

# Adult Teaching Resources

February 28, 2021



## Season of Epiphany

Mark 1:29-39—"Jesus, the Traveler"

Mark 9:2-9—"Jesus, the Dazzler"

## Season of Lent

Mark 1:9-15—"Jesus, the Preacher"

**Mark 8:31-38—"Jesus, the Challenger"**

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# “Jesus, the Challenger”

Mark 8:31-38

## FIT Teaching Guide

by David Woody

This adult teaching outline is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartledge, printed in *Nurturing Faith Journal*. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Nurturing Faith Journal* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Nurturing Faith Journal* so they can prepare before the lesson.

### Key Verse

Mark 8:34—“He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.”

### Opening

After everyone arrives, ask your group to form smaller groups of 3-4. After everyone is settled, have each small group talk about leaders and leadership.

Who is the most effective leader you personally know or have worked with?  
What made her/him an effective leader?  
How did others relate to that leader?

Who is the most ineffective leader you personally know or have worked with?  
What made him/her ineffective?  
How did others relate to that leader?

Who is the most radical leader you personally know or have worked with?  
What made that person so radical?  
How did others relate to that leader?

Give each group time to share about all three leaders. Then, as time allows, open the floor for larger group conversation and discussion about what makes a leader effective, ineffective, and radical.

### Reading the Bible

What did he begin to teach them? (that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.)

How did he say all this? (quite openly)

How did Peter react? (he took Jesus aside and began to rebuke him)

What did Jesus do? (he turned and looked at his disciples and rebuked Peter)

What did Jesus say? (“Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.”)

## Reading the Bible *continued*

What did Jesus say was necessary for anyone who wants to become one of his followers? (let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. )

What will happen with those who want to save their life? (they will lose it)

What will happen with those who lose their life for Jesus' sake and for the sake of the gospel? (they will save it)

What will come of those who are ashamed of Jesus and his words? (of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels)

## Making Connections

When have you felt like you were in a good, safe, comfortable pattern and routine with your faith life? What was going on in your immediate world? What was going on with your faith?

When have you felt like you were struggling, being challenged, and trying to make it day-to-day with your faith life? What was going on in your immediate world? What was going on with your faith?

When have you felt like you were on the edge and pushing the boundaries with your faith life? What was going on in your immediate world? What was going on with your faith?

What sermon or teaching do you remember that was antithetical to what you thought was necessary at the time? What did you think was necessary? What message did you hear? When did you know the message you heard was right for the situation?

How do you react when you hear words or messages that you don't think fit the situation? What is your initial reaction to the message? What is your initial reaction to the messenger?

How do you react when you hear words that are deeply challenging and you know that you will struggle to follow what you've heard? What is your initial reaction to the message? What is your initial reaction to the messenger?

How do you react when you hear the truth, especially when the truth is hard to hear?

What do you think is the meaning behind Jesus' words, "For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it?" How does one do that? What does that look like?

Our Lesson Writer says, "How we live makes a difference, both to us and to others. Taking the easy way may leave us physically alive but without really experiencing the life Jesus wants us to know." What do you think is the life Jesus wants us to know?

What are your feelings toward Jesus? Do those feelings change when you talk about Jesus with this group? Why do you say that? Do those feelings change when you talk about Jesus at home? Why do you say that? Do those feelings change when you talk about Jesus in the public square? Why do you say that?

## So What?

Ask your group to regather in their smaller groups from the beginning of the lesson. Give each group a pen and a piece of paper to take notes and record their ideas as you ask them to consider this question:

What specific ways are we called to live the radical way of the cross and live in the way of Jesus?

Encourage each group to think way outside the walls of the church as they consider radical living at home, at work, in all their relationships, and with all others.

Give each group time to think and talk, then open the floor for a large group conversation. Make notes on the board and record ideas of how to live for Jesus.

Make a list of the top five actions your group needs to take to live a more faithful and radical life for Jesus. Write those on the board for all to see.

## The Challenge

Choose one of the top five radical living ideas from the group conversation and spend time each day doing something to have that become more a part of how you live.

## Prayer

*Loving God, you tell us what we need to do to live for you. The truth is sometimes difficult to hear, but deep down we know what we need to do. Help us to live in your way, which is better than our own. Help us to follow you wherever you might lead us, sharing your love and grace as we go. Amen.*

## Digging Deeper

by Tony Cartledge

Digging Deeper is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartledge, printed in *Nurturing Faith Journal*. Watch for the “shovel” icon in the THE BIBLE LESSON, and then reference that item in this Digging Deeper resource. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Nurturing Faith Journal* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Nurturing Faith Journal* so they can prepare before the lesson.

**Structure**—The structure of Mark is hard to pin down in any detail, but the gospel does appear to fall into two primary sections, with 8:27-30—Peter’s confession of Jesus as the messiah—marking the transition. In Mark 1:1-8:26, Jesus is mainly teaching and preaching to crowds in Galilee, and miracle stories abound. From 8:31 on, there are few miracle stories as Jesus turns toward Jerusalem and focuses on teaching the disciples in light of his coming passion.

**Who got the rebuke?**—I suggested in the lesson that Peter was probably speaking in behalf of the other disciples when he responded to Jesus’ open talk about suffering by taking him aside in order to “rebuke him” (v. 32).

The authors of Matthew and Luke were apparently uncomfortable with the notion that Peter ever “rebuked” Jesus to begin with. Luke omits it altogether, and Matthew has Peter say: “God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you!” (Matt. 16:22).

Mark is clear that Peter spoke the rebuke, but he adds that Jesus turned and looked at the disciples before saying “Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.” Although he spoke directly to Peter, Jesus made sure that all the disciples got the message.

It is interesting to note that Jesus then expanded the audience further, calling “the crowd” along with his disciples before saying “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me” (v. 34). One wonders how much of the earlier conversation the crowd had heard. Jesus wanted them to know that the teaching applied to them, too.

**Cross bearing**—Jesus’ charge that his followers should also be willing to take up a cross and lose their lives for his sake also appears in Matthew 16:24-28 and Luke 9:23-27, in a similar context.

**Real living**—Jesus challenged his followers to be willing to risk their lives for the sake of the gospel. Others have pondered the same theme.

Martin Luther King, Jr. famously said: “If a man hasn’t discovered something that he would die for, he isn’t fit to live.”

And, while we may think of such risky following as idealistic, we recall G. K. Chesterson’s memorable lament: “The Christian ideal has not been tried and found wanting, it has been found difficult and left untried.”

## Digging Deeper *continued*

**You can do it**—The thought of following Jesus wherever he leads can be scary, but we can do it. Consider repeating this ancient motto. In Hebrew, the words are *hazak v'ematz* (ha-zak veh-eh-matz).

In the King James English, the words are “*Be strong and of good courage.*”

Following Jesus can be risky business, but we can do it as we remember to be strong and courageous.

# The Hardest Question

by Tony Cartledge

The Hardest Question is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartledge, printed in *Nurturing Faith Journal*. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Nurturing Faith Journal* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Nurturing Faith Journal* so they can prepare before the lesson.

## How do “Son of Man” and “Messiah” go together?

Mark says that Jesus “began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again” (v. 31).

Jesus had used the title “Son of Man” previously (2:10, 2:28), but it seems a bit surprising here, because Peter had just referred to him as the Messiah. It is often suggested that Jesus used the title “Son of Man” as a means of affirming his full humanity and relationship with other humans.

It is more likely, however, that the term has its roots in Daniel 7, where Daniel’s vision of the four beasts included a mysterious heavenly being who appeared as a “son of man” (KJV) or “a human being” (NRSV):

“I saw one like a human being  
coming with the clouds of heaven.  
And he came to the Ancient One  
and was presented before him.  
To him was given dominion  
and glory and kingship,  
that all peoples, nations, and languages  
should serve him.  
His dominion is an everlasting dominion  
that shall not pass away,  
and his kingship is one  
that shall never be destroyed.” (Dan. 7:13-14).

Jesus would have been familiar with this language and appears to have drawn on it to describe himself as one who had come from heaven to earth, receiving dominion and lordship over the earth. This fits with the earlier references in Mark. In 2:10, Jesus prefaced the healing of a paralytic by saying “So you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins,” and in 2:28 he insisted that “the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath.”

In 8:31 and 38, Jesus also emphasizes the Lordship of the Son of Man—though he will suffer, die, and rise again (v. 31), he will also return “in the glory of his Father with the holy angels,” language reminiscent of Daniel 7:13-14.

From this point in Mark, Jesus often speaks of himself as the Son of Man, as in 9:9, where he told the disciples to keep quiet about the transfiguration “until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead.” He speaks of the Son of Man’s betrayal and suffering in Mark 9:9, 31;

## The Hardest Question *continued*

10:33, 45, and 14:21, 41. In 13:26, however, Jesus predicted the Son of Man's "coming in the clouds with great power and glory," and in 14:62 Jesus responded to the high priest's question about whether he was the Messiah with

"I am; and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven."

By using the title "Son of Man" while accepting the title of Messiah, Jesus not only identified with humankind, but with the prophetic expectation of a heavenly king who would come to earth with power to usher in a new kind of kingdom. Jesus' use of the title "Son of Man" would not have been surprising to those who were familiar with the prophets and with Jewish apocalyptic hopes. The shocker was Jesus' insistence that the Son of Man must suffer, die, and rise again before returning in power.