

THE GOSPEL OF MARK

Message Ten

**Taking Up Our Cross and
Praying with God as Our Faith**

Scripture Reading: Mark 8:31-38; 9:28-29; 11:20-24

I. In order to follow the Lord Jesus, we need to deny the self, take up our cross, and lose our soul-life—Mark 8:34-35:

- A. When we set our mind not on the things of God but on the things of men, we become Satan, a stumbling block to the Lord (Matt. 16:23) in the fulfillment of God's purpose (Mark 8:33); setting the mind on the things of men is a matter of the evil reasonings mentioned in 7:21.
- B. We need to deny the self—8:34:
 - 1. The self is the embodiment of Satan; the self is the soul plus the mind of Satan—Gen. 3:1-6; Mark 8:32-33:
 - a. The origin of the self was Satan's injecting his thought into the human mind; when the mind of Satan was injected into the human soul, the soul was corrupted and became the self—Gen. 3:1-6.
 - b. The self, which is one with Satan, is expressed through the mind, which is actually the opinionated thoughts—Mark 8:33.
 - 2. The self is independent of God; it does not care for God's will or for God's interest.
 - 3. To deny the self is to reject the self with its desire, preference, and choice.
- C. To take up our cross is to make the cross of Christ our cross—v. 34:
 - 1. Taking up the cross is not a matter of suffering but of applying to our life what Christ has done on the cross to terminate us—Gal. 5:24.
 - 2. The three aspects of the work of the cross are the accomplished fact of our crucifixion with Christ, the realization of the accomplished fact, and continually bearing the cross to deny the self—Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20.
 - 3. To take up our cross is to remain under the killing of the death of Christ for the termination of our self, our natural life, and our old man; in so doing, we deny our self so that we may follow the Lord.
 - 4. The application of the cross is in the Spirit and by the Spirit; the real bearing of the cross for the denial

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of the self must be in the power, strength, and energy of the Spirit—Rom. 8:13.

- D. To follow after the Lord is to gain Him, to experience Him, to enjoy Him, to partake of Him, and to let Him become our very being—Mark 8:34:
 - 1. If we want to follow after the Lord in this way, we must put the self aside and forget the self.
 - 2. Because Christ is the life-giving Spirit dwelling in our spirit, we follow Him in an inward way, in our spirit—1 Cor. 15:45b; 2 Tim. 4:22; Gal. 5:16, 25.
- E. To save the soul-life is to please the self by allowing the soul to have its enjoyment and not to suffer; to lose the soul-life is to lose the enjoyment of the soul and to suffer in the soul—Mark 8:35-38:
 - 1. Our soul-life is embodied in and lived out by the self, and our self is expressed through our mind, our thought, our concept, and our opinion.
 - 2. Not loving our soul-life means that we are willing to give up our soul-life and that we do not care for our soul-life—Rev. 12:11.
 - 3. We should lose our soul-life for the sake of the Lord and also for the sake of the gospel; this is to live Christ and to live the gospel—Mark 8:35.
- F. Prayer is the real denial of the self—9:28-29:
 - 1. The Lord's word in verse 29 indicates that the disciples failed to pray; that was the reason they could not cast out the demon.
 - 2. To pray is to deny ourselves, realizing that we are nothing and that we can do nothing—v. 29; 8:34.
 - 3. The word *prayer* in 9:29 means in practice that "it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me" (Gal. 2:20); therefore, to pray is actually to declare, "Not I, but Christ."
 - 4. One who prays in a genuine way has been terminated and has become ashes; his natural life has been completely terminated by the cross—Lev. 6:9-10.

II. We need to pray with God as our faith—Mark 11:20-24:

- A. Prayer is man cooperating and co-working with God,

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allowing God to express Himself through man and thus accomplish His purpose—Rom. 8:26-27.

- B. In Mark 11:20-24 the Lord Jesus taught His disciples to pray by faith for executing God's will according to God's economy:
1. Our prayer should carry out God's will to have the Body of Christ, which will consummate the New Jerusalem—Eph. 1:9, 22-23; Rev. 21:2.
 2. When the praying one is mingled with God and is one with God, God becomes his faith; this is what it means to have faith in God—Mark 11:22.
 3. Only prayers that are out of faith will touch God; without faith prayer is ineffectual—v. 23.
 4. Faith is believing that we have received what we have asked for—v. 24:
 - a. According to the Lord's word, we should believe that we have received, not that we will receive.
 - b. To hope means to expect something in the future; to believe means to consider something as having been done.
 - c. Faith is not only believing that God can or will do a certain thing but also believing that God has done that thing already.
- C. The prayer in Mark 11:20-24 is a prayer with authority; this kind of prayer is directed not toward God but toward "this mountain"—v. 23:
1. A prayer with authority does not ask God to do something; instead, it exercises God's authority and applies this authority to deal with problems and things that ought to be removed—Zech. 4:7; Matt. 21:21.
 2. God has commissioned us to command what He has commanded and give orders to what He has given orders to—17:20.
 3. The church can have such a prayer with authority by having full faith, being without doubt, and being clear that what we do is fully according to God's will—6:10; 18:19-20.
 4. Prayer with authority has much to do with the overcomers; every overcomer must learn to speak to "this mountain"—Mark 11:23.