



**LC STUDY GUIDE**  
**The Divine Invitation**  
The Passage: Mark 8:31-36  
From 11/13-11/26

**Introduction:**

As Grace Chapel concludes Global Awareness Week and approaches the end of the fall series, The Divine Invitation, we find our themes of sacrifice and discipleship dovetailing together.

Today we want to examine and discuss what following Jesus on mission looks like in our world that is filled with danger, risk, and tension. What is Jesus calling us toward? What does carrying our cross look like? And what is to be gained from following Jesus with everything we have?

Please also note that in this season of studies, we are focusing on asking fewer questions and having deeper answers to the questions. So let's take a few moments after the question is asked and consider what is going on in the text, what's going on in our hearts, and what this might mean for us today.

Let's begin with a "theme" question for the year:

As we "go," how has your walk with God been a blessing to someone else this week? Or where might He be inviting you to bless someone this week?

**Mark 8:31-36**

<sup>31</sup> He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. <sup>32</sup> He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.

<sup>33</sup> But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. "Get behind me, Satan!" he said. "You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns."

<sup>34</sup> Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. <sup>35</sup> For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. <sup>36</sup> What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?

**O** – Take a few moments and read the passage again privately.

Depending on how you group the phrases, there are at least 5 challenging concepts here for the 12 Disciples, as well as for us today. Identify the ones you find most challenging and why.

**I** – Being called Satan is quite startling. This compounded by the person saying it – Jesus, the Lord, the Son of God, the Messiah. It makes it difficult to even hear what’s next! Now for our sake, consider that the evil one, “Satan” in Hebrew literally means “the accuser” and is also translated to mean the “deceiver.” How does this change the context? What do you think are the implications of what Jesus is really saying here? *(It’s important for us to remember that the disciples lived in a time where they felt the presence of danger with the occupying Roman presence. It’s all they ever knew. And now they were following a radical rabbi who had angered the Roman and Jewish establishments. This was next-level danger now. Jesus is embracing all of this and making it clear to the disciples that this is his divine mission.)*

**A** – Take a few more moments and consider this challenging meditative question:

Can you think of a time when you have been deceived spiritually, focusing more on “merely human concerns” than “the concerns of God”?

How did you end up realizing that the concerns of God were greater? How did it change your perspective and/or actions? How did it inform your mission?

**O** – Jesus calls the crowd to join his disciples to hear what he says next. Imagine you were intrigued by Jesus’ teaching, perhaps even witnessing a miracle and had a mix of doubt and belief about whether he really was the Messiah.

Upon hearing verses 34-36, imagine what you would have thought initially. And what do you think you would have left pondering?

Set-up for last question:

Often we don’t create questions directly from this past week’s sermon as some of us may not have heard it for one reason or another. (Our studies are focused on the texts that were preached.) But Pastor Bryan framed it so well for group discussion that it’s too good to pass up:

**A** – As Pastor Bryan explained in his message, taking up our cross is not synonymous with living with a burden or a challenge that we have encountered in life: “Your cross is not your boss, your ornery neighbor .... your bad back ... those are challenging situations that we need God’s help with, but not our cross ...

“When the **disciples** and the **crowd** heard the words – *take up your cross* – it **meant only one thing** to them – **be ready to die**. Be ready to **give up anything** and **everything** for **me** and **my cause**. So when Jesus talks about taking up your cross, he’s talking about **taking up your life** – your **hopes and dreams**. Your

**career plans. Your retirement plans. Your home. Your hobbies. Your health. Your happiness.**

**All of it. Any of it. ...”**

Today we might not have all the specifics or all the language, but what does this mean to you? What is Jesus pulling you aside to confront you with? What do you sense he is inviting you to do?

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- a. Please note that not all these questions are to be asked in a single meeting. Take some time to prayerfully discern what will serve your LC the best. Select and reword the questions that best fit your voice and your Life Community group.
- b. Complement these questions with “process questions” (what else? what more? what do others think?)
- c. When you ask questions, give people ample time to think and respond. Wait. Take your time; don’t rush people but encourage participation. Avoid answering your own questions!
- d. Application: Pace the study to conclude with difference-making application.
- e. Secondary texts—use other texts sparingly, even if they are relevant. Such texts will push you into “teaching” rather than facilitating, causing people to feel distracted or de-powered.