

## Sunday, March 24, 2013

**Read** Mark 8:27-30

**Reflect** Jesus has challenged the Pharisees and the government. He has healed yet another person, this time a blind man. As Jesus is travelling with his followers he asks them what they are hearing people say about his identity. He asks them who they think he is. Peter declares Jesus is “the Christ,” a title with kingdom/political implications. Jesus warns them not to tell anyone about the conclusions they are reaching.

**Pray** Praise God for the power of Jesus clearly seen in his feeding crowds and healing the sick. Give thanks to God for the patience Jesus showed to the twelve and the patience he regularly shows to us when we do not fully understand who he is. Ask God to reveal to us a deeper understanding of and appreciation for Jesus as the Christ.

**Exercise** Spend some time thinking this through: What are you hearing? What are the people you know saying about Jesus? What are the political implications of Jesus being “the Christ?” If someone asks who you think Jesus is, how will you answer? Craft a two or three sentence response so you will be prepared.

## Monday, March 25, 2013

**Read** Mark 8:31-9:1

**Reflect** With his followers thinking he is “the Christ,” Jesus teaches them plainly about his rejection, death, and resurrection. Peter’s response makes it clear his understanding of “the Christ” involves power and victory, not rejection and death.

**Pray** Give thanks to God for Jesus, our suffering savior. Acknowledge Jesus as Lord and Christ. Acknowledge the kingdom of God is upside down, not a kingdom of asserting power, but of laying down your life.

**Exercise** What implications, if any, do “taking up your cross” and “laying down your life” have for our schooling? Our jobs? Our views on politics and international relations?

## Tuesday, March 26, 2013

**Read** Mark 9:2-13

**Reflect** Jesus took Peter, James, and John with him up the mountain. Jesus was transfigured, his clothing becoming a dazzling white. Jesus talked with Elijah and Moses. Peter, James and John were frightened, not knowing what to say. A voice from heaven affirmed Jesus and called for them to listen to Jesus. As they come down the mountain they discuss the confusing concept of Jesus rising from the dead.

**Pray** Praise God for God’s glory as seen in Jesus. Give thanks for the promise of the resurrection.

**Exercise** Make a list of what you believe to be the five most challenging biblical teachings. Beside each item listed, write a sentence describing the nature of the challenge.

## Wednesday, March 27, 2013

**Read** Mark 9:30-50

**Reflect** Jesus continues to teach his disciples about his betrayal, death, and resurrection. The disciples still do not understand what Jesus has been teaching them. While he is teaching them about laying down his life, they are arguing about who will be the greatest in the kingdom and stopping people from doing good in the name of Jesus.

**Pray** Ask God to open your heart and life to understanding the upside down nature of the kingdom

**Exercise** Be vulnerable: name three people who might say you have caused them to sin. Make amends if you needed.

## Thursday, March 28, 2013

**Read** Mark 10:32-45

**Reflect** Again Jesus tries to explain his death to the twelve. Again the disciples and other followers respond with

astonishment, fear, and a reach for power. Jesus explains leaders in God's kingdom serve rather than wield power.

**Pray** Give thanks for the way Jesus served/serves you. Ask God to help you develop the heart of a servant.

**Exercise** Serve someone you love today. Serve a stranger today.

## Friday, March 29, 2013

**Read** Mark 12:28-34

**Reflect** Jesus responds to a question about the most important command by pointing to the commands to love God and love people. Jesus affirms that loving God and people is more important than worship rituals.

**Pray** Express your love to God in prayer. Thank God for the people in your life.

**Exercise** Write your own psalm of loving praise to God.

## Saturday, March 30, 2013

**Read** Mark 14-16

**Reflect** This is the gospel story: Jesus is anointed. Jesus blesses the bread and cup. Jesus predicts Peter's denial. Jesus prays in Gethsemane. Jesus is arrested and tried. Jesus is denied by Peter. Jesus is handed over for crucifixion. Jesus is mocked, beaten, and crucified. Jesus dies, is buried, and is resurrected.

**Pray** Give thanks for the gospel story of Jesus's death, burial, and resurrection. Thank God for being buried and resurrected with Jesus.

**Exercise** Prepare for tomorrow's worship gathering by tracking the emotional ups and downs of the disciples through the last week of Jesus's life up to the first day of the week when Jesus rose from the dead.



*Readings, prayers, and exercises to stimulate growth  
and enjoyment in living*

# The New Life



Part 7, March 24-30, 2013