



**The Gospel of Mark – Give Up
Pastor Joseph Zwanziger 07.07.2024**

USING THIS SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE

We have provided all the Scriptures references in the sermon and some discussion questions for you to use to discuss the weekend message.

This Sermon Discussion Guide is only a tool to aid you in meeting the needs of your group. For most groups, there are too many questions to answer in one session together. Give priority to the needs and pace of your group members.

While the questions are important, remember your group's goal is to create an atmosphere that will foster true friendships. Use the discussion questions as you see fit but emphasize the relationships.

[Mark 8:34, NLT]

Then, calling the crowd to join his disciples, he said, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me."

"The life you're looking for in Jesus is on the other side of full-surrender."

[1 Kings 19:19–21, NLT]

¹⁹ So Elijah went and found Elisha son of Shaphat plowing a field. There were twelve teams of oxen in the field, and Elisha was plowing with the twelfth team. Elijah went over to him and threw his cloak across his shoulders and then walked away. ²⁰ Elisha

left the oxen standing there, ran after Elijah, and said to him, "First let me go and kiss my father and mother good-bye, and then I will go with you!" Elijah replied, "Go on back, but think about what I have done to you." ²¹ So Elisha returned to his oxen and slaughtered them. He used the wood from the plow to build a fire to roast their flesh. He passed around the meat to the townspeople, and they all ate. Then he went with Elijah as his assistant.

1) Give up your own way... by laying down your rights.

William Mounce:

"In a real sense, we face a double choice: to choose to put our own interests and ourselves first and thus deny the Lord Jesus, or else to deny ourselves and in place of that to choose to live for God."

[Psalm 16:11, ESV]

You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

2) Take up your cross... by going 100%, all-in, unreserved.

James Brooks (The New American Commentary):

In the first Christian century an admonition to take up a cross could only have been an admonition to martyrdom. It reflected the practice of compelling a condemned person to carry the horizontal piece of the cross on which he was going to die. That is what Jesus called on his followers to be willing to do. Many of his early followers did in fact die by crucifixion and in other ways. When martyrdom ceased to be common, cross bearing properly became a symbol of following Jesus in sacrificial service.

It is closely related to self-denial, involving a willingness to give up everything dear in life and even life itself for the sake of Jesus. It is a willingness to suffer for Jesus and for others. **Such a concept of discipleship is so radical that many contemporary Christians in the West have difficulty relating to it.**

[John 16:33, NIV]

“In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

[Romans 12:1]

“In view of God’s mercies... Offer your bodies as living sacrifices.”

3) Follow Jesus... Decide again to go “all-in” with Jesus.

[Revelation 2:5, NLT]

“Look how far you have fallen! Turn back to me and do the works you did at first.”

Key Points:

1. Give up your own way... by laying down your rights.
2. Take up your cross... by going 100%, all-in, unreserved.
3. Follow Jesus... Decide again to go "all-in" with Jesus.

Applications for the Week:

What steps can you take this week to lay down your rights and fully surrender to God's way? Identify one area in your life where you have been hesitant to go "all in" for Jesus. What practical steps can you take to fully commit in that area?

Discussion Questions

1. Reflect on your initial encounter with God. How can you return to the simplicity and passion of your faith from that time?
2. What does Jesus ask of those who want to follow Him in Mark 8:34?
3. What does it mean to "give up your own way" in the context of Mark 8:34, and how does this apply to modern-day believers?
4. How does Elisha's act of burning his plow and slaughtering his oxen illustrate the concept of full surrender?
5. What are some "plows" or "oxen" in your life that you need to burn to fully commit to following Jesus?
6. According to the sermon, what does "taking up your cross" mean in the context of following Jesus?
7. The sermon mentions that true discipleship involves trials and suffering. How does this contrast with the idea of a comfortable Christianity often promoted in Western culture?
8. How can you embrace trials and suffering in your walk with Jesus, knowing that He walks with you through them?
9. In what ways have you allowed life's distractions and complexities to complicate your walk with God? How can you simplify your faith journey?

10. How can you ensure that Jesus is not just one of many influences in your life but your ultimate authority?