

## Review

Last week, we heard Simon Peter make that foundational statement: Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God. And Jesus affirmed that this statement was the rock on which He would build His church. Death will not overcome it, and the church will be a powerful force of ministry in binding up the brokenhearted and loosing people from the power of death.

You would think now that Simon Peter understands this, the command would be to go into all the land of Israel and proclaim it, but instead, Jesus said...

### **16:20 Tell No Man**

“Don’t tell this to anyone.” What a strange thing! Why would Jesus not want it proclaimed that He is the Christ? The answer is that it wasn’t time yet. Their concept of the Messiah wasn’t complete.

Oh, they did understand that the prophecies of the Messiah talked about a coming king, the son of David, who would establish God’s kingdom on earth. The Messiah that they were expecting was the One to Whom the Father said,

**Psa. 2:8-9 “...I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, and the very ends of the earth as Your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron, you shall shatter them like earthenware.”**

**Is. 9:7 There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness...**

Indeed, they had a great understanding that the Messiah would come and be king, ruling and reigning upon the earth.

But they had refused to understand the many prophecies that spoke of the Messiah as a suffering servant shepherd. Prophecies like...

**Zech. 13:7 “Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, and against the man, My Associate,” Declares the LORD of hosts. “Strike the Shepherd that the**

**sheep may be scattered”**

**Is. 53:3 He was despised and forsaken of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief...**

**Is. 53:5-7 ...He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed. All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him. He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth; Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, and like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, so He did not open His mouth.**

They had understood a Messiah who would bruise satan on the head, but had not comprehended that satan would bruise him on the heel (Gen. 3:15). Jesus didn't want them spreading the message until they understood what that message truly was. And so, He begins to tell them...

### **16:21 The Whole Story Clearly Explained**

Now that they understand He is the Messiah, Jesus begins to clearly tell them that the Jewish leadership is going to reject Him (Mark 8:31), about the suffering He is going to undergo, and that He is going to be killed, and resurrect from the dead on the third day.

This of course didn't sit right with Simon Peter. What kind of Messiah gets rejected? What sort of Christ gets Himself killed? No, this wouldn't do. The plan was going to go just as Peter expected it to: Jesus would conquer the Roman oppressors. Peter and the disciples would rule and reign over Israel and all the earth with a rod of iron. Now THAT was a plan!

### **16:22 Peter's Misguided Rebuke**

Like a presidential campaign manager, Peter presumes to pull Jesus aside and tell Him what the real plan will be. "Bad PR move, Jesus! Rejection and death aren't good for approval ratings. No, we're

going to stick to the 'Conquering Christ' plan. It's definitely the better way to go."

But Jesus' response wasn't quite what Peter had expected...

### **16:23 Jesus Rebukes Peter**

This must have taken Peter completely by surprise. After all, the last thing he'd said to Jesus got him a great big "attaboy" (Matt. 16:17).

But now, he's being rebuked in no uncertain terms. Jesus calls him "saw-TAWN," which in Greek means, "adversary." As a matter of fact, satan had earlier tried to convince Jesus to do the same thing - bypass the suffering and go right to the ruling and reigning (Matt. 4:8-9).

Now, Peter's motive was obviously different than satan's, but it was evil nonetheless. Peter was focused in on immediate prosperity and victory. God's plan was much larger than that. There was a purpose and a reason for the upcoming rejection, suffering, death, and resurrection.

### **16:24-28 Take Up Your Cross And Follow Me**

**Matt. 16:24 ..."If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me."**

Many times, we are forced to put this statement in today's speech. Because the cross was the instrument used to implement the death penalty, we have often translated this into, "Take up your electric chair and follow after Me."

But now things are beginning to change. Mel Gibson's movie, "The Passion of the Christ," released just a week and a half ago, is revolutionizing people's understanding of death sentence by crucifixion.

Practically every Jew living under the Roman occupation had seen criminals sentenced to death and watched as, under Roman guard, they carried the instrument of their torture to the site of their crucifixion.

This was an act of great physical effort and terrible public humiliation. The crowds were merciless to criminals condemned to crucifixion. Curses, cackles, stones, and spitting would assault the one carrying the cross.

As the cross-bearers plodded their way to the site where they would be executed. They knew, "There is no escape. Today I am going to

die a slow and painful death.”

And die painfully they did. The place of crucifixion would always be a visible area next to a well-traveled road, so as to discourage passersby from committing crimes.

This is the context in which Jesus told those who would follow Him, “Take up your cross and follow Me.”

Today, can you say,

**Gal. 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.**

Jesus took up His cross and is instructing us to do the same. To lay down our lives, to endure humiliation, and to sacrifice our pride and our plans. To do anything less is not to follow Him.