On the game show *Family Feud*, family-based teams of contestants are asked to guess how 100 people responded to various survey questions. On one episode, a contestant had to provide the top answers to the following survey question: "When someone mentions 'the King,' to whom might he or she be referring?" Here were the four top answers:

1. 81 people said "Elvis Presley"
2. 7 people said "God or Jesus"
3. 3 people said "Martin Luther King, Jr."
4. 2 people said "The Burger King"[[1]](#endnote-1)

In modern society, just like in ancient society we have a little trouble with the concept of Jesus as Messiah or Jesus as King to whom we owe our allegiance. And even when we know who Jesus is, we, like Peter, often don’t really understand the nature of Kingship. And, more importantly, we don’t understand that serving this king is hard – in fact, serving this King demands everything of us – that we give 100 percent, just as Jesus gave 100 percent for us.

For the past several months we’ve been reading about the miracles Jesus performed. He healed people and he fed 5,000 with just a few loaves and fishes, for example. This passage today marks a shift from these times of wonder and joy to the journey toward Jerusalem where Jesus will be crucified. Mark has positioned this question of Who Jesus Is to be the bridge here. Although Jesus will still perform miracles, everything in Mark’s Gospel from this point forward leads directly to the cross. Perhaps the disciples were expecting their following of Jesus to continue just as it had always been – full of fun and games and marvelous deeds. But Jesus knows what is ahead. At this pivotal point in the Gospel, he wants commitment from his disciples not only to Him as King but to the Kingdom as it really is – one in which love is so strong that is leads Jesus (and us as his disciples) to sacrifice everything for that love. Jesus wants his disciples – the original 12 and us – to be all in – 100 percent committed to His Kingdom – no matter what the cost. He wants us to be willing to give up running our own lives the way we want to and allow Him to do it.

Frederick Buechner, Presbyterian minister, teacher and theologian wrote “Inspection stickers used to have printed on the back, ‘Drive carefully: the life you save may be your own.’ That is the wisdom of men in a nutshell. What God says, on the other hand, is, ‘The life you save is the life you lose.’ In other words, the life you clutch, hoard, guard, and play safe with is in the end a life worth little to anybody, including yourself; and only a life given away for love’s sake is a life worth living. To bring this point home. God shows us a man who gave his life away to the extent of dying a national disgrace without a penny in the bank or a friend to his name. In terms of men’s wisdom, he was a perfect fool, and anybody who thinks he can follow him without making something like the same kind of fool of himself is laboring not under a cross but a delusion.”[[2]](#endnote-2)

So, what does this mean for us practically. I think it means that we love greatly – both God and our neighbor. We wake up every morning and we say, “Good morning, Lord, here I am, your loyal subject ready to do whatever you want in your Kingdom.” Now this is a bold prayer and I invite you to only pray it if you mean it. Because you don’t know exactly what God may call you to do that day. Maybe it is to stand up to the bully who is taunting and abusing another person (and that might mean you then become the subject of the bully’s wrath.) It might mean taking the money you saved for your vacation and giving it to another person so that they can heat their home for the winter. It might mean giving up your need to be right so that you can see another’s point of view and become their friend. It might mean giving up a lucrative career to take on one that better serves humanity but earns less money. It means being humble and being moldable into what Jesus wants us to be. It means living in such a way each day that our daily bedtime prayer, is “Thank you Jesus for using me your servant as you wish.”

Recognizing and serving Jesus as Messiah requires all of us – 100 percent. Jesus doesn’t ask that we give of ourselves just to test our faith, however. We give 100 percent because, in doing so, we show Jesus to others. We lead them to see who Jesus really is because they see Jesus in us. And the funny thing is that the more we invite Jesus to use us in His Kingdom, the more joyful we become in this service because the more we realize that Jesus’s kingdom is the lasting one – the things valued in earth are temporary.

My hope is that we live as true disciples of the King, loving God and others wherever that love takes us – even if it means sacrificing something we think we want to do it. My hope is that we serve our King with everything we have so that others, in seeing us, will recognize Him as king and seek to serve Him also.

1. *James Gilmore, "*[*We Have No King but Elvis*](http://www.whitehorseinn.org/blog/2012/09/14/we-have-no-king-but-elvis/)*,"*White Horse Inn*blog (9-14-12), found on PreachingToday.com* [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Frederic Buechner in Listening to Your Life (N. Y.: HarperOne, 1992), found in Synthesis. A Weekly Resource for Preaching and Worship in the Episcopal Tradition, PNMSI Publishing Co., Inc**.** [↑](#endnote-ref-2)