

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JULY 25TH-26TH, 2020 // BOOK OF MATTHEW

FORWARD (MATTHEW 16:21-23)

A MONUMENTAL TURNING POINT

V21 marks possibly the greatest shift in the entire Bible. Jesus blatantly tells His disciples that He is going to “suffer many things...be killed, and be raised the third day.”

- From this point the seriousness of Jesus' time with His disciples is amplified and they will face exponentially more opposition.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CROSS

Many ask why Jesus had to be killed in order to save the souls of willing people. The reason is that humanity had incurred so great a debt to God because of their evil, and there aren't enough good human deeds to pay for it.

- **Christians don't believe in karma because we know that only the Son of God could tip the scales in our favor.**

“PETER TOOK HIM ASIDE...TO REBUKE HIM.”

Because of the disciples' limited understanding of Jesus' mission, they only focused on the suffering of Jesus and not the outcome of the resurrection.

- Peter, being impulsive and feeling blindsided, pulled Jesus aside and told Him this isn't going to happen. Some of his fear was for his own safety.

MAD, BUT STILL RESPECTFUL

Though Peter was upset, he still maintained respect for Jesus by addressing Him as Lord. We should learn a couple of things from this.

- **First, anger is not evil, but how we act when angry can be. Second, respect for others is a Christian value. Third, we can be upset with God, but we must be respectful.**

“GET BEHIND ME SATAN!”

Jesus was not literally calling Peter the devil, but that **Peter's response was not in line with Christ's mission, therefore evil.** Satan was using Peter's response as a temptation for Jesus to back out of the coming suffering.

- Peter was a “rock,” but in this moment he was a stumbling block. **Tempting others to disobey God is a sin.**

HUMAN CONCERNS

Now we get to the root of what made Peter's response evil. It wasn't that he cared as much for Jesus' mission or well-being, but that he and the other disciples were afraid that their lives would be in danger.

- **The god of this age is self. The pursuit of self is anti-Christ and never in line with God's mission.**

EASY IS RARELY BETTER

Jesus wanted His followers to know that though humans pursue the path of ease, **it is work and suffering that yield the greatest rewards.**

- There's nothing wrong with efficiency or finding a sustainable pace, **but anything of value only comes with blood and sweat.**

THE COST (MATTHEW 16:24-28)

IT IS ABOUT TO GET REAL

Up to this point, the sacrifice had been pretty minimal, but now the hard times were coming. Jesus was about to suffer, and He clearly told His followers that their time would come.

- **Jesus made it clear that following Him starts with choosing to put His mission above ours. We must deny ourselves and take up His responsibilities.**

TAKING UP A CROSS AND FOLLOWING

Jesus said the same thing in 10:38. This is basically the calling of His followers to commit to **being trained and led** by Jesus even in the face of the greatest suffering and struggles.

- **This means Christianity is more than just worship services and small groups. It is intentionally growing in education and application.**

“LOSES [THEIR] LIFE BECAUSE OF ME WILL FIND IT”

It is in this simple phrase that we find a collision with our current culture. We are bombarded with individualism and pursuit of personal happiness. This is directly opposed to the teaching of Christ.

- **It is not that God doesn't want us to be content, it is that He knows the only pathway to contentment is Him!**

THIS IS A LIFE LONG ENDEAVOR

Laying ourselves down and choosing to carry the cross of following Jesus isn't just a weekend or when we need to be bailed out thing.

- **Compartmentalization doesn't work with faith.** When we truly follow Jesus, how we live changes. **It's this lie of having separate lives that's destroying so many people. We're Christians all the time, or not at all.**

ENDURANCE

The Bible holds nothing back when it alludes to how tough being a follower of Jesus can be. Paul refers to faith as a race and a fight and James calls it a series of trials, but both authors knew the reward of **endurance.**

- This is why we **need a good church, to read the Word, to pray,** and to properly **sabbath.**

WE ARE ALL GOING TO DIE. WHAT'S NEXT?

Jesus makes a very practical statement. He says, “For what will it benefit someone if he gains the entire world yet loses his life?”

- Two practical things come from this: **1. Everyone will die and we cannot take our material successes with us. 2. We must ask what happens after this life.**

ALL OF THE SUFFERING HAS PURPOSE

Living a life for Jesus has hard times, but it is also fulfilling and gives us a real purpose. Living a life for Christ also helps others and leads many into His kingdom.

- **Jesus assures He is coming back to reward all of those who've been faithful and the reward He brings will far outweigh any trials we've had in this life.**

JESUS ASSURES US WE WILL BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE

Jesus will “reward each according to what [they] have done” and also punish those who have done evil.

- The Bible alludes to levels of rewards and punishment. **Jesus is the perfect righteous judge that will honor the good and hold accountable the bad. Only He knows the true state of the heart.**

BUT THEY ALL DIED BEFORE HIS RETURN

V28 is often misunderstood. Jesus wasn't telling His disciples that He would return before they died, but that “some standing here” would see Him be transfigured. We will cover this in the next chapter.

- The misunderstanding brings up the importance of study, proper research, and application (2 Timothy 2:15).

THINGS WE HATE TO SAY

- Virtuous things come with opposition. The best things of this life, and the promise of a perfect life to come, call for endurance and commitment.
- If we're to be true followers of Christ, we must face some difficult truths of that decision. It is a cross to bear.

WORDS WE HATE TO SAY

- **Submit:** In our individualist culture we struggle to lay our dreams, ideals, and identity down for Jesus and His principles.
- **Sacrifice:** We focus more on “self-care” than using our time for the greater good of the Kingdom. We fail to see that sacrifice yields a greater reward than selfishness.
- **Endurance & Consistency:** We've become a people that jump ship whenever things are not exactly what we prefer, but it is only through faithfulness we can follow Christ.
- **Suffering:** Jesus said, “In this life there will be suffering” (Jn. 16:33). Life is brutal, and there is an extraordinary brutality towards Christians.

THERE IS A REWARD FOR THE FAITHFUL

- There is a life after this one. If we love Jesus and live a life that honors Him and His Word, we inherit the Kingdom of Heaven.
- Our problem is that **in the middle of the chaotic temporal we forget the promise of a perfect eternal.**
- Regardless of how hard it gets, **we must hold on.**