

Date: Sunday, March 14, 2021    Scripture: Mark 8:34-38

## Transcript

And this morning we come to Mark chapter 8, Mark chapter 8, and we're going to be in verses 34 through 38, and you can see the title of this sermon this morning is The Great Invitation. The Great Invitation, as we come to this text here this morning, Christ is giving an invitation. So will you read this passage with me starting in Mark chapter 8 in verse 34? The Word of the Lord says this.

*34 And He summoned the crowd with His disciples, and said to them, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. 35 For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. 36 For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul? 37 For what will a man give in exchange for his soul? 38 For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels." (Mark 8:34-38)*

People love to receive invitations. I'm sure when you receive an invitation in the mail, you get excited. It's flattering, it's a flattering thing to be invited to a party, or to a wedding, or to a dinner. And when you receive this invitation in the mail, the invitation usually has you respond with an RSVP. All you have to do is tell them that you'll be attending. Then you just show up and you're there.

But what if you received an invitation from a friend that said this...? You are invited to join me, and may attend only if you sell your house, get rid of your cars, quit your job, deny your friends and your family. In fact, deny even yourself, and make me the most important person in your life. And if you do that, then please reply with a yes. And I'll see you at the party.

How many people would reply with a yes to that? Not many would. Not many would reply with a yes. Why? Because people love themselves, and they love their stuff, and they love their life the way that they have it. They aren't willing to give things up for someone else. Because their heart is fixed upon one person -- me --themselves.

In our passage this morning, Christ gives an invitation. And He gives a call, and He makes receiving this invitation hard for those who are full of themselves. In fact, in order for you to accept this invitation, it's going to cost you. It will cost you much. What will it cost you? Not a \$20 entrance fee. Not a few Sunday mornings out of the year. But it will cost you your very life. It will cost you.

And so let's look at this invitation this morning that Jesus gives, and we're going to break our passage down into three points here. Three points.

1. The first one is **The Cost of Receiving**. The Cost of Receiving.
2. The second one we'll see is **The Condition of Discipleship**.
3. And then, third, we'll see **The Consequences of Rejecting**.

The **Cost**, The **Condition**, and The **Consequences**. So let's look at our first point here this morning,

### 1. The Cost of Receiving

Look what it says there in verse 34.

*And He summoned the crowd with His disciples, and said to them, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. (Mark 8:34)*

Now, if you remember, Jesus is on His way with the twelve to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. We talked about this last week. It's about 25 miles north of Bethsaida. And the region there that Jesus is in is a very heavily pagan region. This is heavily Gentile region and the disciples have just been given the ultimate confession. They have just given the ultimate confession that Christ is the Messiah. Jesus is the Christ. He is the Messiah. They finally recognize who He is. Jesus is the Messiah.

And they are able to say this because God has revealed it to them. But Jesus then goes on to tell them and says you are right, I am the Messiah... but the Son of Man is going to be rejected. He's going to be killed. And He's going to rise again on the third day. And how did the disciples respond to that? They don't like it. Right?

Especially Peter, the spokesman for the disciples. He comes up and he begins to rebuke Jesus. But what does Jesus say to him? Get behind me, Satan! Peter had his mind set on man's interests, instead of having his mind set upon God's interests. And now as they arrive in the villages of Caesarea Philippi, the people hear that Jesus has arrived, that He's there. He's now in the village, and a crowd comes out and they gather around Jesus.

Now remember what was being said about Jesus. Remember when Jesus asked the disciples, who did the people say that I am? And what did they say? Basically that He was just a prophet, right? It's all He was... maybe John the Baptist, Elijah, maybe Jeremiah... He's just a prophet. But word had also spread that Jesus was a miracle worker. And so the crowds love to come out, and they love to watch Jesus perform all of these miracles and some even to receive the miracles that Jesus was doing.

But as Jesus is out there in one of these villages, out in Caesarea Philippi, He gathers up the crowd along with the twelve. As the twelve are there with him. And as the crowd is gathered, seemingly wanting to follow Jesus, and His disciples are gathered who have already shown that they want to follow Jesus, Jesus gives this great invitation. Notice what Jesus says there. He calls for anyone. For anyone who wishes to come after me, it's the call to anyone.

Now we know, of course, that Jesus at this point had followers, right? He's got twelve of them at least the twelve apostles. These guys have been following him, but with the crowd that's gathered around there now He offers this invitation, not just to the twelve, but to anyone who desires or who wishes to come after Him and become a disciple of Jesus.

Which means this invitation extends to us as well. This is an invitation for you this morning. It extends to us. But Jesus tells this crowd and He tells the twelve disciples that there's a cost to following Him. A great cost to following Him. And He lays out **three things** that the disciples of Christ must do in order to become a true disciple of Himself. What are they? Let's look at these here, found in verse 34.

1. The first one that He says is -- **he must deny himself**.

If you want to become a disciple of Christ, you must first of all, deny yourself. Now there are many people who get this wrong when they think about what Jesus is telling them to do here. And notice what He says here, deny himself. Many people think that this is some form of self-denial, as in practicing some kind of self-discipline in your life. You've got to deny yourself in

some way. And so they'll say I'll deny myself. I'll practice self-denial. Tell you what, I'll give up drinking. I'll give up cussing. That's what Jesus wants me to do. I'll practice self-denial. Many religious people will do this around this time, practicing Lent. They'll give something up, right? You know that for Lent people give something up -- practicing self-denial. They do all of this for their love of Jesus. Oh Jesus, look at how much I love you. I gave up meat... I love burgers... You know that...but I give them up because I love You. But that's not what Jesus is talking about here.

Jesus is not talking about this form of self-denial. Denying self means to renounce yourself completely. It wasn't to just give something up to make you feel better about yourself. Jesus is not after self-promotion or self-affirmation. This is what happens when people practice self-denial and giving something up in their life. They all of a sudden feel good about themselves, right? I feel so good...I gave up the burger. I didn't do it.

But this Greek word that is used here, that says *deny himself* means “to act in a wholly-selfless manner,” “to have no association with”, or “to disown completely.” That's what Jesus is after. This is a strong word in the Greek. It's a strong word that is used here. It's a radical action that Jesus calls for. If you want to become one of His disciples. He says you must deny everything about yourself. You must renounce yourself. Renounce your desires, renounce your ambitions, renounce your personal goals and dreams. Whatever they are, you renounce them all. Deny yourself.

The true disciple of Jesus no longer has any interests for himself. But he's completely and only concerned with Christ and doing His will. A true disciple of Christ is a slave of Christ. That is, he understands the relationship that he has, as Christ as his master and he is the servant of Christ, and therefore will submit to, and do whatever it is that Christ commands him to do.

That's self-denial. That's denying oneself. It means living a life of repentance from sin. Which sin is all about what? Self. Right? It's all about me pleasing me. But it's living a life of repentance from sin, and a life of obedience to Christ. That's what He calls for.

It means you must recognize that there is nothing in you that is even deserving of eternal life. Because there is nothing in us that is deserving of eternal life. We have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. And everyone of us deserves hell. That's what we deserve because we've sinned against God. This denying self...is you realizing how bad you really are. You're not a good person because we know...what? Romans 3 says, there is no one good. No, not even one. (Rom 3:10-12)

We're bad people. We're sinners. This denying self means you recognize that you're not righteous. And there is zero confidence in yourself to do anything, because you can't do it. This denying self means that you are totally dependent on Christ.

Warren Wiersbe says “we deny self when we surrender ourselves to Christ and determine to obey His will.” That's what we're called to do. So if you want to become a follower of Christ. You must first of all, deny yourself.

2. The second. Jesus says **you must take up your cross**. You must take up your cross. Again this is often something that a lot of people get wrong.

In fact, I remember reading a story of a guy who was walking across the country carrying a cross. Maybe some of you have seen this guy, or there are many guys. Right? They got the big cross on their shoulder with a tire on the back, so that way they don't have to drag it around and carry the whole thing. It makes it easier to carry across the United States... as they walk from city to city and do all of this, right? Over their shoulder...and what are they doing? Christ told us to carry our cross. So I'm carrying the cross. That's not what He's talking about...

Others think, that they think, that taking up the cross is going through burdens or some kind of sufferings in life. Their sickness maybe, your coronavirus that you got was my cross. Or your struggles that you're going through at work. Oh, those are my cross. They are so bad.

But that's not what Jesus is talking about here. He's not talking about sickness, He's not talking about hardships. He's not talking about having hard days at work...because unbelievers have bad days at work, right? They're not carrying a cross, though...they don't follow after Christ...so that's not what it means. So what does it mean then to take up your cross?

Well, just as a side note, here Jesus mentions cross here, and this is the **first time** that the cross has been mentioned in the Gospel of Mark. If you notice this, as we've been going through, notice what Jesus says back up in verse 31

*“and He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and scribes, and be..” (what?) “killed, and after three days rise again.” (Mark 8:31)*

Does He tell them how He's going to be killed? He doesn't. He doesn't mention the cross. But this right here is where He mentions the cross.

And He mentions the cross to this crowd and to the twelve disciples who are gathered around Him, and at this point they get the picture. They understand what's going on. What is this picture that they get? Well, the Romans had perfected the method of crucifixion on a cross. This is well-known to the hearers that are gathered around Jesus that day.

And generally, generally what happened at a crucifixion was the criminal would bear the crossbeam on their shoulders, and then they would carry it out to the site where they were going to be crucified. They went from the city, outside of the city walls, and then they went out there where the beam, then the upright beam, would be laying there where the site would be for them to be crucified. But they would have to bear the crossbeam themselves, and they would carry it out there. And once they got out to that place, then they would take the crossbeam, and they would attach it with the upright beam, and then they would take that criminal and they would nail him to the cross.

Then they would put him up for everyone to see. And the Romans love to do this next to the populated highways...where people are going back and forth. They see what's going on. They understand what's going on and they would do this next to these major highways because they wanted to bring shame and humiliation on the one who's hanging there on that cross. Were they successful in it?

Of course they were. Bringing shame and humiliation. But it also served as a warning to anyone who opposed Rome. Look, if you oppose us, this is where you're headed. This is your ultimate destiny. You're going to a cross.

And so what Jesus is telling this crowd and His disciples is that they must take up their cross, and that's the picture that they have of carrying that crossbeam and going outside of the city, and being hung up next to a major highway... be shamed and humiliated...so that everyone could see them.

So what did Jesus mean by this then? To take up your cross? Means you would suffer, and die, for My sake.

Now, did it mean that they would all die by the cross? Some of them would. Not all of them. We know believers who have died, who have passed on, that didn't die by a cross, right? So He's not saying that everyone is going to die like this, but there were some of the apostles that we know died by a cross.

In fact, Peter died on a cross and then he was put upside down, because he said I don't want to die the same way as my Savior. What is this cross all about? It symbolized death. And means death to self, and a willingness to be put to death, for the sake of Christ. And it means being willing to be shamed and humiliated by the world... all for the sake of Christ. What Jesus is saying here, is, look... if you want to be My disciple, it's not gonna be an easy road. It's going to be hard. This is a difficult road. Following Christ doesn't mean health, wealth and happiness.

In fact, it means the opposite, if that's God's will for your life. It means accepting the plan that God has for you, and even if it means that I have to die, I will die for the sake of Christ. For His name.

I love what one commentator says, he says this, "Taking up your cross wasn't a journey. It was a one-way trip." It's a one-way trip.

What Jesus is saying here is, look, there is no looking back. When you take up your cross and follow after Me, there's no turning back. You follow Me all the way till death. And that road that you take, when you bear the cross...oh that road is going to be difficult, and you're going to be shamed and you're going to be humiliated for My name. Not because of who you are... no no no... because of Me. Because of who I am. That's what Christ is saying here.

It's not an easy road, but a lot of Christians don't view the Christian life this way. They don't like suffering...dying for the sake of Christ. I don't know if I can handle that. But Jesus is saying, look, you will be persecuted...for My sake. You will be persecuted... for My name.

So we come this week to 2nd Timothy chapter 3, in our study on Wednesday night, 2 Timothy chapter 3 and verse 12 says this... and you won't find this at Hobby Lobby. But it says this:

*12 Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. (2 Tim 3:12)*

You want to hang that up in your house. That's what Jesus says. You want to live a godly life? Get ready... persecution is coming. Fact is, we've talked about the last couple of weeks with James Coates... persecution is here, right? Persecution is here. Being a true disciple of Christ

means willing to go through persecution. Now, this doesn't mean that every single believer is going to be a martyr for Christ.

It doesn't mean they're going to tie you to a post and set you on fire (as they did with many of those during the Reformation.) It means that every true disciple of Christ will be willing to be martyred. That's what it takes. To be martyred for Christ. To die for Him and for His sake. Are you willing to do this?

Are you willing to suffer? And to die for Christ? That's the invitation that Christ gives to be a disciple. That's the very invitation. That's what it means to have eternal life in Christ. To be willing to suffer, to die, for the sake of Christ. This is the invitation that Jesus gives in order for someone to be a true disciple of His.

But there's a third thing that Jesus says as well. The cost is not only denying self and taking up the cross, which Luke adds, by the way, daily, that you must "take up your cross daily" (Luke 9:23), that it must be something that must be done every single day.

3. But third, He says the cost is that **you must follow me.**

Deny yourself, take up your cross, and third, follow me. This is true discipleship. Think about the twelve who were standing out there with this crowd. They're there. They're gathered around Jesus and what have they done? At this point they've followed Jesus. Everywhere Jesus went, there was the twelve. They followed Him. The only place they didn't go with Jesus was out to pray, because Jesus went out alone to pray with the Father, to get away. But He came back and He picked up the twelve and off they went. And these guys followed Him everywhere they went. And think about all that they have done to become followers of Jesus.

Peter left his mother-in-law, which maybe he wanted to do. We don't know. But he left his wife. Matthew left his job as a tax collector. The others left their jobs as fishermen. They left everything that they had to follow after Christ.

This following, here, is a personal relationship with Jesus. Which means you leave all things behind to pursue a relationship with Christ. It means you'll lose your friends. Which I've experienced. In college when I was saved...all of a sudden, those friends that I was hanging out with didn't want to hang out anymore. I'm sure that's a problem that's happened to you...you've lost friends, for the sake of Christ. It means a continual relationship and continual obedience to Christ.

In fact, the Greek word here for *follow* is in the present tense, which means it is a continual action. This is something that is continuous in the life of a true disciple of Christ. You don't get to wake up some days and think... you know, today's my day, live for me today, I'll give Jesus Friday. You don't get to do that. You follow Christ daily. It's a continual thing that happens in your life. And the following after, means learning His Word and obeying it. This is what it means to be a follower of Christ. It means to be obedient to Christ. Because we have been saved as true followers of Christ, we have been saved unto good works, right?

Now let me. Be clear we're not saved by our good works. We are saved unto good works. There is no good work that we can do to save ourselves. There's nothing that you can do, in your sinful

heart, to save yourself. But when we get saved as believers, we are saved and then we make a decision to follow after Christ, and to say... I am going to live in obedience to Christ today. I'm going to submit to His Word... and whatever it is that He wants for my life...I'll do that. That's what it means to follow Christ. That's the cost of receiving the invitation that Christ gives. To deny yourself, to take up your cross daily, and to follow after Christ. That's the cost.

Let's look at point #2.

## 2. The Condition of Discipleship.

The condition of discipleship. Look at verse 35.

*For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. (Mark 8:35)*

Jesus starts off here with this great paradox. This great paradox of saving one's life, versus losing one's life. And He starts off by addressing one who wants to save his life. He says "*whoever wishes to save his life will lose it.*" And what does He mean here by saving his life?

Jesus is not talking about salvation here. It's not what he's talking about. It means living for yourself in the present life. It means not being willing to die for Christ. You would rather save your life, and have the pleasures of this world... That's what Jesus is saying there. What's the consequence of the one who wants to live that way? What does He say? He will lose his life.

You want to save your life now? You're going to lose it. You'll lose it. Or another way, is to say that his life will be destroyed or ruined. That's what He says there when He says to lose his life, He's saying his life will be destroyed...his life will be ruined...do you want to save your life now, then get ready, because when you die your life will be ruined, destroyed. Where? In hell. For all of eternity.

You want to live for yourself now? Then you will have to face destruction later. But Jesus goes on and He says, "*whoever loses his life for My sake, and the gospel's, will save it.*" That is, if you deny self and take up your cross and follow after Christ now and live for the sake of Christ and not pursuing after sin and the pleasures of this world, but surrendering everything over to Christ now, doing all for the sake of the gospel. If you do that now, then you'll save your life. Your life will be saved.

And that's the condition of a true disciple of Christ. You might lose everything in this life. Everything. Fame, fortune, friends and family. But it's all worth it. It's all worth it in the end because, in the end, all you have is Christ. And there's nothing greater than Christ.

But you must be willing to do that now. Are you willing to lose your life now? For the sake of Christ and for the gospel's sake? That's what He calls us to do. That's the invitation that Jesus gives.

He continues on in verse 36 and He says

*For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul? (Matt 8:36)*

This is a simple question, right? Simple question, you look at that and you see, "*for what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?*" But Jesus takes it to the ultimate end. If you were to gain all of the fame, all of the riches, all of the power, and even have the entire world now... you'll lose your soul for all of eternity. Is it worth it? Is it worth it? It's not.

Why? Because this world is passing away right? 1 John 2:17 says:

*17 The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever. (1 John 2:17)*

A true follower of Christ understands the conditions that are set forth here. You don't want the world. Don't pursue the world. Don't go after the world. Pursue Christ. He should be the one that you want. He's the One that we should desire. Don't seek after riches. Don't seek after power. Don't seek after accolades because all of that is passing away.

A true disciple of Christ only wants Christ. That's it.

Then Jesus asked another question. In verse 37 He says:

*For what will a man give in exchange for his soul? (Mark 8:37)*

Simple question again. What will a man give in exchange for his soul? What's the answer here? Everything? He'll give everything, right? He will give over everything. You see what Jesus is saying here is that by the time a person has gained the whole world and then lost his soul, it's too late.

And at that point he would give everything in exchange for his soul. Give it all up. I'll give it up now, Jesus.

Jesus says. It's too late. It's too late. You gain the whole world now, and then lose your soul to eternal damnation, by the time that time comes, it will be too late. And sure, that man at that point would give everything in exchange for his soul. But it's too late.

**But listen, if you are here this morning and you are not a follower of Christ. It's not too late. Come to Christ today. Repent of your sin now and put your faith in Jesus Christ who came to pay the penalty for your sin. And to give you the gift of eternal life. And He calls you to come to Him, to deny yourself to turn away from your pleasures, to turn away from your sin, and He calls you to come to Him. And He says, if you deny yourself now, I will give you life. If you deny the world now, I will give you eternity with Me. And there's nothing better than that. It's not too late. Come to Christ today. Give your life, completely to Him.**

So the condition for a true follower of Christ is not to try and gain the whole world, but to lose your life for Christ's sake, so that you might gain eternal life in the future. Listen, it's not worth chasing after the world now, it's not worth it. And true followers of Christ don't do that.

And so if you are doing that, if you are a believer right now, and you've been seeking after the things of this world, repent. Stop. Don't go that way. Follow after Christ. Give everything to Him. We're committed to following after Christ, even if it means leading to suffering and death. Do that believer. Do that...pursue Christ. So that's the condition...to lose your life. And Jesus gives the ultimate invitation...to follow after Him.

What about those who don't receive this invitation? Leads to point #3

### 3. The Consequences of Rejecting.

The consequences of rejecting look at verse 38.



*For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.”  
(Mark 8:38)*

The consequences of those who reject Christ now, who are ashamed of Christ now, will be rejection on the day of Judgement. They will be rejected. And who are these people who will be rejected? Two classes of people. Two classes of people.

1. First, the rebellious.
2. And second, the religious.

The rebellious and the religious.

1. Who are **the rebellious**? These are those who are ashamed of Christ now. Those who don't care about God's law. Those who live in utter rebellion to God because they love their sin. They are ashamed of Christ. And therefore they live for themselves. 1 Corinthians 6:9 through 10 says

*9 Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, 10 nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. (1 Cor 6:9-10)*

What's he saying there? Rebellious. All of that is rebellion to Christ, and he says you live that way. If you are living in rebellion to Christ, He will be ashamed of you. Why? Because you're ashamed of Him now. These are the rebellious sinners who have suppressed the truth of God in their unrighteousness. And Christ will be ashamed of them at the Great White Throne judgment.

As we talked about this morning, in equipping hour, they will cry out. They will declare Him as Lord. They will confess with their tongue that Jesus Christ is Lord, and they will say, Lord, Lord! And what will He say? I never knew you. Depart from me, you worker of what? Iniquity. Rebellion. (Matthew 7:21-23) You are a rebellious sinner. And you are ashamed of Me, and therefore I'm ashamed of you. Depart from Me. And He will cast them into the eternal lake of fire. That's where the rebellious are headed.

2. But there's a second class of people, and that is **the religious**. That's the religious. The religious who are ashamed of Christ and His Words. Who are these people?

These are, from man's perspective, the opposite of the rebellious. Those who think that because of their religion, because of their traditions, because of their good works, because of their self-righteousness, that they will gain heaven. That Christ will let them into heaven because of how good they are. We're so religious. We go to church every Sunday. We read a Bible verse every day. They'll say Lord, Lord! And He will say, depart from Me.

And in Jesus Day, who were these people? Who were the religious in Jesus Day? The Pharisees, right? The Pharisees and the scribes. The Pharisees are those who... notice what Jesus says... who are ashamed of Me. They are the religious ones that Jesus is after, who says you are ashamed of me? You are self-righteous. You think you're so religious you think you know God but you don't know God because you don't know Me. They're ashamed of Him. What did these religious Pharisees want to do with Christ?

Crucify Him, right? They plan to kill Him. They're ashamed of Him. And they're ashamed of Him. Notice what it says, ashamed. Jesus says,

*"Ashamed of me and what My words". (Mark 8:38)*

Ashamed of Me and My words. And while they thought that they were so religious and so righteous, Jesus says that He will be ashamed of them on judgment day. And we have religious people like this today. People who live the religious life and yet do not heed the words of Christ. Who are these people?

These are the religious people who claim that Jesus is not the only way. Those that claim that Jesus is not the only way, like Joel Osteen who goes on national TV and is asked if Jesus is the only way to heaven. And you know he responds with. "I don't know."

What about the Muslims? Larry King asked him (Joel Osteen)... "Well, they believe in God, don't they? Won't they go to heaven?" "Well, I don't know." "What about the Jews? They believe in God. Won't they go to heaven?" "Sure, they don't believe in Jesus as the Messiah, but they believe in God. Won't they go to heaven?" And "religious" Joel Osteen says, "I don't know."

Ashamed of Christ. He's ashamed of the words of Christ. Who said in John 14:6:

*(Jesus said to him), "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me (John 14:6)*

Those are the very words of Christ, and he's there on national TV, ashamed of Christ. As one of the top "religious" guys in our country...in fact in the world. Ashamed of Christ.

These religious people like this will stand before Christ one day and He will be ashamed of them. There are many religious people sitting in our pews in our churches today who don't believe that Jesus is the only way. And therefore they show that they are ashamed of the words of Christ. They are ashamed of John 14:6 *"I am the way."*

If you think that there is another way to heaven, Christ will be ashamed of you because you are ashamed of Him. These are pretty heavy words that Jesus gives here. Notice what He says about these religious people. He says these are those who are *"an adulterous and sinful generation."* An adulterous and sinful generation. Now Jesus is not talking about rebellious sinners who commit adultery. That's not what He means when He says adulteress generation here. Jesus is talking about spiritual adultery. That's what He's after.

Just like the nation of Israel who turned against God to worship idols. Spiritual adultery. God chose them. God called them. And what did they do? They worshipped other idols. He called them and He says do not worship any other idols.

Moses comes down from Mount Sinai and what are they doing? Worshipping an idol.

Religious people. Adulteress and sinful generation. In fact, in Matthew chapter 12, verse 39. When the scribes and the Pharisees came to seek a sign from Jesus, you know what Jesus called them. He looks at them and He calls them *"An evil and adulterous generation."* (Matthew 12:39)

Now, He's not saying that the scribes and the Pharisees you are committing sexual immorality.

That's not what He's saying when He calls them an adulterous generation, because they were, what? Righteous, self-righteous, right? They wanted...they, obey the law "to the T." It was all about them. So when He's calling them an adulterous generation, what He's saying here is, you have committed spiritual adultery. And Jesus will stand ashamed of both the rebellious and the religious. Because they were ashamed of Him.

Are you ashamed of Christ? If someone came to ask you, "Is Jesus the only way to heaven?" How would you respond? Would you give them the words of Christ? Not being ashamed of Him. Or will you get the popular answer? Christ says we are not to be ashamed of Him.

Are you willing to follow after Christ, no matter the cost? That's what it means to be a true disciple of Jesus. That's what it means to have eternal life in Christ. Being willing to follow after Him no matter what the cost.

In closing, this is the invitation that Christ gives to all. To all, to forsake everything for the sake of Christ. And if you forsake everything now, you will be rewarded in the end...with eternal life in Christ. And there's nothing greater than Christ, for all of eternity, right? Nothing greater than Christ.

So that's the ultimate invitation. You must deny yourself. Take up your cross daily and follow after Christ and all who do that are promised eternal life. And will be welcomed into heaven...with Christ not being ashamed of them. Christ as their master, and Christ will say this, "Well done. Good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of your master." (Matthew 25:21 -23). Let's follow after Christ.

Father, we thank you for this time. In this amazing portion of Scripture. This radical call. This radical invitation that Jesus gives to those who wish to come after Him. But Father, I do pray for anyone who is here this morning that doesn't know You. Father I pray that they will understand and realize the cost. And that they will repent of their sin and put their faith in You. I pray that You would draw them to Yourself. Father, for those of us who are believers, I pray that You would help us to understand what it means to be a true follower of Christ. That we would never seek after the pleasures of this world. That we would never be ashamed of Christ. But that we would be fully, and completely devoted, to You, and to You alone. Thank You for Your Word that convicts us. Thank You for Your Word that molds us and shapes us. Father I pray that as we leave from here this morning, that we would go out as disciples, as followers of Christ, that You would give us the boldness that we need to proclaim the message of Christ. That we would be a people who are not ashamed, that we would live for Your glory alone. We love You. We give You all glory and praise in Christ name. Amen.