

“For God So Loved the World”

Mark 8:38

An Emblem of Love

I am reminded of a young father whose face was badly disfigured. His young son was continually ridiculed by the children in school because of his father's appearance. (You know how cruel children can be.) The other children sometimes called the boy the “son of Frankenstein.”

The boy never mentioned his father's appearance, and the father never explained. One day, after an exceptionally cruel episode of mocking by the other children, the boy blurted out to his father, “I wish I had a normal father, like everyone else!” The father finally explained to him that when the son was a baby there was a dreadful fire in their apartment building in which the boy's mother and several other people had perished. And, although the Father was able to save the baby boy, the father himself suffered very severe burns in the process.

From that day on, the boy was no longer embarrassed about his father. Every time he looked at his father's face it was a reminder of *just how much he was loved*.

Reflection

If you are like most Christians, there was probably a time in your life, when you've heard people mocking Christians. You may have been silent, and failed to defend Christ. Consider how you would feel if those who you loved, and for whom you had sacrificed, did not come to your defense when others mocked you. How would you expect Christ to feel?

Accountability and Application

Ask yourself if you conduct yourself in a manner which shows others you are proud of your faith. Remember that when Christ comes in the glory of God with his holy angels, He will think of you as you think of Him.

Prayer: *I am proud to be a Christian, and thank you for giving your Son to save this world from sin. Forgive me for those times when I failed to speak up for Christ. Grant me the courage to truly take up my cross and follow Christ.*

Mark 8:31-38 (English Standard Version)

Jesus Foretells His Death and Resurrection

³¹ 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. ³² And he said this plainly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. ³³ But turning and seeing his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind me, Satan! For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.”

³⁴ And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. ³⁵ For whoever would save his life¹ will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. ³⁶ For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? ³⁷ For what can a man give in return for his soul? ³⁸ For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”

¹ NOTE in ESV: The same Greek word can mean either *soul* or *life*, depending on the context; twice in this verse and once in verse 36 and once in verse 37