

• *Events recorded in Mark's gospel passed over by Luke*

Luke passes over some events that are recorded in Mark's Gospel. Mark tells of the miracle of walking on the water^{□1}. Jesus visits the area in and around Bethsaida; then He crosses over the lake and performs many healings at Gennesaret^{□2}. This must have been round about Passover, April AD 32. When the Pharisees come to Jesus the major exposition concerning the 'traditions of the elders' takes place^{□3}. At this point there came a temporary withdrawal from public ministry^{□4}. Jesus went to Tyre. In Phoenicia, the Syro-Phoenician woman gets her request answered^{□5}. Jesus then goes through Sidon, the Sea of Galilee, and the Decapolis. He heals a deaf mute^{□6}, the four thousand are fed^{□7}. Then Jesus crosses to Dalmanutha and Magadan^{□8} perhaps on the east coast of the Sea of Galilee, and the Pharisees seek a sign^{□9}. While crossing the Sea of Galilee, Jesus warns His disciples against them^{□10}. A blind man is healed at Bethsaida^{□11}. At Mark 8:27 and Luke 9:18 the two gospels come together again. 'As Jesus was praying alone, His disciples were with Him', says Luke 9:18. It is another proof that Jesus did not find people distracting. He could be 'alone' in a crowd.

□1 Mk 6:45-52

□2 Mk 6:53-56

□3 Mk 7:1-23

□4 Mk 7:24

□5 Mk 7:24-30

□6 Mk 7:31-37

□7 Mk 8:1-10

□8 Matt 15:39

□9 Mk 8:11-13

□10 Mk 8:14-21

□11 Mk 8:22-26

Who is able to recognise Jesus as the Son of God?

1. A vague admiration for Jesus is insufficient

1. **A vague admiration for Jesus is insufficient.** Jesus asks what are the opinions of the common people concerning Himself^{□1}. Some think Jesus is John the Baptist. Others thought that Jesus was Elijah or one of the prophets^{□2}. It seems that people generally admired Jesus and thought He was some kind of prophet on the model of the prophets of days gone by.

□1 9:18

□2 9:19

• *Jesus makes claims about himself*

Many people think Jesus is a good person and have a vague and general admiration of Him. Yet a vague admiration for Jesus is not enough. Jesus not only comes with teaching which we should admire, He also makes claims about Himself.

2. True disciples come to an altogether greater conviction about Jesus

2. **True disciples come to an altogether greater conviction about Jesus.** Jesus asks the disciples what they believe^{□1}. Peter replies for all of them. The disciples have come to know that Jesus is the Messiah, the predicted King of Old Testament prediction. Jesus is the unique divine Saviour. There is no one else who is the one-and-only fulfilment of the Saviour predicted for Israel and the world. Jesus is uniquely empowered. There were predictions in the Old Testament saying that God's coming Saviour would be specially empowered by the Holy Spirit. It was for this reason that the coming Saviour came to be known as 'the Messiah', 'the Christ', 'the Anointed One'.

□1 9:20

• *The predicted Messiah*

3. Others must come to recognise Jesus by faith

3. **Others must come to recognise Jesus by faith.** When people come to believe that Jesus is the predicted Saviour, He does not encourage them to speak too loudly about the matter^{□1}. One obvious reason is that people had a very worldly idea of what the Messiah would be like. If Jesus simply says 'I am the Messiah' or if others say 'Jesus is the Christ', most people will interpret the claim politically. People are very eager to have Jesus on those terms.

□1 9:21

4. Faith must reckon with the cross of Jesus

- (i) Self denial
- (ii) Personal daily cross
- (iii) follow Jesus

• No to self centred-ness

• Chastening that crucifies our love of sinful ways

• Daily opportunities

4. **Faith must reckon with the cross of Jesus.** Jesus takes His disciples aside and tells them ‘*The Son of Man must suffer*’^{☞1}. This was hard for them to take. They were very used to the idea of a Messiah coming in glory, but the idea of a suffering Messiah was not something they could take to easily. But it was not only a matter of reckoning with the cross in the life of Jesus. Jesus goes on to say that if they wish to get to glory and honour following Jesus¹ they must (i) deny themselves, (ii) take up their cross daily, and (iii) follow Jesus. They must reckon with the cross in their own lives as well as in the life of Jesus^{☞2}.

Denying ourselves is a matter of denying our own instinctive sinfulness; saying ‘no’ to our self-centredness, our love of certain sins, and resisting the ‘*sinful nature with its desires*’^{☞1}.

‘The cross’ may be any chastening which Jesus imposes on us, which is painful and ‘crucifies’ our love of sinful ways. Our gospels only give hurried summaries of what must have been a lengthy conversation. Luke knows that part of the matter is the **daily** crucifixion that the Christian must accept. Luke has the word ‘daily’; the other gospels do not.

Every day there will be things coming across our path which will ‘crucify’ us. There will be times when we have to swallow our pride, times when comfort and pleasure eludes our grasp, frustrations which run across our desire for an easy life.

5. Self-denial and crucifixion is the only way to gain life

• The time for self-surrender is now

5. **Self-denial and crucifixion is the only way to gain life.** Jesus still has these matters in mind when He goes on to say, ‘*For whoever would save his life will lose it...*’^{☞1}. Some will seek to hold on to ‘life’, the easy life that refuses the self- denial and crucifying experiences that are necessary to our ‘coming after’ Jesus. Such people lose ‘life’ – the liveliness that comes by the presence of God, the rich rewards of God’s presence, peace and power. It is a poor exchange. The world might be gained, but the life that comes from God is not experienced^{☞2}. Better to lose a few fleshy comforts and gain the life which is life indeed. Better to acknowledge Jesus now than to be unacknowledged by Jesus^{☞3}. Soon the kingdom of God will come with power (9:27 refers, I believe, to the exhibitions of the kingdom of God in the outpouring of the Spirit and the fall of Jerusalem). The time for self-surrender is now.

Note

1. For fuller exposition, see Eaton, Mark (Preaching Through The Bible), ch. 18.

☞1 9:22

☞2 9:23

☞1 Galatians 5:24

☞1 9:24

☞2 9:25

☞3 9:26



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Dr Michael Eaton is highly respected internationally as a theologian, author, preacher and teacher. He lives in Kenya where he is one of the leaders of the Chrisco Fellowship. His *Preaching Through The Bible* (PTTB) books are highly popular worldwide. Michael Eaton puts the theological and practical meaning of the Bible in a clear and down-to-earth way so that what is written can be easily understood by the reader.



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