

The Gospel of Mark
The Other Half of the Gospel
Mark 8:31-38

One dictionary describes the word commitment in two ways. 1) Commitment is responsibility, something that takes up time or energy, especially an obligation. 2) Commitment is loyalty, devotion or dedication to a cause, person, or relationship. We tend to think of commitment in terms of time and prefer to have a beginning and an ending to commitments in general, after all, in our world that is governed by the autonomy of self, we always reserve the right to change our minds.

1. Christ's way, while misunderstood, is perfect.
2. Christ's command, while difficult, is required.
3. Christ's offer, while free, is priceless.

There is a difference between words and actions. There is a difference between a declared commitment and a demonstrated commitment. Yes, God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life, but it is not the life you choose to live. It is the life that He chooses to live through you. We cannot expect the blessings of the confession apart from the commitment of the cross. We must confess with our mouths the Lord Jesus, but we must also believe in our hearts that God raised Him from the dead (Romans 10:9-10). Our salvation is more than words. It is a new identity in Christ's cross and a new life in His resurrection power.

For further consideration:

How is Jesus' call to discipleship radical and how have we made the Christian life less radical than it was intended to be? How would you answer the question, "Why does it say Jesus must suffer, die, and rise again?" What do you suppose Peter was thinking when he rebuked Jesus? How does the world entice us to live self-centered lives? How should giving up the "right" to self-determination counter those temptations? What are some practices that can be put into place that would help you follow Jesus the way He wants to be followed?