



JESUS – OUR TEACHER, PROPHET, AND JUDGE | WEEK 5

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WORSHIP

Begin your group with a time of worship. If someone in your group can lead worship, invite them to lead two or three songs. Alternatively, consider using one or more of these songs from our Sunday morning worship time:

- **Be Glad** (*Cody Carnes*)
- **None Like You** (*Jesus Culture*)
- **Worthy** (*Elevation Music*)

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

- Mark 8:34-38; 13:26-27
- Matthew 7:21-23
- Psalm 25

OPENING PRAYER

Begin by asking God to open hearts and minds to His truth and give courage to respond to His call.

Ice Breaker (5-10 min)

Share about a teacher, mentor, or coach who significantly impacted your life. What made their influence so powerful?

SERMON RECAP (5 minutes)

Key Scripture Reading

Have someone read Mark 8:34-38 aloud. Consider reading it from multiple translations if available.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (35-40 min)

Part 1: Jesus, the Teacher (Mark 8:34)

1. Understanding the Call: Jesus uses three powerful words: Disciple, Deny, Death. Which of these three is easiest for you to embrace? Which is most challenging? Why?
2. The Cross Connection: The sermon noted our response progression: "Disciple – yes, Deny – maybe, Death/Cross – no." Why do you think we're naturally resistant to the "take up your cross" part of following Jesus?
3. Daily Dying: Read Luke 9:23. What does it mean practically to "take up your cross daily"? What might this look like in your everyday life this week?
4. Crucified with Christ: Reflect on Galatians 2:20. What areas of your life need to be "crucified with Christ" so that He can live more fully through you?

Part 2: Jesus, the Prophet (Mark 8:35-37)

5. The Great Paradox: Jesus says whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for Him will save it. How have you seen this paradox play out in your own life or in the lives of others?
6. Eternal Perspective: What are some ways our culture tempts us to "gain the whole world" at the expense of our souls? How can we guard against this?
7. Soul Value: Verse 37 asks, "What can anyone give in exchange for their soul?" How does keeping this question in mind change your daily priorities and decisions?
8. Temporary vs. Eternal: The sermon contrasted "temporary life and the flesh" with "eternity and soul." What practical steps can you take to invest more in eternal things rather than temporary ones?

Part 3: Jesus, the Judge (Mark 8:38)

9. Ashamed or Bold: Jesus warns about being ashamed of Him and His words. In what situations do you find it most difficult to openly identify as a follower of Jesus?
10. Cultural Pressure: We live in what the passage calls "an adulterous and sinful generation." What are the specific pressures in our current culture that tempt Christians to hide or compromise their faith?
11. The Coming King: Read Mark 13:26-27. How does the reality of Jesus' return in glory affect how you live today?
12. True Discipleship: Discuss Matthew 7:21-23. What's the difference between saying "Lord, Lord" and actually doing the will of the Father? How can we ensure we're not just going through religious motions?

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Write these on a board or share them verbally:

1. Jesus teaches us what is true – Following Him requires denying ourselves and taking up our cross daily.
2. Jesus prophetically reveals what we cannot see – He opens our spiritual eyes to eternal realities beyond temporary circumstances.
3. Jesus will judge with perfect justice – Our eternal destiny depends on whether we acknowledge or deny Him now.
4. The cross is non-negotiable – True discipleship always involves death to self and living for Christ.
5. Our choices today have eternal consequences – What we do with Jesus determines what He will do with us.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION (10 Mins)

This Week's Challenge:

Choose one or more of the following to practice this week:

Daily Denial:

- Identify one area where you need to deny yourself this week (a habit, attitude, comfort, or desire that competes with following Jesus fully).
- Each morning, consciously "take up your cross" by surrendering this area to God.

Eternal Investment:

- Evaluate how you spend your time, money, and energy. What percentage goes toward eternal things versus temporary things?
- Make one concrete change to invest more in what matters eternally (relationships, spiritual growth, service, generosity, etc.).

Bold Witness:

- Identify one relationship or situation where you've been ashamed or silent about your faith in Jesus.
- Pray for courage and look for an opportunity this week to speak about Jesus or His words.

Soul Examination:

- Spend time in prayer asking God to search your heart (Psalm 139:23-24).
- Are there areas where you're trying to "gain the world" at the expense of your soul?
- Confess and repent where needed.

Accountability:

- Share your chosen application with at least one other group member and commit to checking in with each other during the week.

CLOSING REFLECTION AND PRAYER

Reflection

Read Psalm 25 together. This psalm beautifully captures the heart of someone seeking God as Teacher, trusting Him as the revealer of truth, and hoping in His mercy and justice.

Reflection Questions:

Which verses from Psalm 25 speak most powerfully to you right now?
What is God asking you to surrender to Him today?

Closing Prayer

Invite group members to pray:

- For courage to take up their cross daily
- For eternal perspective in a temporary world
- For boldness to acknowledge Jesus before others
- For specific needs and struggles shared during discussion