Our scripture this morning comes from Mark 8:27-34. While you’re finding that - Little Johnny came running in the kitchen one day with a huge smile on his face. Surprised, his mother asked, “Why are you home so early?” Johnny said, “They let me come home early because I was the only one who could answer a tough question the principal asked!” So proud, his mother hugged him tightly, “I’m so proud of you honey - what was the question?” He responded, “Who threw the eraser at the teacher?”

**Mark 8:27-34 Now Jesus and His disciples went out to the towns of Caesarea Philippi; and on the road He asked His disciples, saying to them, “Who do men say that I am?” 28So they answered “John the Baptist; but some *say,* Elijah; and others, one of the prophets.” 29 He said to them “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered and said to Him, “You are the Christ.” 30Then He strictly warned them that they should tell no one about Him. 31 And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. 32He spoke this word openly. Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. 33But when He had turned around and looked at His disciples, He rebuked Peter, saying, “Get behind Me, Satan! For you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.” 34When He had called the people to *Himself,* with His disciples also, He said to them, Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.**

Discipleship – as Master, Jesus left us clear steps to follow. Realize that He’s teaching us how to become like Him when He says “deny himself , take up his cross, and follow Me.” Jesus very clearly denied Himself, coming from Heaven to live among us. He took up His Cross literally, and He followed the Will of God – John 5:19 Then Jesus answered and said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner.” We can do nothing of ourselves, we do what we see the Master do, and whatever Jesus did, we’re to do in like manner.

Mark 8 starts with the disciples witnessing Jesus feeding 4000 people. They witness Jesus heal the blind man at Bethesda. In verse 29, Jesus asks the greatest question we’ll ever answer, the only question that will matter in our eternal salvation, “But who do you say I am?” Peter answers, “You are the Christ.” Can’t you feel the mountain top high that the disciples are on?

Jesus then shifts gears. Verse 32 says He spoke verse 31 openly, the Greek word means bluntly. He didn’t waste words. He says, “I’ll be rejected, killed, and rise”. Peter takes Him aside and rebukes Him. Look at the first half of verse 33 - But when He had turned around and looked at His disciples, He rebuked Peter, saying, “Get behind Me, Satan!” Jesus returns to the disciples and rebukes Peter openly. Get behind Me, Satan… Peter, the one that had confessed Christ’s true identity, Peter - in Matthew 16:17 Jesus called him blessed, Peter – one of the inner circle, witness to incredible miracles… is called Satan. How quickly Peter goes from blessed disciple to a tool of Satan! It happened in a matter of minutes!

It happens in us as well. Peter didn’t like what Jesus was saying, it didn’t fit Peter’s plans! How often we, as the student, try to tell the Master how our life should go, how the plan should work out, what we will and will not do. We do it in our personal life, our professional life… we do it in our spiritual life… Jesus, this is what I want… this is my wish… Jesus, You stop with Your plan and bend to My will and Jesus says, “Get behind Me, Satan.”

Look now at the last half of verse 33 - For you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men. In the original translation, it said “For you do not savor the things of God.” It has the idea of setting affections upon. Jesus says – Peter, you don’t love the things of God, but the things of men.” It’s a harsh rebuke!

But I have to ask – do we savor the things of God or of men? Be truthful! The things we want for this church, the ways we’re willing to serve, the places we’re willing to go, the sacrifices we’re willing to make… are they wide open “whatever you want from me Jesus? I won’t consider what I want, but only what is best for Your Kingdom?” or are they safely within the guard rails of what will make us comfortable in life? Peter heard his friend would die, he heard that life would change and he didn’t like it and, in that moment, if only for that moment, he became a tool for Satan to use against Christ. As true disciples, we must take measure – are my words and my actions building disciples, encouraging others, building up my church? Or am I rebuking Jesus so I might stay comfortable? Are the things of men what we savor or the things of God what we savor? It’s a hard question and can be very uncomfortable and revealing!

Verse 34, Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. Too often, we get this backward. We try to follow first, take up the cross, and, if it’s not too difficult, we deny ourselves. Jesus says – flip it around! Deny yourself – lay down your personal plans and pray for guidance. Take up your cross, not anyone else’s, yours! Now you’re able to follow Me. See Peter had not yet denied himself. He had his plans, his agenda, what he thought his worship should look like, how he thought Jesus should be… who was Peter’s God… it was Peter! And when we place any constraint on Jesus, any constraint on what our church must be like or the people we worship with must be like or the people we want as disciples serving with us… we’ve made ourselves God.

Several years ago, I wired a motor to turn the antenna on my rooftop. When I pressed the button, the motor turned backward. I had placed the positive on the negative and the negative on the positive. Nothing went the right direction until I switched those wires. No matter how I rebuked the motor, it refused change! In order to move the right direction, I had to correct my mistake! This week, I want us to consider the recipe Christ provided. We must have our walk wired right or everything else will go wrong. Deny first, take up the cross, and follow. If we are savoring what we want, how we like it, what we wish would happen, our comfort, who we think deserves Jesus… we’ve not denied… Savor the things of God and everything will fall into place.