

Notes on Spotlight Lesson 13; Mark 8: 27-38

“When Peter responds to Jesus’ question with the right answer, that Jesus is the Messiah, the reader might breathe a sigh of relief. The rift of knowledge between the reader and the characters is closed. What Peter quickly learns is that grasping Jesus’ identity is not simply about getting the title right. Naming does not define. Mark opens the rift again, this time between expectations of the title Messiah and the reality of what Jesus’ role as Messiah will be like. Mark’s Jesus pivots immediately and discusses how the Son of Man must suffer and die and be raised after three days. Jesus says all this with a boldness that contrasts the secrecy preferred only two verses earlier (Mark 8:30).”

“If we believe God is active and that Jesus is alive in the world, then the question posed to us is not whether we confess Jesus as the Messiah. That is the easy part. We know what the title is. The question becomes how do we misunderstand what the title means? How do our expectations not align with God’s?” – **“Working Preacher,” Micah D. Kiel, Associate Professor of Theology, St. Ambrose University**

“...Jesus upends everything we expect a messiah to be and to do for us. First-century Jewish messianic hopes varied, but none of them expected a messiah crucified by elders (lay leaders), chief priests (tall-steeple preachers), and scribes (biblical scholars). [Ancient Hebrew] writings dreamt of idealized rulers who would judge the wicked and restore Israel’s righteous. None of these messiahs handed their followers a cross to be shouldered en route to their own Golgothas. In no Gospel does Jesus say, “It is my responsibility to die for you, while you applaud my heroism.” Instead: “The Son of Man is ordained by God to suffer, die, and be raised. And so are his followers. Are you coming?””

“...in what ways do we pretend that Jesus didn’t mean this, or try to be our own messiahs and save ourselves? On what do we stake our lives? In what do we ultimately place our trust? ... Doctrinal confusion is not the Christian’s fundamental problem. Instead, it is disobedience: our refusal to accept Christ’s authority over our lives.”

“Lay your ear upon Mark’s page and listen for the wail of lament: the steep price paid for following Jesus.” – **“Working Preacher,” C. Clifton Black, Otto A. Piper Professor of Biblical Theology, Princeton Theological Seminary**