



Lectionary Bible Study Our Savior Lutheran Church

Lectionary 22

Readings Readings and Psalm

Jeremiah 15:15-21; Psalm 26:1-8;
Romans 12:9-21; Matthew 16:21-28

[Click here](#) to join Pastor Mark for a Live Zoom conversation each Wednesday at 10am.

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Or dial in for audio only: 1-301-715-8592

Matthew 16:21-28 (NRSV)

²¹ From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. ²² And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you." ²³ But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."

²⁴ Then Jesus told his disciples, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ²⁵ For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. ²⁶ For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life?"

²⁷ "For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done. ²⁸ Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."

When a passage begins with "From that time on," it is usually a good idea to check back and see what the time / space reference is. In this case, "From that time" refers to 16:13-20 (last week's gospel) where Jesus seeks confirmation from his inner group of disciples of what the gossip is about him - "Who do people say that I am," and then of their personal assessment - "Who do you say that I am?"

When Peter says, "You are the Messiah," he confirms the authority of Jesus. Following that confirmation, Jesus tells the disciples it is now time to journey to Jerusalem where that authority will clash with both the religious establishment that surrounds the Temple as well as the authority of Rome. In the road trip that follows (all the way through chapter 20), Jesus' teachings and actions focused on preparing his followers for the actions that will happen there as Jesus brings his proclamation of the Kingdom of God into direct, face-to-face, confrontation with the Empire of Rome.

Poor Peter. In verse 16, he calls Jesus, the Messiah, but seven short verses later, Jesus is calling Peter, "Satan." Poor Jesus. In verse 16, the disciples affirm their understanding of Jesus' authority and mission, but seven short verses later, Peter reveals that they are still misunderstanding and/or unwilling to follow the logic of what he has been teaching them.

1. *Why the change for Peter?*
2. *What is surprising about Jesus prediction about going to Jerusalem? That he would suffer? Be killed? Or on the third day be raised?*

The prediction of his suffering and rejection by the religious authorities is actually not rocket science, nor does it require any special divinity on Jesus' part. Given the exalted status now being attributed to Jesus by popular opinion (see the answers to "who do people say that I am), and given his challenge to the authority of the elders, chief priests and scribes, everyone alive then would know that this could only end badly. But the prediction of his resurrection is a different matter. That adds a whole new, completely novel twist. No wonder Peter is unnerved.

3. *Can you relate at all to Peter's rebuke of Jesus and statement that "This must never happen to you?"*
4. *What does it mean to be a stumbling block?*

Verses 24-26 repeat a teaching from Matthew 10:38-39. (*"And whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it."*)

Jesus is clear: suffering and self-denial is not reserved just for Jesus. Jesus is bold to invite others to join him in denying themselves, picking up the cross, and following him. Jesus cuts through any illusion of an easy path to follow Jesus.

5. *What does it mean to "lose one's life in order to find it"?*

We all know how to lose our life so that it is lost. Discovering how to lose one's life so that it is found is to surrender to our life for a higher purpose, to a higher person/authority. And the key to that mystery is to lose our I, and to a higher end.

In verses 27-28 Jesus describes a future day when God's mighty angels will come and judgment will be made.

6. *Do you hear these words as positive promise or as finger-wagging threat?*
7. *In these day of pandemic, political polarization, and racial protectionism, what does it mean to follow Christ in suffering, death in resurrection?*