

**Catching Up With The Radical Rabbi Sermon Series**  
**"The Radical Rabbi Who Was Very Demanding"**  
*by Rev. John C. Tittle*

**Scripture Reading:** Mark 8:34-38 NRSV

<sup>34</sup> 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. <sup>35</sup> 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, will save it. <sup>36</sup> For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? <sup>37</sup> Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? <sup>38</sup> Those who are ashamed of me and of my words 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."

**Discussion Questions:**

1. What jumps out at you in the passage?
2. If you were granted one wish, what would it be? What would you be willing to part with to have the wish come true? What would you not be willing to do?
3. Jesus call us to come to him and to follow him. In Matthew 11:28 Jesus says, "Come to me and I will give you rest." But in this passage, Jesus summons us to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow him." What is similar about these two calls? What is different?
4. Jesus gives us some very challenging and difficult words here. Why didn't he water down his message to make it an easier pill to swallow? What is scary about these words? Attractive about them?
5. Do you agree or disagree with this statement: *The way of the disciple is the way of Jesus. And the way of Jesus is the way of the cross. You can't have Christ without the cross.*
6. What do you think of Kierkegaard's words in one of his Christian Discourses:  
*Christianity has been taken in vain, made too mild, so that people have forgotten what grace is. The more rigorous Christianity is, the more grace becomes manifest as grace and not a sort of human sympathy.*
7. What is the difference between denying yourself and hating yourself? When is it healthy? When does it become unhealthy?

8. Which one of these temptations is the hardest for you?
- a) Don't sacrifice your integrity for profit.
  - b) Don't sacrifice your principles for popularity.
  - c) Don't sacrifice lasting things for quick fixes.
  - d) Don't sacrifice eternity for a fleeting moment.
  - e) Don't sacrifice \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_.
9. How does denial of ourselves bring us real life?