MARK: The Tipping Point 6.8.08

22 And they came to Bethsaida. And some people brought to him a blind man and begged him to touch him. 23 And he took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village, and when he had spit on his eyes and laid his hands on him, he asked him, "Do you see anything?" 24 And he looked up and said, "I see men, but they look like trees, walking." 25 Then Jesus laid his hands on his eyes again; and he opened his eyes, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly. 26 And he sent him to his home, saying, "Do not even enter the village." 27 And 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 told him, "John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets." 29 And he asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Christ." 30 And he strictly charged them to tell no one about him. 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 he called to him the crowd with his disciples and 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 life 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 life? 37 For what can a man give in return for his life? 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."
Mark 8:22-38 ESV

v.22-26 A healing miracle that serves as a 'living parable' for the disciples and us.
v.27-33 A conversation btw Jesus and the disciples about Jesus' true identity.
v.34-38 Building upon their previous conversation, Jesus takes the opportunity to reframe their concept of discipleship.

P: God is completely sovereign to act however He chooses—this includes His will to heal, how He heals, or whether or not He chooses to heal at all (v.22-26)

Implications for Us:

1. We must be open to accept whatever God has in store for us.
2. We must never forget that He is our loving Father and is deeply concerned about His glory, our good and the advancement of the Kingdom. (Rom. 8:28)
3. We shouldn't let our own circumstances taint how we respond to others.

Are we walking (and resting) in this truth?

"Who do people say that I am?" What is the word on the street about me?
"John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets." Spokesmen for God.

P: The question Jesus asks is the most important question in the world. It has both temporal and eternal implications (v.27-33).

P: It is a question that we must answer for ourselves (v.27-33).

"But who do you say that I am?" He wants to know what *they* think.
Peter answered him, "You are the Christ." Anointed One. King to end all kings.

P: Jesus *is* the long-awaited Messiah they were waiting for (v.27-33).

"that the Son of Man must suffer many things…" This would have been unthinkable.
"Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him." Same word for rebuking demons.
"Get behind me, Satan! Strong rebuke from Jesus.
"For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man." Missing it.

P: Coming to full spiritual understanding is a process.

Implications for Us:

1. Some of our conversions will be instant, others gradual.
2. Until we get to heaven, we will always embody a mix of belief/unbelief.
    a. Consistency and trust in God reflects growth in maturity.

Are we being faithful to where we are in the process?

"If anyone would come after me…" Be my disciple, become a follower of Jesus.
"let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." Heavy concept and imagery.
"For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it…" Not physical life but identity. Who we are, what defines us as people.
"For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? For what can a man give in return for his life?" Ultimate reality. What is *really* important?
"For whoever is ashamed of me…the Son of Man also be ashamed…" About now and then.

P: Truly following Jesus isn't just a way of life—it is also a way of death.

1. The death of our own selfishness and our own agenda.
2. It is a death that leads to life. (Like a seed.)
3. This is why the Gospel of 'self-improvement' is so dangerous.
    a. It's not telling people the whole story—potential bait and switch.
    b. Sets people up to misunderstand and be disappointed with God.
    c. Sets people up to think they are Christians when they aren't.

Do I have the correct understanding of what following Jesus is really about?

What is the 'tipping point' I am standing on today?
What is God calling me to do?

Visit www.crossinglouisville.com for more helpful resources, including study guides on Mark.
Works Consulted : Expositor's Bible Commentary, Life Application Bible, MacArthur Study Bible, Messages by Steve Hart, Hunter Beaumont, Tim Keller, Numerous Other Commentaries on Mark