

Who do you say I am

Mark 8:18-28

- You cant have the crown without the cross

And this is a tension we need to keep in our understanding of the faith

- That every good teaching of the crown needs to include the cross
- And every good teaching of the cross need to include the crown

Often we get churches or preachers that will emphasis one but not the other

- Its very popular today to preach the crown of Christ
- That in being followers of Jesus there is glory and power
- In the eternal heavenly sense but also in the here and now
- The power of Christs victory is available to us now

Matt 17²⁰ Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you."

- Power and Authority is available to the faithful to do amazing things
- We have all heard the stories or experienced this ourselves
- Healings, miraculous provision, giving of spiritual gifts.
- This is the Crown of Christ...

Long story short but I met a Guy that had worked with Mother Teresa in Calcutta

- He was a passive believer himself
- They ran out of a medicine they were giving out in the free clinic
- Well we better pray about it
- Her and a few nun went and prayed
- That afternoon, a truck turned up, mother we have been meaning to drop this off for weeks.
- A delivery of medical supplies, food, including the medicine they were missing.
- That just blew this guys mind... that's the crown
- That with faith Nothing is impossible... blind see, mute speak, medicine appears

And it is Good and right to preach the crown

- Because its how our faith is revealed to us through Jesus teachings
- But you cant have the crown without the cross
- This theology of power in Christ, a powers given to us through the spirit
- Can't be separated from the theology of suffering
- They don't work in isolation from each other but in co-operation.

Because Jesus also says following me will be hard

- He says to be a disciple of JC you need to pick up your cross and follow me
- V34

- The bible tells us that it will mean hardship and sacrifice

Paul tells us in his writing that for the gospel he has been

- In prison, flogged, exposed to death, 5 time forty lashes, 3 times beaten with rods, stoned, shipwrecked, spent day and night in open sea, bitten by snakes.....
- And he had a thorn in his side, some back ailment or something that God would not heal.
- Here is the cross.... For Paul to Follow Christ he picked up his cross daily
- And faced all sorts of scary and horrible experiences

BUT they always when hand in hand with the glory and the power of Jesus

- He is thrown in prison and theres an earthquake and the walls fall down
- He is in a storm for 2 weeks, ship wreck on an island bitten by a snake
- But survives it all... the locals think he is a God
- And he heals all the sick on the Island
- The cross and the crown... once again side by side.

You know the kids game follow the leader?

- A line of kids they all have to do what the leader does
- Climbing up a tree or jumping in a puddle or eating a pile of dirt
- You have to follow what the leader is doing
- V34 "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and **follow** me
- Jesus says..... follow me, do as I do, speak as I speak
- And follow the leader has only one rule
- No follower can shirk going anywhere the leader had gone first.
- The good and the bad, the blessing and the suffering
- The cross and the crown

Being a Christian is not a solution to all of life problems

- It wont stop you from getting hurt or sick
- It wont stop you from being ostracised or rejected by people
- It wont keep you from hitting financial problems in life.
- Those things can and do happen to Christians all the time.

To be a follower of Christ is to hit the same hardships he did

- But ... but To follow in his foot sets is to walk in the power of God
- To see the world for what it really is to experience true forgiveness
- To know real hope, hope that transcends this world into the next.
- To know that with faith in God we can move mountains
- The sick can be healed, relationships can be restored
- That we are called into a family of God....

The irony is that for the disciples this **is** their rags to riches story

- Because ³⁵ For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it.
- In giving up whats yours.... Giving your time and energy to God
- There you find true treasure... there you share in the glory of God