**Sunday 15th September 2024: Mark 8: 27-38 What’s the Point?**

*27 Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, ‘Who do people say that I am?’ 28 And they answered him, ‘John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.’ 29 He asked them, ‘But who do you say that I am?’ Peter answered him, ‘You are the Messiah.’[*[*h*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=mark+8&version=NRSVA#fen-NRSVA-24526h)*] 30 And he sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him.*

*31 Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. 32 He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. 33 But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, ‘Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.’*

*34 He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, ‘If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. 35 For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel,[[i](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=mark+8&version=NRSVA" \l "fen-NRSVA-24532i" \o "See footnote i)] will save it. 36 For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? 37 Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? 38 Those who are ashamed of me and of my words[*[*j*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=mark+8&version=NRSVA#fen-NRSVA-24535j)*] in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.’*

**Notes**
Start by asking your listeners to imaging how life would be if they had all the money in the world. Give examples of the kinds of things they could do, and worries they would no longer have.

Then ask them what their reaction would be if someone said there would be no point in having all this money – and gently point out the person who said that is Jesus [v36].

Explain that Jesus is talking about values – the things we believe either consciously or sub-consciously to be most important, and which drive the decisions we make. Some things are not wrong in themselves, but it would be pointless to value them higher our communion with God.

So Jesus’s words are an invitation to consider what we value most, and whether that is reflected in what we do with our money. This then leads us to ask ourselves how much we value our participation in our local parish Church, and whether that is reflected in how we spend our money.

But acknowledge some people are really struggling financially and not in a position to give more or start giving. Stress that how much someone gives is a private matter and not for us to direct them.

But refer to Biblical examples [eg Mark 12:44, 1 Kings 17, 2 Corinthians 8] where people who were struggling still managed to give, sometimes beyond their ability, and without even being asked!

What we give must be rooted in our understanding of Christ. Our passage started with Peter having a revelation as to who Christ is, and the discussion about values flows from that revelation.

Finish by inviting people to consider how much they give prayerfully and honestly, and close with a reminder of the key verse [36] “what will it profit a man to gain the whole world but lose his life”.

**End**