

## STANDARD EQUIPMENT

(Mark 8:31-38)

- Intro: It's been awhile since I bought a new car.
- My trusty little Honda will be 10 years old in a couple of months.
    - #I hope that talking about my car.
      - #Doesn't have a similar result.
        - \*As my talking about never having spent the night in the hospital.
          - +I explained that on Ash Wednesday.
  - One of the things I liked about buying a Honda.
    - #There are two basic models.
      - \*LX.
      - \*EX.
    - #Each model has basic standard equipment.
      - \*LX.
        - +Power windows.
        - +Power mirrors.
      - \*EX.
        - +Has the same features.
        - +Plus:
          - =Power seats.
          - =Moon roof.
    - #There are very few options.
      - \*Consider.
      - \*Haggle over.
    - #Only optional equipment I ordered on my Civic LX.
      - \*Floor mats.
    - #Everything else was standard equipment.

What about us?

- Christians.
- People of faith.
  - #What is standard equipment for us?
    - \*As we are called to faith.
    - \*As we are called to discipleship.

I. Our Gospel Lesson Suggests That Standard Equipment For Us Includes The Cross.

A. Jesus Began To Teach His Disciples.

1. What it meant for him to be the Messiah.
  - a. Suffer many things.
  - b. Be rejected.
  - c. Be killed.
  - d. After three days rise again.
2. Jesus begins to teach this lesson.
  - a. Our Gospel Lesson is the first of three Passion Predictions in Mark.
    - 8:31.
    - 9:31.
    - 10:33-34.
  - b. Why does Jesus teach the same lesson over and over again?
    - Because his disciples are slow learners.
      - #They don't get it.
      - #They don't understand.
      - \*Mark 8:17-21.
    - It's no accident.
      - #Mark frames these three Passion Predictions.
        - \*With two:
          - +Miracles.
          - +Healing stories.
            - =Healing of two blind men.
              - Blind man of Bethsaida.
                - #Mark 8:22-26.
              - Blind man of Jericho.
                - #Bartimaeus.
                - #Mark 10:46-52.

- B. Peter Wanted To Make The Cross Optional Equipment.
1. In last week's Gospel Lesson.
    - a. Jesus was baptized.
      - Declared by the heavenly voice.
      - #To be the Beloved Son.
      - Mark 1: 11.
    - b. Immediately thereafter.
      - Jesus was driven by the Spirit into the wilderness.
      - #To be tempted by Satan.
      - Mark 1: 12-13.
  2. In this week's Gospel Lesson.
    - a. Jesus has been declared to be the Messiah.
      - By Peter.
      - Mark 8: 29.
    - b. But Peter is here called Satan.
      - Because:
        - #He has a different idea about Messiahship.
        - \*Messiah who could be:
          - +Political.
          - +Military.
          - =Hero.
          - =Winner.
          - Who could kick the hated Romans.
          - #Out of the country.
        - \*Not some loser.
          - +Who gets crucified by the Romans.
      - #Peter wanted to make the cross optional.
      - \*But Jesus says:
        - + "Son of Man must:"
          - = "Suffer many things,"
          - = "Be rejected,"
          - = "Be killed,"
          - = "After three days rise again."
        - Mark 8: 31.
      - + That word:
        - = "Must."
        - = "It is necessary."
        - Comes from a little 3-letter Greek word.
        - Means:
          - #Divine necessity.
          - #Divine compulsion.
          - #Will of God.
      - \*For Jesus.
        - +Cross is standard equipment.

## II. Do We Want To Make The Cross Optional?

### A. I Wonder.

1. Both of my sons graduated from ORU.
  - a. They got good educations there.
    - Including Josh.
    - #Who majored in theology.
  - b. Maybe things have changed.
    - When:
      - #They were students.
      - #I toured the campus.
    - When I went into the chapel.
      - #There was no cross.
        - \*No processional cross.
        - \*No cross on the wall.
        - \*No cross on the altar.
      - +There wasn't even an altar.
  - c. I thought to myself.
    - What does this mean?
      - #This is a Christian college.
      - #But there is no cross to be seen.
    - Has the cross become optional?
2. My son Joel moved to Atlanta in January 2008.
  1. He moved there.
    - a. Without:
      - Job.
      - Place to stay.
        - #Although he found:
          - \*Place to stay the first day.
          - \*Job shortly thereafter.
    - b. To become a member of a church.
      - He had encountered on the internet.
      - #Streaming video.
  2. In November.
    - a. I went to visit Joel.
    - b. I went to church with him on Sunday morning.
      - Mega church.
        - #20,000 members.
        - #12,000-13,000 people worship most Sundays.
          - \*In two different services.
        - #Service I attended.
          - \*Maybe 7,000 people.
          - \*Filling most of the 8,000 seats.

- When we walked in.
    - #I wasn't given an order of worship.
      - \*There was no order of worship.
    - #I was given an offering envelope.
      - \*They took three offerings.
        - +Tithes.
        - +Debt reduction.
        - +Hunger appeal.
          - =For an Atlanta food ministry.
          - =Their goal was \$100,000 for the food ministry.
  - Just from that congregation.
- There was a stage.
  - #Not really a chancel.
    - \*No altar.
  - #Orchestra pit.
  - #6 or 7 times the pastor said:
    - \*"This is not a show."
    - \*But it was a show.
      - +Or so it seemed to me.
    - \*Performers performed.
      - +On the stage.
    - \*Rest of us were spectators.
      - +No congregational singing.
      - +No prayers.
      - +No profession of faith.
    - \*Only thing asked of the congregation.
      - +Put money in the buckets.
- Only cross I saw.
  - #On the front of the lectern.
    - \*Lectern was on wheels.
  - #When:
    - \*Children's choir came out.
    - \*Dance troupe performed.
    - \*There was a dramatic presentation.
  - #Lectern was pushed offstage.
    - \*Cross disappeared.
  - #I wondered:
    - \*Has the cross become optional?
  - #But it wasn't only the physical representation.
    - \*Of that most important of Christian symbols.
      - +Wood.
      - +Metal.
      - +Glass.
        - =I wondered about.

#There was no proclamation of:

\*Cross.

\*Gospel.

\*Jesus.

+Pastor spoke for an hour during the 3-hour service.

=I hesitate to call it preaching.

=It was more of a lecture.

-On time management.

-Except for a few Biblical proof texts.

#Sprinkled in every once in awhile.

-Dr. Phil could have delivered the message.

#"Don't waste your time."

\*"Hanging out at the mall."

\*"Texting your friends."

=There was no mention of Jesus.

-No need for Jesus.

=There was no mention of the cross.

-No need for the cross.

#St. Paul's words seem to have fallen by the wayside.

\*"I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus, Christ, and him crucified."

+1 Corinthians 2:2.

-It seemed to me that the cross was not standard equipment.

#Not in that place.

#Not on that day.

## B. Is The Cross Standard Equipment For Us?

1. Mark Twain once said:

a. "Many people are bothered by those passages of Scripture which they cannot understand."

b. "But I've noticed that the passages of Scripture which trouble me most are those which I do understand."

2. This is one of those passages.

a. It talks about the necessity of the cross.

-Not just for Jesus.

-But for us.

b. "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me."

3. We know what that means, don't we?

a. It means:

-Obedience.

-Self-denial.

-Service.

-Sacrifice.

- b. It means we are not spectators.
  - Sitting in our cushioned theater-type seats.
  - Watching someone else perform.
    - #Obey.
    - #Deny self.
    - #Serve.
    - #Sacrifice.
  - Whether that someone else is:
    - #Jesus.
    - #Pastor.
    - #Our sisters and brothers in Christ.
- c. It means we have a cross to bear.
  - Our cross is not simply that which is difficult or painful.
    - #Collapsed lung is not a cross.
      - \*Anybody can get a collapsed lung.
        - +Even unbelievers.
    - #Cancer is not a cross.
      - \*Anybody can get cancer.
        - +Even unbelievers.
    - #Denying ourselves chocolate during Lent is not a cross.
      - \*Especially if we do it:
        - +To lose weight.
        - +To improve our complexion.
      - \*Anybody (most anybody) can abstain from chocolate.
        - +Even unbelievers.
    - #Unemployment is not a cross.
      - \*At least not necessarily.
        - #Unemployment could be a cross.
          - +If there are ethical principles.
            - =We are not willing to surrender.
              - Simply to get a paycheck.
      - \*Anybody can be laid off from a job.
        - +Even unbelievers.
  - Our cross is what we bear.
    - #Because we are:
      - \*Believers.
      - \*Disciples.
    - #For Jesus.
      - \*Cross is the burden of the redeemer.
    - #For us.
      - \*Cross is the burden of the redeemed.
        - +We:
          - =Deny self.
          - =Take up our cross.      =Follow.

- +We.
  - #Obey.
  - #Serve.
  - #Sacrifice.
  - #Give.
  - #Forgive.
    - \*Not to earn our way into heaven.
    - \*That is a matter of:
      - +Grace of God.
      - +Our faith in the promises of God.
        - =As St. Paul states so clearly.
        - Romans 4: 13-25.
- +We are saved.
  - #By being losers.
  - #By losing ourselves.
    - \*For Jesus' sake.
    - \*For the sake of the gospel.
      - +Mark 8: 35.
  - #In following wherever the cross takes us.
    - \*Through:
      - +Collapsed lungs.
      - +Cancer.
      - +Unemployment.
    - \*All the way to the end.
      - +When the Son of Man comes.
        - = In the glory of his Father.
        - =With the holy angels.

Concl: We are on a journey of:  
 -Faith.  
 -Discipleship.

On this journey.  
 -Cross is standard equipment.



