

Easter - Meeting Jesus

Peter

Foundation

Bible passage : Mark 8.27-33

Peter, like James and John in the previous unit, became a follower of Jesus but found it hard to understand both Jesus' identity and mission. In Mark 8 there appears to be a landmark moment when in answer to a question from Jesus, Peter replied "You are the Christ". Accepting this truth is why His followers later became known as Christians (Acts 11.26). But Peter still had a lot to learn about Jesus, and it was going to be hard.

Jesus went on to explain that He would suffer many things, rejected by the elders, be killed, and after three days rise again. This was the first of three predictions of these events which Mark records as the focus of the gospel shifts towards Easter. We might imagine that for Peter the most striking thing in what Jesus said was about rising again, but that amazing statement seems to pass him by as he was so shocked by what Jesus said about suffering and dying.

Not only was Peter shocked but he took it on himself to rebuke his master which in turn led to a rebuke from Jesus and being told "get away from me Satan". It is a strong response from Jesus but if Peter had his way then Jesus would not have died and instead would have gone to Jerusalem proclaiming Himself Messiah and establishing His kingdom. Therefore Peter, like Satan (Mtt 4.1-11) was tempting Jesus to abandon His mission. Jesus had come to die, to give His life as a ransom for many (Mk 10.45). Jesus died to pay the price for our sins so that we might be set free from the power of sin, death and the devil and so have new life through Him.

"God has made Him both Lord and Christ"



When Peter rebuked Jesus he was tempting Him to take the wrong road.

In previous modules we have looked at how after Jesus was arrested Peter three times denied knowing Jesus and then fled in tears. The denial is striking partly because before the arrest Peter was ready for a fight and actually struck a blow against one of the arresting party (Mk 14.47).

Despite all that Jesus had said Peter still seemed to have thought that being Messiah would mean establishing an earthly kingdom there and then. When his expectations began to crumble, so did Peter.

However, after the resurrection Jesus singled out Peter with the message He sent to the disciples (Mk 16.7), how he appeared to him first of twelve (1 Cor 15.5), and then in calling him afresh to follow (John 21.19). Therefore, a few weeks later we find Peter preaching boldly on the day of Pentecost, finally having understood about Jesus identity and mission:

"this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed ... God raised Him up ... God has made Him both Lord and Christ (Acts 2.23,24 & 36)."



Peter came to believe that Jesus was the Christ but still struggled to understand that meant Jesus had to die for our sins.