

## Sermon

### **"Sinners Who Rebuke Their Savior!"**

**(Mark 8:31-33)**

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#### **Introduction: Ashamed Sinners**

- A. There is a saying out there, "hate the sin, but love the sinner." It is an interesting saying. There is merit in it because the Gospel means that God loved and loves all sinners through the Savior and Lord Jesus Christ. On the other hand, we must also be careful not to invest too much in the saying, since at the judgment it will not be *merely* sin that is condemned, but actual people who reject the Lord. That is, we should never "love" the sinner to the extent that we ignore their need and our need to repent from sin. If a person does not repent from sin, it will not just be their sin that is cast into hell, but the whole person!**
- B. The reason I mention this is that we are good at separating the identity of a person from the acts of a person. They are after all, bound up together.**
- C. Forest Gump's mother expressed her unconditional love to her son and would not accept people calling her son "stupid." She consoled her son as she taught him, "Stupid is as stupid does." Forest would learn to do smart and wise things so that the accusation would in itself be stupid and bear no weight. Even Forest knew the connection between person and action.**
- D. During a summer vicarage in Los Angeles in 1988, one of my responsibilities was outreach into the community, literally walking the streets and looking for opportunities to invite people to church. I visited a local trailer park and visited the smallest trailer I had ever been in in my life. I had to stoop down to even begin to walk in. The older woman was friendly, but immediately tried to direct our conversation by telling me that while she believed in God that she did not want to be a "fanatic." I was of course very interested in what she meant by "fanatic" and I quickly discovered that she considered me a "fanatic." What was her definition? One who did not merely confess God, but the necessity of believing in Jesus Christ His Son; one who taught that only through His life, death, and resurrection do we have the forgiveness of sins and eternal life; and finally one who actually felt it necessary to share this Gospel with other people. My person was immediately tied to what I was doing. Because my actions and claims were considered fanatical, then I was – in my person – a fanatic. She would not accept the Gospel that day because she did not want to be a fanatic.**
- E. Finally, I'd like to share a much more personal story but this time will share the conclusion up front: my parents and family became extraordinarily supportive of my having become a pastor. My mother once told me after the first time she heard me preach that she was proud of me and that I was doing what I was meant to do! As my father was dying this past summer, he welcomed my ministry to him as I kept the**

crucified and risen Christ before his eyes. He frequently smiled and frequently said, "Amen!" That is the end of the story. The beginning is much different. My parents and family were very proud of my person as I graduated from high school. I had earned this and that superlative as a student-athlete, and was accepted to the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest ranked school in the state that year. They had their image of my person and wanted to embrace that person, that son, that brother, that nephew, that cousin who would make them proud. When later I announced that I wanted to go to the seminary to become a pastor, you would have thought someone had died (and I suppose in a sense that is what happened). But when that announcement reached my family, I was confronted with severe disappointment. A very close first cousin told me, "But the family had had such high hopes for you." A another close family member asked me why I was going to the "cemetery." I was mocked by another family member who said I was going to be a "monk." I was throwing my life away, the day would come when I would not earn a wage, but would be supported by "charity." I heard it all...and it was crushing. Once my family had been proud of me, but they were now patently ashamed of me.

**Part I: In our sin, this is what we do to God:**

- A. Jesus had finally brought His disciples to the point that they knew clearly WHO He was. They had confessed that He was the Christ the Son of God. They knew that He was the God-man, the true Messiah.**
- B. But now the question was: would they accept the actions that had to accompany the person? Would they accept the person-action connection, or try to separate them? They were seemingly excited for and happy about WHO Jesus was...would they also be supportive of WHAT Jesus had to do?**
- C. In a heart-beat it became evident that they wanted the PERSON, but not His ACTIONS, which meant that they were in truth rejecting the actual PERSON altogether!**
- D. At Mark 8:31 Jesus clearly tells the disciples what is going to happen to Him, what ACTIONS would accompany His PERSON, and they wanted nothing of it! Mark 8:31 says:**

***"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 the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again."***

- E. We ask, "Didn't they also hear the prediction of His resurrection?!" Luke 18:34 enlightens us:**

***"But they understood none of these things. This saying was hidden from them, and they did not grasp what was said."***

- F. This shouldn't be hard to understand. The disciples must have been shocked to hear that their master was going to be murdered. There were several reasons for this:**
  - 1. They had in fact actually been avoiding persecution flowing from Jerusalem, but now Christ was saying that He was essentially going to go into Jerusalem and enter into the lion's den.**

2. They had finally come to know who He was, and now did He just say that they were going to lose Him?!
  3. They had witnessed through His mighty miracles how many people He was helping, healing, and all the good He was doing...and now He was going to enter Jerusalem and be murdered?!
- G. This just didn't compute. How could this be?! They could not accept this PERSON-ACTION connection!
- H. But has any of this changed? An LC-MS pastor was being interviewed by leaders of a call committee and one of the leaders asked the pastor if he was going to preach about the *blood* of Jesus. She asked the question with a grotesque and painful expression on her face. Her clear implication was that this was something she had grown tired of and did not want this message echoing in her beautiful sanctuary! She was in fact requesting that the pastor not resort to the power of the Gospel itself.
- I. When the movie *The Passion of the Christ* came out in 2004 one of the chief objections to the movie was the "unnecessary" bloodshed and violence.
- J. This is the part we object to. We want a Savior without the sacrifice, without the rejection, without the torture, without the mockery, without the bloodshed...we want the Person, but not the Action that true Messiah had to carry out.
- K. Much preferred would be a so-called "Messiah" who would just give us what we want in this life and make this life more comfortable for us...this Messiah would be much more acceptable.

## Part II: So Peter Rebuked Jesus!

- A. This cannot surprise us.
- B. "The argument that immediately after praising Peter as the *rock* (Matt. 16:18) Jesus could not have called him *Satan*, i.e., an agent of Satan, overlooks the fact that Peter had the flesh in him as well as the spirit, ignorance as well as faith, weakness as well as strength." (Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Mark's Gospel*, 345)
- C. This is what we are all capable of and according to the sinful flesh, exactly what we do. We may speak the words of God when we confess the faith in divine service or when we speak forgiveness to someone who offends us; but we also are Satan's agents when we gossip, when we are ashamed of the blood of our Savior, or when we act as if we don't anyone to think we are a fanatic!
- D. And so in our hearts we really do understand Peter. This is what we do not want Jesus to do...it is too messy, and it takes us to the place of saying what God's Word says: This blood is necessary for sins to be forgiven! We would rather say that God just let a sign down from the clouds and say that everyone gets to go to heaven. Then we would have the God that gets along with our sensibilities and the God who doesn't offend anyone.
- E. In our hearts, we rebuke Jesus: "I want to accept WHO you are, but not WHAT you must do, and for that matter, WHAT you continue to do!"

## Part III and Conclusion: Jesus' Reaction Was Our Salvation:

- A. But our Savior would not permit Peter's confrontation to last for a second. He does not for a moment entertain the temptation.**
- B. This was our salvation! He would not let the surprise, or shame, or disappointment, or objection, or resistance stop His commitment to saving you dear Christian. Nothing was going to stop Him and there was no cost He was not willing to pay.**
- C. In effect, Jesus was telling Peter to "get out of my sight!" and it was the same thing He told the devil in the wilderness as recorded at Matthew 4:10.**
- D. This boldness, this determination, this crushing attitude towards our willingness to play with sin and consider temptation Jesus would not tolerate.**
- E. In the face of Peter's weakness, and in the face of yours, Jesus is quite simply faithful and will not allow anyone to compromise His saving work for you dear Christian. The person-action of Jesus Christ remained pure.**
- F. In our sin, we do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of man; but our Savior and Lord always has in mind the things of God: how to save us even when we stubbornly resist Jesus!**
- G. During World War II, one of my dad's fellow Marines panicked as their amphibian approached the enemies' shore. He jumped out of the amphibian tractor and into the ocean where he promptly began to drown. When my dad jumped in to save him, his drowning and panicked comrade started to pull him under the water. My dad resorted to punching him in the face and knocking him out as he then swam him back to the amphibian.**
- H. Jesus response to Peter was a slamming one. He obliterated the rebuke; He crushed it before it could drag Him down. Sometimes we resist our Lord so much that we can't imagine how we could still be saved. The answer is simple: He jumped into our messy lives, He took our sin, and He put our sin on Himself and killed that part of us that was nailed with Him; and then He came into your life here and killed your old man when you were buried with Him in baptism. All of this is messy – perhaps the things of fanatics and we're not quite sure we want to hear about them – but they are true and because they are, you are saved.**
- I. Sinners rebuke Jesus, but Jesus rebukes your sin so that you are saved so that actions come forth consistent with your person: You are a Christian and you are not ashamed of the Gospel and you now live for Him!**