

## **Mark 8:27-9:1**

### **Who do you say that I am?**

#### **Background**

This point in Mark's gospel is THE PIVOTAL moment where Jesus leaves the confines of his home base Capernaum and is now "on the way" to Jerusalem. Mark has established that Jesus is the King, but his King is headed to the capital city, not for enthronement, but to suffer, serve, and die on the cross.

**Q:** Peter has thought of the Messiah as a strong warrior and so he rebukes Jesus for saying he must suffer and die. Peter is creating a Jesus in his own image. What are some examples of the ways our culture creates Jesus in our own image? Which one are you most inclined to "prefer"?

**Q:** In the sermon, Scott talked about why Jesus had to go to the cross. If you had to explain why Jesus had to die, how would you answer the question?

#### **Read this quote by Ben Witherington**

"What sort of God would require that his Son sacrifice himself on a cross? ...what needs to be said is that Mark believes that Jesus came to serve and lay down his life as a ransom for many. This was indeed the only way God could be both righteous and the righter of fallen humanity, both just and the justifier of sinful people. It was the only way God could express his love without becoming an unrighteous God, or conversely express his holiness without being an unloving God."

**Q:** Why was the cross the one way for God to be utterly true to both his holiness and his love?

**Q:** What do you think it means practically for us to pick up our cross and follow Jesus?

#### **From The message of Mark**

"Cross-bearing as a follower of Jesus means nothing less than giving one's whole life over to following him. And here comes another surprise. This is the way of total freedom. If you clutch your life wholly to yourself, protecting it against all others, asserting all your rights, needs and privileges, you lose it because it isn't life any longer. If, however, you acknowledge that life is not yours by right, that all is privilege, and that it is to be lived in the love that the gospel story reveals, self-giving love, then you possess it wholly. There is now nothing to lose and everything to gain."