penalty, that we sinners may receive the pardon. As sinners we still of course have to suffer some of the personal, emotional and social consequences of sin, but the penal consequence, the deserved penalty of alienation from God now and forever, has been borne by Another in our place, so that we might be spared it. Peter says it this way, *"For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God"* (1 Peter 3:18). Or as Paul says, *"God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them"* (2 Corinthians 5:19).

Two personal responses to the Cross. First, the Cross compels us to love and live for Jesus, the One who gave Himself for us. And second, since Jesus died in our place, we are now ambassadors in His place — *"Therefore, we are ambassadors for (literally **on behalf of** or **in place of**) Christ, God making His appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God"* (2 Corinthians 5:20). Just like Jesus resolutely set out for the Cross, we resolutely set out for our neighbors and the nations, creating opportunities for every man, woman and child to see, hear and respond to the gospel of Jesus Christ.