

Whoever Is Ashamed of Me; Mark 8:38-9:1

0482-0484

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For whoever would save his life will lose it. But whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospels. We'll save it for what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul for what can a man give in? Return for his soul for whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation of Him will the son of man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his father With the Holy Angels, and he said to them, truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power.

There's a story that's told of a sharecropping couple that lived in the Great Depression, and this couple was a third generation sharecropping couple. Their father was a sharecropper and their father before them was a sharecropper. And so they knew nothing of life except the hard, meager existence to work all day from sunup to sundown, seven days a week, year round, to just merely get enough to just pay the owner of the farm.

That's all they'd ever known. Furthermore, they were experiencing this in the time of the Great Depression when things were difficult anyway. And so all they knew of life was just a hard, hard existence of nothing but work. And nothing extra to have ever no creature comforts whatsoever. And they became so frustrated and so discouraged with their life that they vowed that their one and only son that they had would be.

Delivered from this form of life from this form of being trapped in this form of life in which all you do is just Work to simply pay somebody else who owns the farm that you live on so they swore to themselves They would do whatever it took in order to provide the way for their one son to escape this cycle of poverty Well in those days As it has been the case for most of human history, up until recent time, the way out of a cycle of poverty was through education.

Higher education today has taken on somewhat of a different dynamic, of a different purpose. But up until recently, higher education was seen by everyone as the way out of a cycle of poverty. So they determined between them that they would do whatever it took to provide the way for their son to go to college.

So they began doing everything that they could. The farmer, although he worked from sunup to sundown, he took a night job at the local factory. The wife, although she also worked from sunup to sundown, she began taking in sewing, and taking in ironing, taking in babysitting, whatever she could do. to earn just a few extra nickels, a few extra dimes.

And nickel by nickel, dime by dime, they succeeded in putting away just enough money to send their one son off to college. So he reaches the age to go off to college and they send him down to the local college about two hours away and they drive him down and they get him all settled in college and then This new life begins for their son, this new exciting life of opportunity and new ideas and things to learn and new people to meet and a future that his parents never had.

So he would diligently write home to mom and dad once or twice, sometimes three times a week. And his letters would always tell them of these exciting things that he was learning, these new

people that he was meeting. And what the professors were teaching him and how, oh, how bright everything looked and how grateful he was that they had made such deep sacrifices for him to be there.

Well, as this, the first semester of his first year wore on. The letters began to change in content and change in tone. And the parents began picking up on things that the son, ideas that their son was now embracing that was never, there were never ideas that they would have ever embraced. He was embracing new worldviews and new perspectives on life and new perspectives on the world around him that they never, And so then as time goes on, the letters begin to become less and less frequent until finally they stopped.

Along about the second semester of his first year, the letters stopped altogether. Some time went by, and the mother and the father just grew more and more worried about this, so they scraped together just enough nickels and just enough dimes to put just enough gas in the old, rusted out, beat up farm truck so that they could drive down, make the two hour drive to the college and check on their son.

So they do just that, and they drive down to the college, they get to the campus there, they begin looking around for their son. And as they're looking around, they're asking everyone that they meet, and it seems like everybody knows their son. And so they finally are told where they can find him, and so they go to that part of the campus, and as they're looking, they see their son coming across the way, walking across the campus.

And here's the two parents wearing, the mother wearing her homespun dress, the only dress she had, because she limited herself to one outfit of clothing, In order to provide for him the father wearing his only pair of old ragged out patched up overall so that they could give everything to their son. And so here they are standing in their old ragged clothes with the deep creases in their face of all the hard work that they put in over the years and they spot their son walking across the campus.

He's surrounded by four or five friends and they're just having a great old time talking with one another. And then that moment happens, the moment in which the son looks up. And he recognizes his parents and right at that moment is a crossroads that will determine the rest of that man's life. As he looks up and he sees his parents standing there in their worn out, ragged out farm clothes.

He looks to his friends all around him and his parents recognize him and they begin waving to him. And he looks away and ignores them. And that moment his life permanently changed. Because he had made the decision to be ashamed of those who had sacrificed so deeply. For him to be there, he valued the opinion of his newfound friends above the opinion of those who had sacrificed their whole life for him.

There's some deep morality, there's some deep ethic in that story that pertains very closely to the first verse of our passage because the first verse of our passage has to do with being wrongly ashamed with being sinfully ashamed. Not rightly ashamed, but wrongly ashamed. And this is to what Jesus now turns as he turns to this warning from verse 38.

Once again, for whoever is ashamed. And if you're reading in your King James, then you'll notice that it's translated. Whoever shall be ashamed. That is not a future tense reference that Jesus

makes. Jesus is not referring to some future event. When someone will theoretically be ashamed of him as though when he returns, we will be ashamed of him then.

No one will be ashamed of Jesus when he appears. No one. There will be no shame of Jesus when he appears. There will be nothing but glorifying him. There will be much shame of ourselves. And so Jesus is not referring to a future event. Rather, our English Standard translates it more faithfully, for whoever is.

A shame. The shame is now in the here and now. The shame is when Christ is absent. At least bodily absence, absent, whoever is ashamed of me and of my words. And so Jesus is describing a twofold shame here. Shame of the person of Jesus and shame of his words. Now we remind ourselves that when Jesus says whoever is ashamed of me and my words.

He's not saying that whoever is ashamed of the things that I say, meaning those things that are recorded in the four Gospels. Our doctrine of the Trinitarian Godhead tells us That God is one God in three persons father son and spirit all three persons are equally God Therefore what any of the three persons say is equally spoken by God And so when Jesus says of my words, he doesn't just mean the words that literally came from his mouth He means also the words that were written by the author of the scriptures, the spirit.

So we know that our doctrine of the Trinity tells us that Jesus is not just speaking of the words that came out of his mouth. Furthermore, our doctrine of the scriptures tell us that all scripture Second Timothy 3 verse 16, all scripture is equally breathed out by God. And so whether it was in quotation marks from Jesus's lips, or in some other part of scripture by way of the Spirit, whether spoken by David or spoken by Jeremiah or Paul, it's equally His words.

So whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, in this, Adulterous and sinful generation of him with the son of man also be ashamed. So this is a heavy statement that Jesus makes here and the purpose of the statement is at least the purpose of feeling the weight. Jesus intends for us to feel the weight of this shame that is felt for him.

Now, the New Testament historian, James Brooks will tell us. That when Jesus speaks of being ashamed of him, the context of Mark's readers in the first century, they would have associated that with the shame of denying him under persecution. And so there's this correlation between being ashamed of Jesus.

And the context of that shame being the persecution that was in existence for Mark's readers or soon to be in existence for Mark's readers. We talked about that way back at the beginning of Mark's gospel. When we reminded ourselves, we saw that Mark's readers either were Experiencing the beginning of severe persecution or would or would soon be experiencing the beginning of severe persecution.

So for them to hear these words, they're correlating it with the persecution, the tense pressure, the intense pressure coming upon them to deny their Lord and their Savior. And so this context proves to be a context that is particularly meaningful for us, because let's remind ourselves of who is writing this to us, who is the human author.

who is, of these words, we know the Holy Spirit is the divine author, but the human author is Mark, Peter, both of them, right? Think back to, as we began Mark's gospel, this is the account of Peter

written down by Mark. And one of the things that we observed. And this gospel, this gospel is unique among the four gospels in that it is written to us by two men who know experientially what it is to deny Christ publicly and be restored.

Do you remember that? Both of the human authors of this gospel were those men who denied Christ publicly. publicly, and then were restored after denying Christ publicly. Peter, in his famous denial of Jesus, in fact, that's probably the most well recognized event of Peter's life. When Peter on the night of Jesus's arrest.

I don't know that man. I don't know him. I'll be damned if I know that man. And then we remember the restoration of Peter afterwards by the Lord himself. But then you might also recall that Mark himself also was one who publicly denied Christ and did so in a way that was very memorable. As we go along a little further in Mark's gospel, we're going to come to the night of Jesus's arrest and we are going to witness that in Mark's gospel, in Mark's gospel alone, there's that one little sentence about doing the chaos of the arrest on that night when the soldiers were there and they were arresting Jesus and everything was chaotic and all the disciples were running.

There was the one whom the soldiers tried to grab. And instead of grabbing him, they grabbed the garment, the outer garment, ripped it off. He ran right out of his clothes and ran home naked. And we observed in that, that almost, that almost certainly is just a small little autobiographical snippet that Mark inserts in there to say, I was that man.

I was that man that was so ashamed and so fearful that in my eagerness to get away, I literally ran out of my clothes. And the double shame of not only abandoning Jesus, but running home naked after doing so is like this double shame heaped upon him. But again, of course, he is restored later. Also, we'll couple that together with The famous disagreement between Mark and Paul and how they got at odds with one another and Mark was, again, restored by Paul later on in Paul's life.

And so this gospel comes to us from the pen of two men who know what it means to deny Christ publicly, visibly, and very embarrassingly, and be restored later. So this is the context in which Jesus says these words. Whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation. So as he speaks of being ashamed of him, and then he's going to say of that one, I will be ashamed before my father.

So the paradox comes to us in, in just simply asking ourselves, how could the son of man, how could God incarnate? Feel shame because it's not logical for us to regard the Son of God, the maker and creator of all things to himself, feel shame. And so Jesus is not speaking here of this shame as we would think of embarrassment in terms of embarrassment.

That's part of it. But the shame that he's speaking of, he's speaking in biblical terms here. And when we think in biblical terms of shame, we should equate in our minds shame with denial or shame with abandonment or shame with, with, rejection and the opposite of shame, the Bible would hold out for us as that which would be Acceptance, or claiming, or as we sung a few minutes earlier, owning.

So to own Jesus, in biblical terms, would be to not be ashamed of Him. To be ashamed of Jesus would be to deny Him. So think less in terms of embarrassment. Oh, Jesus is just, He's just embarrassing me by the things He's saying. Think in terms of claiming, ownership, outward

association with. The opposite would be rejection of, not claiming, distancing myself from, denial of, okay?

So when Jesus says, of him I will be ashamed before my father, he's not saying I'll be embarrassed. What he's saying is what he says elsewhere in places like, well, in John's gospel when he says, if you deny me before men, I'll deny you before my father. This is the denial will take place before my father and he's not he's not speaking of an embarrassment or a shame He's speaking of either an acceptance a claiming an ownership of or a denial of Whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation So when Jesus says here this adulterous and sinful generation is Jesus saying that the generation in which he lived is more sinful and wicked than ours or any other generation.

That's not what Jesus is getting at. Jesus is not saying that if you deny me in front of this most wicked of all generations, He's instead calling our attention to the stark, Stunning contrast, the contrast between the two audiences. There's two audiences in the statement. There's one audience of the adulterous, sinful, wicked generation.

And there's the other audience of the Father and the Holy Angels. Those are the two audiences. And Jesus says, before those two audiences, there is one audience in front of whom, in sight of whom, you feel shame, or you deny, or you reject in front of one audience. And Jesus is saying, I want you to contrast the two of these audiences.

The one audience is the Heavenly Father, the Holy Father, the heavenly being, the sinless Contrasted against the adulterous, wicked, sinful generation in which we're now living. And so Jesus says, there's the shame before them. There's shame before one or the other. Which one before which one will you feel the shame?

So what Jesus is getting at is that the one before whom you feel shame. speaks volumes about what you value. That's what Jesus is getting at here. He's pointing this finger and saying, ask yourself this question. Do you feel shame of me before this wicked generation? Or if that's the case, then there will be shame of you before my Heavenly Father.

So think for yourself. Ponder, meditate for yourself, do you feel shame of me and of my words before this wicked generation because the one before whom you feel shame speaks volumes of what you value. So let me put it to you this way. When you feel shame or embarrassment, let's say. Before someone else, then what you are saying is what you are assigning a type of authority or a type of superior status to the one before whom you feel shame.

So let me just give a couple of examples and then you'll kind of see what I mean. Let's say, for example. we were not in this room. Let's say for example, this was a, basketball court and there were some goals, some basketball goals, and we had some basketballs and I took one of the basketballs and I was going to do not, not just a, a jump shot from behind the three.

I was going to do a spinning jump shot from behind the three-point line, no chance whatsoever that that's going to make it. In fact, it's going to be embarrassingly. Now, if I did that in front of you, then there would be some embarrassment attached to that, maybe. But if I did that in front of Michael Jordan, then that would be on a whole different level.

You follow what I'm saying? Or let's just say, for example, I was going to take a golf club and swing a golf club. Now, to do that, and for you to see what sort of swing I don't have, is one thing. But in front of, maybe, Jack Nicklaus, is another thing. You see, we attach to someone a level of superiority or authority, and whatever level we attach to that informs us of what sort of shame we would feel before them.

Just I think it was this week, a conversation came up, a few of our kids right now are reading some books about the Korean War, and so the topic came up, they asked me, they said, Dad, can you explain communism to us? To which I did, I explained communism to them. And I didn't have any problem doing that.

But, if instead of my seven and twelve and fourteen-year-old kids asking me to explain communism, if instead it was oh, I don't know, the five person PhD panel that was the panel of political science at the University of North Carolina, if I was explaining communism to them, that would be a whole different scenario, you see?

Because then I would be before those Who I would see as superior to me in that field, and I would feel embarrassment or shame That I wouldn't have felt in front of those that I don't consider superior in that field, and that's the whole key That's what Jesus is getting at Jesus is saying if this sinful and adulterous generation is that which you assign authority to in such a way that you feel shame before them then that speaks volumes of how you value them compared to how you value your father and that's the whole key.

That's the whole point to grasping Jesus is getting at something the Bible calls the fear of man The fear of man is something the scripture will talk about frequently the fear of man is Is simply when we attach? such value to the opinion of others That the value we attach to their opinion of us rivals or surpasses what we value to be God's opinion of us.

And that's why God is so impatient and so condemning of what he calls the fear of man. Who are you? He says in Isaiah 51. Who are you to be afraid of man who dies when I am the one who comforts you? Well, Proverbs 29 and verse 25, the fear of man lays a snare. How do you avoid that snare? Whoever trusts in the Lord is safe.

So you see what Jesus is getting at is It's the same thing that he just said. He is continuing the same thought process because it's the same thought process that he was speaking of earlier about attaching worth, attaching value, the right attachment of value. And so here he continues on that same thought to say if your valuation system is so disordered that you feel shame before a sinful and adulterous and wicked people, And the shame, the object of your shame, is me and my words, then Jesus is, essentially he's saying, that's the most disordered the disordered could be.

It doesn't get any more disordered than that to feel shame of the one perfect eternal God and my perfect words in front of a generation of liars, to feel shame for my justice in front of a generation of unjust people, to feel shame over my mercy and my compassion in front of a generation of heartless evil people.

And Jesus is saying this is the most disordered that disordered can be. My followers are not this way. So he's saying, there's going to be shame. If there's shame of me before people, there will be shame of you before the perfect being of my heavenly father and the perfect being of the holy, and the perfect beings of the holy angels.

So now, what we also recognize is when Jesus is saying that if there is acceptance, Of him and his words, if there's an embracing or as we sung earlier, if there's an owning of Jesus and his words Before men and before people, then there's also a shame attached to that as well. Because the scriptures tell us that Jesus was rejected, He was shamed, He was reproached.

But the scripture also tells us emphatically that if we are His followers, we will share in that reproach. For example, Hebrews 2 and verse 11. That He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are one. Literally are one yours your translation might say or of one source, but they are one That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers.

Okay, so there is this I'm sorry I was supposed to read Hebrews 13 verses 13 14 there that didn't match did it and nobody said a word that didn't match Therefore let us go to him outside the camp and bear the reproach that he endured For we, for here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come.

So the flow of the passage, as well as the writers of the Hebrews, they're saying the same thing to us. Jesus is saying to his disciples, this is what it means to be Messiah. This is what it means to be the Christ that you've confessed. I'm here to suffer, I'm here to be tortured, I'm here to die. And furthermore, that is your fate as well.

And so, attachment to Jesus, connection to Jesus, owning Jesus. Taking up our cross, following him, denying self. All of that also includes the heaping of reproach upon us by the world. So in essence, what we're saying is this. Jesus is saying to us, there's going to be shame. There's no avoiding shame. There's no escaping of shame.

You'll be shamed either by the world or you'll be shamed before my father, one of the two. Pick your choice. Take your pick. You will either experience the reproach of the world now, or you will experience the reproach of my father later. So this shame is not an option for us. The question is, of whom or before whom will we choose to feel shame?

So this shame, the last thing that we'll say about this, and we'll move on to the next, to the promise. The last thing to say about this is this. In the irony of what Jesus says here, the paradoxical irony of what Jesus says here, Jesus, understand, is the one and only being ever, the one and only person ever, to be completely and totally undeserving of any shame.

So think about that for a moment. There is no person ever in the history of mankind that has ever been free from legitimate shame. I don't care how much you look up to someone whether it's your dear old sainted mother Whether it's your spouse that you look up to whoever it is At some point in our life, all of us are worthy of legitimate shame.

Only Christ is never worthy of any shame whatsoever. Furthermore, of us, ourselves, when we think of us, we are the ones who are fully worthy of shame. Who are completely deserving of legitimate shame. And yet it is the one who is worthy of no shame. Who will say of us, of them I will never be ashamed, of them I will not be ashamed.

As he says in Hebrews 2 verse 11 that I read a little bit earlier. He's not ashamed to call us brothers. Now why is he not ashamed to call us brothers? He's not ashamed to call us brothers because we have been made one. That is the, that is the knee shaking glory of the gospel of penal

substitution. That we have been made one with Christ and having been made one with him, as Paul will say to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2, he cannot deny himself.

He cannot deny himself, meaning he cannot deny us, because we've been made one with him. Having been made one with Him, we know that He will never deny us. So as He's speaking to these people and He's saying to them, Listen, if you're ashamed of me and my words before men and people, then I'll be ashamed of you before my Father.

He's not saying to them, you better watch out, you better be careful, because I just might end up denying you before my Father. He cannot. If we are in Christ, he cannot deny himself. So in one of the most astounding ironies of the gospel is this, that those who are worthy of being denied, those who are worthy of shame, meaning us, We receive no shame, we receive no denial, because we are made one with Him.

So that is the warning. Now, let's move on quickly to the promise. And we'll look now at the final verse in this section, in this passage, verse 1 of chapter 9. Verse 1 reads this way again. And He said to them, Truly I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come.

So this is one of the most difficult verses in the Gospels. And once again, it's difficulty is an attestation for us of its authenticity. When we come across difficult passages, the first thing that we should recognize is this is a reminder for us that God's people have never seen themselves as being free to edit.

The scriptures that have been given to them, the Holy Spirit who has miraculously given the scriptures to the church has also miraculously preserved them. And this is one of those verses that if the church ever wanted to sort of smooth out the wrinkles to sort of ease out the hard parts, this is one of those that would have stood out.

But instead, because it's still in our scriptures is once again, a reminder for us that God's people have never seen themselves as having authority over the scriptures, rather the other way around. The scriptures have authority over us. So the difficulty of this verse is one that really comes to us as, as, really, it's easy to see what the difficulty is, isn't it?

Jesus is making a prediction. He's speaking a prophecy. And the prophecy has to do with something that will happen in the future, and Jesus attaches a time frame to that something that will happen. And so, in order for us to understand what Jesus is saying to us, first of all, we must understand What Jesus is saying will happen, and we've got to understand something about the time frame, because if we don't understand those two, then we're not going to get what Jesus is saying.

So let's sort of dive into this and let's see what we can come up with. So the first thing to recognize is this. Let's recognize that chapter one, I'm sorry, chapter nine and verse one belong with chapter eight and not chapter nine. So here again, we have A misleading, if this is a word, *chapterfication*, a misleading *chapterizing* of the scriptures.

Our chapter divisions are not inspired. They have been added for the ease of finding our way around, just like the verses. They've been added for our ease of finding our way around.

Sometimes they're helpful, sometimes they're not so helpful. Chapter 9 and verse 1. It belongs with chapter 8. There should be chapter 8, verse 39, instead of chapter 9, verse 1.

There's two ways that we can know that. First of all, we can know that simply by looking at the next three words at the beginning of verse 2. The first three words of verse 2 read this way. After what? After six days. So Mark is telling us there's a lapse of time. Now, one of the things that we noticed early on in Mark's gospel was that Mark has a favorite word.

Anybody remember what his favorite word is? immediately. And he uses that word over and over and over. Some 41 times in his gospel, he uses the word immediately. So that if you were to sit down and read Mark's gospel in one sitting, you would close your Bible with the distinct impression that Mark was in a hurry.

And he was painting the picture for you of a, of a Messiah that's in a hurry to get to the cross because it's immediately, immediately, immediately, immediately. Now he's using that word immediately. Not just, and here's the key, not just to describe a sequence of events or a pace of events. Instead, he uses that word immediately, often, not to describe the sequence of events, but to connect events together.

Alright? So we've seen how Mark is an expert at teaching theological truths. By putting together instances of Jesus's life, connecting them together. Sometimes he'll have this sandwich technique, sometimes he'll just put them together. But his putting together of these instances in Jesus's life are teaching us spiritual truths.

And so he'll often use that word immediately. to let the reader know this is connected spiritually. This is connected thematically with what just came before it. Here, Mark uses the rare instance in his gospel in which he specifies a time that passes. So we'll talk about this next week as we get to the Transfiguration.

But when Mark says, after six days, he's not making it up. There really was. That time that passed, but he puts that there to let the reader know I'm starting something new. I'm moving to a different topic now. All right, that's one of the ways that we know that secondly We know that because as we think about the meaning of this My hope is that it'll be clear to all of us here that what Jesus is saying Belongs with what he just said and I think that we'll see that as we go through it But the first thing we got to do is we got to try to understand What it is that this event that Jesus is speaking of this will come to pass and what is the timeframe that he's speaking of again?

He says truly I say to you There are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power So there's two phrases in there that I think are going to be key to help us to see and the one phrase is One is taste death, the other is come with power.

We'll talk about those as we go. So Jesus is specifying this period of time and this event that will happen and the time frame in which it will happen. So the event that's going to happen, the, well, let's just start with the most popular, the most widespread understanding of the event that he's describing.

The most common understanding of the event that Jesus is describing is the return of Jesus. At the end of the age, the return of Christ, whether you believe is, is I believe that that's one event, one

returning, and then after that is the judgment in the eternal state, or whether you as some would believe that there's, there's two of those.

There's a secret returning and then there's another returning later. Either way, it doesn't matter that Jesus is referring to that return to that tip, that that event in time, and so he's referring to his return and the period of time that he specifies is. So Jesus seems to be attaching, if that is what he's saying, his return, he seems to be attaching that to the period of time, which would be the lifetime of some of those who are standing before him, or as we could, we could put it another way, a generation.

So before we move on, let's just notice that this is one of three instances in Jesus's life in which he spoke of a future event. Possibly understood as his return and he attached that return to the same span of time which is A generation or in the Hebrew way of thought, 40 years. Alright, so here's one of those instances in which he possibly is referring to his return at the end of the age, and he's connecting it to the timeframe of a generation.

The other two, one comes in Matthew chapter 10. In this instance we read, these words from verse 21, brother will deliver brother over to death. The father is child. Children will, will rise against parents and have them put to death. He's describing some awful conditions here. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next. For truly I say to you, and here it is, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes. All right, so that's a prediction, a prophecy that seems to be speaking of His return. And it also seems to be attaching it to the time frame of a generation.

You will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes. The other instance comes in Matthew 24 in a section of scripture known as the Olivette Discourse. There's a shortened version of this later on in Mark's gospel that we'll get to, but the Olivette discourse in Matthew chapter 24 is notoriously the most difficult passage in all four gospels to understand.

It is notoriously difficult to understand, and not for one minute am I going to stand before you and claim that I understand all of it. Some of the things that Jesus says in there are very, very difficult to understand, and so we obviously don't have time to unpack all of that. But the Olivet Discourse is another instance in which it starts by Jesus disciples, who are admiring the temple, and they say to Jesus, Look at this building.

And Jesus says, Verily, verily, I say unto you, not one of these stones will be left upon another. And then they answer by saying, well, tell us, Lord, when will these things happen? And specifically, they say, what will be the sign of your coming and the end of the age? Jesus then goes on to describe basically an entire chapter.

A very difficult sayings and very scary sayings. And he ends all of this. Well, not, he doesn't end it all. But verse 30, he says, Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man. Then all the tribes of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

And then verse 34, Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. Those are the three instances in which Jesus seems to be speaking of his bodily return and

he seems to connect it together in the time frame of a generation. Those three passages make up probably the three most difficult passages in the Gospels to understand, particularly the Olivet Discourse.

And in fact, the problem is clear to see, isn't it? If Jesus is speaking of the return of the Son of Man at the end of the age and he's connecting it together to a generation, Particularly the generation that was standing before him as he said those words. Then obviously the problem is Jesus hasn't returned yet, and there's been many, many, many, many generations.

And so this is a difficulty with which many people wrestle. In fact, you may be familiar with the, probably the most famous atheist of all time, a man by the name of Bertrand Russell, who wrote a book that, the title of the book is Why I'm Not a Christian. He started with the Olivet Discourse. That's what he started with, to say this is where it all starts.

Understand, Jesus said, I'll be back in your lifetime, and He didn't. So, with that being said, we clearly don't have time to unpack the Olivet Discourse or Matthew Chapter 10. Instead, we only have time to focus on the one right in front of us, which is Mark Chapter 9, where Jesus says to those who are standing here, He says, There are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it's come into power.

So the most popular understanding of that one is that Jesus is speaking of His bodily return at the end of the age. If that is what he's speaking of, then that has one support to it. And the support is that he just mentioned it in verse 38 of chapter eight. He just mentioned his return, the judgment before the father.

So he just mentioned that time period. So it's not like Jesus sort of pulled it out of the air and the disciples are thinking, What? How do we get on that? How do we go from this to that? Jesus did just mention it. So that has in its favor that Jesus just, just mentioned it. But obviously the greatest difficulty is the obvious one.

That, well, if this is going to happen before some of those who were standing for Jesus tasted death, it didn't. And so what do we make of that? So, for that reason, I don't think that Jesus is speaking of His return at the end of the age. The second most popular interpretation is that when Jesus speaks of some of those standing here, not tasting death, until they see the Son of Man come, or the Kingdom of God come in power, what He's speaking of is the event that immediately follows.

The transfiguration event. And so Jesus, we're being prepared for that with this statement here. Some standing before me aren't going to taste death until you see the kingdom of God come in power. And then right after that is going up the mountain and seeing Jesus transfigure. All three synoptic gospels include the transfiguration account and all three synoptic gospels begin with that.

But then there's another problem. If Jesus is speaking of this coming of the kingdom of God in power, And he's foretelling this event. The question that I want to ask is, what's the point? What's the purpose? What's the purpose of prophesying an event that occurs in six days? What's the point of saying, essentially, to the disciples, you know, some of you aren't going to die in the next six days.

To me, it just seems that is not a consistent use of prophecy. That's not the way that prophecy is typically used to prophesy event, an event that is so close in time to happening. Furthermore, Did any of those standing before Jesus die in the next six days? I mean, possibly, but it just does not seem like a likely description.

Lastly, Jesus says, Some of you aren't going to taste death until you see the kingdom of God come in power. Now, the transfiguration event is not a, an event that I would describe as the kingdom of God coming in power. Glory? Yes. Absolutely. The transfiguration event is all about glory. It's all about the magnificence of the Son of God.

But is it, is it so much about power? Alright, so I don't think either of those understandings are really getting at what Jesus is saying. So what I want to offer is a minority view of what Jesus is saying. We're not afraid of minority views here. Right? Because as Jesus says, we value the opinion of God more than the opinion of people.

We are interested in what the scriptures are saying to us. We're interested in what the scriptures are teaching. So what I want to explain or what I want to show is what I feel like is the only satisfactory understanding of what Jesus is saying and how that fits the flow of Mark's thought perfectly, how it fits the context of what Jesus is saying perfectly.

And so let's begin by thinking, first of all, Of the word power. Jesus says, some are standing here. You're not going to taste death until you see the kingdom of God come with power. So what does that word power say to us? It's the word *dynamis*. I think we probably have all heard an expositor of the word stand up and say something about the word *dynamis* and how it's the word that we get our word dynamite from.

And it speaks of an explosive type of power, a power to change things. And all that is true. The word that Jesus uses here is the word *dynamis*. So, what does the scripture, what does the New Testament mean when it speaks to us of power? Well, *dynamis* is one of Luke's favorite words. He will use that word often, and he uses that word often in connection with Jesus, with the power, with the *dynamis* that the Spirit enabled him to have.

The power of the Spirit working through Jesus, Luke will return over and over to the *dynamis* of the Spirit in Jesus. But Jesus isn't here speaking so much of what he can do or what he's here to do isn't the flow of Jesus's thought here? Isn't what Jesus, what Jesus is talking about isn't. Isn't He speaking of his disciples?

Isn't he saying this is the description of a disciple? This is a description of a follower of Christ. You deny self. Take up cross. You follow me. You value the eternal soul. You, you, you do not in any way forfeit anything for your soul. Right? Again and again, he's describing the disciple. And so we should assume that Jesus description of the disciple continues into this verse.

So his description of power, seeing the kingdom of God come with power, now we ask ourselves, what does the New Testament tell us when it speaks of power in relation to the disciple? Well, the New Testament scriptures begin by speaking of power as it relates to the disciple in Acts chapter 1. Verses 8.

When the disciples are there and they're asking the risen Christ, they say, they say to Jesus, Um, Lord, when, is it this time that you'll restore the kingdom to Israel once again? They're looking to

the end of the age, and He says to them, Well, that's not for you to know. But instead, you will receive, here's the word, power.

You will receive *dynamis*. You will receive *dynamis* when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and all Judea and Samaria to the end of the world. So Jesus says that there's this power that will come upon you, and the effect of that power is to make you effective witnesses.

In Judea, Samaria, all the world. So this power then comes upon them in the next chapter. Chapter 2, the Pentecost event. As the Spirit is given, the church is born. And this power that Jesus told the disciples to wait for is then given to them. And from that point on, you can trace it. You can trace the line of this all the way through Acts.

From Acts chapter 2 all the way through chapter 28. The pattern is this. Once this power has come upon them, two or three things have changed, depending on how you want to divide them up. So two or three things have now happened to them. I'm going to call it three, but you can call it two if you want. So these three things happen to the disciples.

Number one, they become equipped. With boldness of speech and effectiveness of speech. We notice this from the very Pentecost event itself. When they say, we all hear them speaking in our own language of the great things that God has done. That continues through chapter 2. There's the healing of the lame man in chapter 3 when Peter stands up and says, You think that we did this?

No, instead, Jesus Christ, whom you crucified, whom you denied, whom you put on the cross, He did this. And that pattern continues. We don't have time to trace it, but it continues consistently all the way through the end of the Book of Acts. Those who are indwelt of the Spirit and those who are specifically, we're told, filled to the Spirit speak effectively and powerfully for Christ.

Secondly, the power, the *dynamis*, is connected together with us in terms of the effectiveness. of this message, this message that changes people, this message that brings salvation. We are familiar with Romans 1 and verse 16, I'm not ashamed of the gospel, there's that same theme again. Shame. I'm not ashamed of the gospel.

I don't deny it. I claim it. I own it. I'm not ashamed of the gospel for here it is, the same word, it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes. A similar passage, 1 Corinthians 1 and verse 18, For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power, it is the *dynamis* of God.

It is the power of God. So also this power that's given to the believer is the power of this message that saves. Now, to be clear, the message of the gospel itself doesn't save anyone. What saves sinners is the sacrifice of Jesus Christ given to them on their behalf. But the gospel is the message of what God has done that the lost sinner can hear and believe.

And then the sacrifice that Christ made for us is then apportioned to us. That's how salvation comes to the sinner. But, we understand what Paul's saying. This message of this, this is the power, this is the power of God that converts lost sinners. So there's a second aspect. This aspect, first of all, of bold and effective speech.

Secondly, the content of the speech. The speech that we proclaim, the power of that speech is the power to save sinners. Thirdly, the New Testament speaks of the power of God given to the believer in the sense of peace and contentment, contentedness in the face of persecution and tribulation. The peace of God, the contentedness that surpasses understanding or explanation that exists in the heart of the believer in the face of persecution and tribulation.

Look at 2 Corinthians 12. Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me the thorn in the flesh. But He said to me, My grace is sufficient for you. For here's the same word again, My power is made perfect in weakness. And so Paul goes on to say, For the sake of Christ, then I'm content.

I'm content with weakness, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities, for when I'm weak, I'm strong. We see the same sort of thing show up in Philippians 3. I count everything as lost because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus, my Lord. For His sake, I've suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ, and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith, that I may know Him, and here it is again, and the power of His resurrection.

And what does the power of His resurrection? How is that manifested in my life that I may share his sufferings and become like him in his death? We see the same thing in Philippians 4. That's the passage that we're all familiar with. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. And so what we see here is this threefold or twofold, this three pronged, Power of God that comes upon the believer, and here's the paradox because remember, this is a section of paradoxes.

Here's the paradox. The first paradox was, of course, gaining by losing, also the paradox of how you're going to pay for your soul. What are you going to get in exchange for your soul? Or, or the paradox that we, that we just saw saving his life by losing it. Or profiting a man or the shame of the son of man before God.

So now the final paradox is this. The final paradox is power through weakness. See the flow? See the consistent flow there? Power through weakness. This is the greatest paradox of all. And it's the paradox that Jesus is saying, there are some who are standing here who will not taste death. Before you see the kingdom of God come in power.

Now, paradoxically, we would think of power as, I don't, I don't know, outward strength, ability, capacity to put under others under our feet to put others in subjugation. But instead Jesus sees power as weakness. So what is Jesus saying? Remember, this is the most difficult of all commands. This is the command that the disciples hear this and they immediately think, Jesus, how will we do that?

How will we deny self? How will we take up cross? How will we do those things? He then begins encouraging them. He warns them. You properly value soul. You understand that there's nothing you can exchange for soul. He reminds them of the biblical principle of gaining by losing, of saving by losing. He warns them, there's a day of judgment coming.

And if you deny me and my words here in this life, there will be a denial of you before my Father. All those things are encouragements and warnings and motivations. But none of those things will

take them into obedience. The final thing that Jesus says to them is, My power. My power will come to you, and my power will enable you to deny self.

My power will enable you to take up your cross. My power will enable you to see by faith your old man dead on the cross and your new man coming out of the tomb with me. In essence, what Jesus is saying to them ultimately is, I will do this, for you can't do this. I will do this in your place. I will do this in your stead.

That's why I think Jesus uses the phrase, taste death. Because tasting death speaks of an experience of physical death that's not permanent. That's not lasting. That's not eternal. And doesn't that describe the one who is in Christ? That there's some standing here. You might experience that thing called physical death, but you won't experience eternal death.

You won't experience lasting death. Instead, there is coming a great power, and that power is coming on the day that we refer to as Pentecost, when the Spirit is given to the church. The church is born, and the church is indwelt with the Spirit that manifests His power in the most paradoxical ways. He manifests his power in the believer being able to deny himself, being able to, by faith, see the old self dead, by faith, being able to understand that this life now cannot compare to the value of an eternal soul.

And so this is the ultimate encouragement for them. This is the ultimate motivation as if to say, listen. Your obedience in this, in this most difficult of matters is not optional. It is not by your choice. Alright? Your regeneration happens to you without your cooperation. You're just like Lazarus. You're in the tomb dead.

And the Spirit of God calls to your soul, and He awakens your soul. Come forth, you dead sinner. But once that happens, from that point on, it's not without your cooperation. So Jesus is saying, this most difficult of commands, this will be the hardest thing you ever do. But ultimately, it'll be Me doing it within you.

Now, two final verses of encouragement. And those two final verses of encouragement. First of all, look at Philippians 1 and verse 6. I'm certain that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. Had God began a work and those disciples standing around Jesus at that moment?

Yes, He had begun a work. And Paul says emphatically, What God began in you, He will complete it. But then I think 2 Timothy 1 and verse 12. We read this earlier. It's worth reading again. 2 Timothy 1 and verse 12. But I'm not ashamed. I'm not ashamed for I know whom I believed and I'm convinced that he is able to guard until that day what he has entrusted to me.

So the final thought, are we resting in that? Are you today? Ask yourself this question. Are you today resting in that promise that what he began in you, he will bring to completion, but what he began in you. What he began in you is the hardest thing humanly imaginable. What he began in you is a supernatural work.

The remaking of a dead sinner into a new creation for Christ. Are you trusting and are you resting? And are you furthermore, by the power of the Spirit, killing the sin in you, which opposes at every step the denial of self and the taking of the cross?