



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

A Conflict of Interests (Mark 8:31-33)

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For the interim session, we plan to meet most Wednesdays during the 12noon-1pm lunch hour in House Hearing Room #6. I hope you are able to make many of our studies. We will continue our study in the Gospel of Mark.

Have you ever made plans, only to have those plans unexpectedly changed by something out of your control? Sometimes, the changed in plans turns out better than what you had originally planned. Other times, though, what you had planned, looked forward to and hoped for so long for was completely scrapped; instead of it being a better plan, it turned out (at least, in the immediate time) very confusing and painful.

This is the essence of the confrontation seen in the passage today of Mark 8:31-33. This change of plans or “conflict of interests” took place immediately after Peter’s great confession to Jesus, “You are the Christ”. Peter declared that Jesus is the Messiah, the Anointed One, the promised One whom the Jewish nation had been waiting for all for centuries. They had grandiose ideas of what their Messiah was going to do and it was all great and glorious for them.

So when Jesus made His first clear prediction of His upcoming rejection, suffering, death and resurrection, Peter (the same Peter who just said, “You are the Christ”) piped up and said, “Whoa—Time out. That’s not the plan.”

INTRODUCTION

Mark 8:31-33 And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. And He was stating the matter plainly. And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. But turning around and seeing His disciples, He rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind Me, Satan; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's."

OUCH!! Peter, the disciple who just made the great confession, is now called “Satan”; “the Adversary.” In fact, the command Jesus gave to Peter, “Get

behind me...” was the same command that He gave to Satan during the temptations in the wilderness: “Get away from me!” (Matthew 4:10).

But that is the truth of the matter. If one’s plans, desires and interests are not the same as God’s, then those plans, desires and interests are truly those of an adversary. You will never hear God say “we just have to agree to disagree.” Instead, one will find out that his or her plans are at odds toward the all-knowing, all-good and sovereign King of the universe. Therefore, no matter how good one’s intentions might be, he or she is in league with any who are against God.

As we examine this passage, I want us to see the things which are “God’s Interests” and the things which are “Man’s Interests”. And then we will address the scenario “When interests conflict.”

GOD’S INTERESTS (8:31)

THEN

All the upcoming events that Jesus described in verse 31 had already been prophesied by the Old Testament prophets. It was told that the coming Messiah would...

...suffer (Isaiah 53:3, 4, 8)

...be rejected by elders/leaders of Israel (Isaiah 53:3, 8; Psalm 22:6-8, 13)

...be killed (Isaiah 53:5, 9; Psalm 22:16-18; Zechariah 13:6-7)

...be raised back to life (Psalm 16:10)

In fact, the whole of Isaiah 53 presented the story of the suffering of the Messiah on behalf of His people. Due to their sin, the Messiah bore upon Himself the penalty due those sins.

And this was not an unforeseen, accidental death which God had to adjust to and make work out for good. It was His plan. Isaiah 53:6b stated “...the LORD *has caused* the iniquity of us all to fall on Him” and 53:10a noted “But the LORD *was pleased to crush* Him, putting Him to grief” (emphasis mine in both verses). It was clear that the plan or interest of God concerning the first arrival of the Messiah was one of suffering, death and resurrection so that people may be saved.

Peter finally understood this as he preached on the Day of Pentecost.

CAPITOL COMMISSION INTERIM BIBLE STUDIES

CAPITOL BUILDING: WEDNESDAYS @ 12NOON, HEARING ROOM #6

TRUMAN BUILDING: THURSDAYS @ 7AM, 4THFLOOR CAFETERIA

PROCLAIMING THE GREATNESS AND GLORY OF GOD IN THE MISSOURI STATE CAPITOL

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A Conflict of Interests (Mark 8:31-33)

Acts 2:22-24 Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know--this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death. But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power.

Not only was God's interests predicted, they were also necessary. Again, in Mark 8:31, "And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things..."

WHY?? It was God's plan, desire and interest to redeem and make a people holy for Himself. This is spelled out by the author of Hebrews. This unknown author explained that the Son of God had to become a Son of Man in order to be a merciful and faithful High Priest (Hebrews 2:17). But He did not come to offer more blood of bulls and goats since they were unable to cleanse and make people holy (Hebrews 10:4). Therefore, the Messiah came to offer a better sacrifice (Hebrews 9:23), the sacrifice of His own sinless, undefiled body and blood (Hebrews 9:25-26).

"FOR PETER, THE INDICATION THAT THE SON OF MAN WILL DIE IS UNTHINKABLE. FOR JESUS, IT IS INEVITABLE." --JAMES EDWARDS

This was the only way and the only sacrifice that was pleasing to God. Nothing less would be acceptable. Therefore, this was God's plan; and thus, the interest that concerned Jesus Christ while He was here on earth. Everything He did led up to the purpose of His coming to "seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10).

NOW

God's interests have not changed over time.

- It is still His interest for people to be redeemed and saved (1 Timothy 2:4).
- It is still His interest for people to repent from their sins and turn to Him (2 Peter 3:8).

- It is still His interest is His people to be holy (Romans 12:1-2; 1 Peter 1:14-16).
- It is still His interest for His people to be prepared for the return of His Son (Matthew 24:42-51).
- It is still His interest for His name to glorified in all things (1 Corinthians 10:31; 1 Peter 2:12)

As we continue, it should be quite clear that the interests of men and women do not always match the things that interest God--either then or now.

MAN'S INTERESTS (8:32)

THEN

During Jesus' day, the Jews were desperately expecting their promised Messiah. Several false Messiahs had come around, only to be crushed, along with their followers, by the Romans. The Jews hated living under Roman rule with its pagan culture and philosophies.

The Messianic expectation that was taught and promoted by the religious leaders and embraced by the common person in Palestine was one of might and power and liberation. The Messiah was going to bring a mighty army, liberate Israel and reestablish the exalted throne of David. He was going to renew the Jewish religion and bring a lasting peace and great prosperity to the nation and individuals. The hated nations (Gentiles) were going to be humbled and Israel rightly exalted.

They were primarily looking for "a political king ruling in earthly splendor"¹ who would reestablish the purity of the Temple and restore Judaism. This Messiah king would bring a peace and prosperity to Israel in relief of their oppression placed upon them by their enemies.

And when Peter confessed, and Jesus confirmed, that "You are the Christ", all of these things would have come to the mind of Peter and the other disciples.

Therefore, it is not surprising that Peter rebuked Jesus for His words of rejection, suffering and death. This was not the plan that had been laid out. It was not the interest of the Jewish nation to have a promised Messiah would die at the hands of the Romans. Jesus was not laying out a plan that went along with Peter's preconceived ideas.

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NOW

People today are essentially interested in the same basic principles. We are all looking to be free from tyranny and oppression--whatever we may think that may be. We all desire true peace, true contentment, true love and true happiness.

In and of themselves, these interests are not bad or sinful. We are simply looking for a life to be lived in peace, freedom and happiness.

The problem is that "peace, freedom and happiness" looks different to different people. And therefore, problems arise -- problems like conflicts between parent & children, husbands and wives, employers and employees, and even nations.

You see, we want these things NOW and we want them in the way we WANT them.

WHEN INTERESTS CONFLICT (8:33)

So what do we do when our interests conflict with the interests of God?

THEN

"For Peter, the indication that the Son of man will die is unthinkable. For Jesus, it is inevitable."² Peter probably spoke from good intentions not intending to be an adversary of the Messiah. It seems that he simply wanted to correct the incorrect teaching of Christ concerning His future. But he received a harsh rebuke from Jesus nonetheless.

The term "Satan" comes from the Hebrew word with the same pronunciation and literally means "an adversary" (1 Kings 11:14; Job 1:6-9). Peter set himself up as an adversary to Jesus Christ by trying to avert Him from the suffering and death that Jesus was describing. As "innocent" and "good intentioned" as it may have seemed, Peter's plans and interests were contrary to God's (and thus, Jesus') plans and interests.

The moment Peter suggested another path he placed himself in league with Satan. Instead of listening and learning and submitting to the One he just called "the Christ", he boldly stated that the Christ was wrong. He was also implying that he knew better than God. And when disciples try to be God instead of follow God, they become an adversary.

NOW

From this conflict of interests between Peter and Jesus Christ, we find three main principles for followers of Jesus to learn. First of all, understand that if your interests conflict with God's, you are in opposition to Him. Again, God does not "agree to disagree" and it is so much more than simply thinking "you do your thing and I will do mine"--it truly is a conflict and you are an adversary. In essence, you are thinking that "God really doesn't know what is best" or that "He doesn't want what is best"; or worse, your thought may be "I don't care what God wants, I want what I want".

Friend, it is best and wise for all not to live or think contrary to what God has plainly laid out for people in the Scriptures.

Secondly, as we look at the scenario in this passage and look at the rest of Scripture, we find that God's interests are always good, right, holy and best for all (you, Him, and everyone); ours are not.

Just imagine what would have happened if Peter had his way in this story. Israel would have been blessed, possibly, but no one else (I say "possibly" for I do not know what would have happened if the sinless Son of God would have sinned by changing God's plan). We would all still be in our sins for there would have been no sacrifice. There would be no hope for eternal life. There truly would be no true hope, true peace, true happiness and true contentment in this world.

Just imagine what would happen if God answered all your prayers as you prayed them. We cannot even begin to think we can know what would life would be like for us or the person we prayed for if God would have healed them or let them keep their job, etc.

Just imagine what would happen if everyone lived as they wanted to live instead of how God wants people to live (if you do not like to imagine, just watch Clint Eastwood's "Unforgiven" to get a small taste of everyone doing what is right in his own eyes).

When God does not answer our prayers as we see fit or we cannot see the "good" in some devastating event, then the question becomes: Do we still trust? Do we believe that God is still on His throne and is directing all things for His glory and for the good of His people? OR do we foolishly believe that we know what is best and right and good?

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Even though the things Jesus was teaching at this time of this passage were contrary to what Peter was expecting, Peter should have submitted in trust to his Messiah. And this is still our call today. We are to trust to God who has proven Himself over and over to being sovereign, good and wise.

Thirdly, as we look at the totality of Scripture, God's interests will always prevail. In light of this passage, it was Jesus' predictions of suffering, rejection, death and resurrection that prevailed and not Peter's grand scheme. God will always carry out His good, right and holy plans for He alone is sovereign, all-powerful and all-wise.

Psalm 135:5-6 For I know that the LORD is great And that our Lord is above all gods. Whatever the LORD pleases, He does, In heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deeps.

CONCLUSION

In wrapping up this study, I want to close with some practical application when we find that a conflict of interest with God.

- a. If your interests and plans are stopped and changed: be humble, be patient and submit to God's will (Acts 16:6-9).
- b. Do not get angry at the agents of change; whether it is a family member, a boss, a friend, an interruption, a stranger, a sickness, a tragic event.
- c. Understand that God has different interests and purposes for His children—therefore, there will be discipline and refinement (Hebrews 12:9-11).
- d. Encourage the brother or sister walking through these times—especially if you have been through them yourself (2 Corinthians 1:4).

Always remember that we were not made for this world, we have a greater, eternal home waiting (2 Peter 3:10).

Let us praise God that Peter's interests were not heeded. Let us praise God for His wisdom, power and goodness in which we can fully trust Him. Let us submit our interests to Him. Let us submit to Him if our interests conflict with His.

Because Jesus carried out God's interests and not Peter's, we have a sacrifice for the forgiveness of our sins. God can forgive your sins, are you interested?

¹ Lewis Foster, *Studies in the Life of Christ* (Joplin, MO.: College Press, reprint 1995), 723.

²James R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2002), 255.