

## The Cross before the Crown

Matthew 16:21-28

July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018

Big idea: Jesus must bear the cross before the crown, and the pattern is the same for all His followers

Intro –

Malcolm Gladwell has made his journalistic career out of challenging long held assumptions that may not be supported by evidence.

For example, he did a story on the gigantic recall of 10 million Toyota cars in 2009 because of stuck accelerator pedals. What if the problem with a stuck accelerator pedal that led to a recall of 10 million vehicles and a \$1 billion fine for Toyota was actually driver error?

Readers may not agree with him, but his style is to surprise by challenging assumptions, and then make his case.

3 surprises in this passage.

May not be surprises to you if you have been immersed in Biblical Christianity for a period of time and are familiar with the teachings of Christ. But for His original audience, these were likely shocking surprises.

1. The surprising necessity of a suffering Messiah (16:21)
  - a. Every word counts in this opening verse of our section.
  - b. "From that time"
    - i. After the great confession by Peter as a representative of the apostles, Jesus leaned in to a clear explanation of what awaited Him as the suffering servant of God.
    - ii. Now that they knew for sure He was the Messiah, He needed to explain to them what He would do as Messiah. And it was a surprise, as we see from Peter's response.
    - iii. There had been hints before this.
      1. 9:15 he spoke of a day when the bridegroom would be taken away from them
      2. 12:40 he said he would be 3 days and nights in the earth
    - iv. But now he's clear.
  - c. "Jesus began to show"
    - i. Indicates He started telling them here and then kept on telling them.
      1. **Matthew 17:22-23** And while they were gathering together in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men; <sup>23</sup> and they will kill Him, and He will be raised on the third day." And they were deeply grieved.
      2. **Matthew 20:17-19** As Jesus was about to go up to Jerusalem, He took the twelve *disciples* aside by themselves, and on the way He said to them, <sup>18</sup> "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn Him to death, <sup>19</sup> and will hand Him over to the Gentiles to mock and scourge and crucify *Him*, and on the third day He will be raised up."
      3. **Matthew 26:2** "You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man is *to be* handed over for crucifixion."
      4. And another half a dozen times as well.

- d. “He must go to Jerusalem”
    - i. Not a mere prediction that He “will go” to Jerusalem, but there was a divine necessity.
    - ii. This was the Father’s will, the Father’s plan, and the Son would willingly submit to it.
  - e. Suffer, be killed, be raised up
    - i. Mark’s account says he was stating the matter plainly (Mark 8:32)
    - ii. **Isaiah 53:3-5** <sup>3</sup> He was despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. <sup>4</sup> Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted. <sup>5</sup> But 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.
    - iii. “be raised” is a passive verb – the Father would raise Him up.
      - 1. Interesting that Peter doesn’t seem to have grabbed on to the last part, only the first two parts.
      - 2. Perhaps by this point he had stopped listening after hearing something he did not like.
2. The surprising error of a **mistaken** apostle (16:22-23)
- a. Surprising because this is “the rock!” The one who made the great confession!
  - b. He took Jesus aside
    - i. Apparently this conversation took place separate from the rest of the disciples.
  - c. He rebuked Him, meaning he expressed strong disapproval and disagreement.
    - i. The phrase translated as “God forbid it” is a rough translation of a Hebrew idiom meaning literally “God have mercy” but the usage was of “No way!”
    - ii. He used the strongest negative in their language – in saying this will not happen to You.
  - d. Why did Peter respond this way?
    - i. Could be an expression of compassion for His friend, teacher, and Messiah
    - ii. Could be “sophomoritis” – the common tendency for someone to get a little knowledge and lot of ego.
    - iii. Still mistaken ideas about the Messiah’s mission, which explains why Jesus began to tell them but then told them over and over again.
  - e. If Peter’s error was surprising, Jesus’ response was even more so!
    - i. “He turned and said to Peter” – quick note and I’ve pointed these things out before in Matthew, these types of details are not found in ancient fiction only in ancient factual accounts. They didn’t embellish fiction with details like this like modern fiction writers do.
    - ii. “Get behind me” is basically “get out of the way”
    - iii. “Satan” because in just the same way that Satan has opposed the Messiah’s work, so Peter is now unwittingly doing the same.

1. The temptation is the same as in the wilderness in Matthew 4 – it’s a short cut to the crown that doesn’t involve a cross.
    - a. “Ease your suffering by making these stones into bread”
    - b. “worship me and I’ll give you a kingdom right now”
  2. Leon Morris – Jesus’ death was so central to God’s plan that to try to avoid it was to do the work of none less than the evil one himself. Indeed, Peter was essentially taking up the position of Satan in the temptation narrative.
- iv. Explains why He calls Peter a stumbling block
1. Stumbling block was either a stone that stuck up on a path causing a person to trip or the term could refer to the bait stick mechanism of a trap that was triggered when an animal touched it.
  2. “Peter, you may not realize it but you are tempting me in the same way as Satan and are acting a trap to me to avoid the cross and take the crown.”
  3. **1 Corinthians 1:23** but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness,
    - a. A crucified Messiah was a stumbling block to the jews
    - b. The notion of a suffering Messiah, misunderstood by Peter so that he became a stumbling block to Jesus
- v. Your focus is on man’s interests, not God’s.
1. God doesn’t see things the way you do, Peter.
  2. **Isaiah 55:8-9** "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," declares the LORD. <sup>9</sup> "For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts.
- f. Lessons from Peter’s experience:
- i. Don’t try to **correct** God if you think He is wrong.
    1. **1 Timothy 6:3-4** <sup>3</sup> If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, <sup>4</sup> he is conceited *and* understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions,
    2. **Romans 11:33-34** <sup>33</sup> ¶ Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! <sup>34</sup> For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, OR WHO BECAME HIS COUNSELOR?
  - ii. Don’t **oppose** God’s work, even if well-intentioned.
  - iii. God is **patient** with people like Peter.
    1. Peter wasn’t off the team at this point.
    2. Peter would make even bigger errors than this one, denying that he even knows Jesus.
    3. And yet He is forgiven.

3. The surprising path of self-denial (16:24-28)

a. Following Jesus may mean suffering like Jesus. (v. 24)

i. Our path is the same – a cross before a crown.

ii. If we want to “come after Him” we will walk where He walked, meaning a path of self-denial and suffering.

1. The invitation is broad – “if anyone”

iii. “Deny himself” is a call to live for the Lord and others rather than for self.

1. **Romans 14:7-9** For not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself; <sup>8</sup> for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. <sup>9</sup> For to this end Christ died and lived again, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.

2. **Romans 15:2-3** Each of us is to please his neighbor for his good, to his edification. <sup>3</sup> For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, "THE REPROACHES OF THOSE WHO REPROACHED YOU FELL ON ME."

3. Our VBS workers could have found an easier way to spend their mornings last week. But they gave them up to love kids for Jesus' sake.

iv. “Take up his cross”

1. This following may even by to death as their Messiah would show by example.

2. They were familiar with the cross even before Jesus' own crucifixion

a. not many years earlier 100 men were crucified near Caesarea Philippi, where they were

b. 2,000 were crucified just 30 years before this conversation after a revolt following the death of Herod the Great.

c. Estimated that 30,000 crucifixions occurred under roman authority during the lifetime of Jesus (MacArthur)

3. To the Greek, a crucified man was utterly humiliated. To the Roman a crucified man was evil and powerless. To the Jews, a crucified man was cursed by God. (Doriani)

4. Our “taking the cross” is different than His but similar in some ways, otherwise it wouldn't make sense that he would bring it up here as a parallel after talking about His own upcoming suffering.

5. He gives 3 commands in v. 24 and all are in the present tense, meaning they are continual, ongoing.

a. Continually deny yourself

b. Continually take up your cross

c. Continually follow Him

i. **Luke 9:23** And He was saying to *them* all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.

Jesus gives 4 reasons why self-denial, for the Lord's sake, brings blessings to us (Doriani)

Series of "for" clauses all through here showing the logical connections.

b. Self denial leads to a **full life**. (v. 25)

- i. We've seen this same statement in Matthew 10:39 so it was a common teaching of Jesus.
- ii. "Life" and "soul" are the same root word and same concept.
- iii. Could be preparing them for possible martyrdom – telling them that they may actually lose their physical life, and most of these initial disciples did.
- iv. Could also be the paradoxical claim that true life, full life, abundant life is found in self-denial for the sake of Christ.
  1. The life of self-focus may be temporarily satisfying but not with a lasting satisfaction and certainly not a satisfaction that spills over into eternity.
  2. Those who served this week at VBS likely found this. There were easier ways they could have spent the week. But there is a joy that is found in pouring yourself out for others in the service of Christ.

c. There is no benefit to gaining the whole world if you lose your **soul**. (v. 26)

- i. Emphasizing both present life and eternal life.
- ii. Hyperbole "imagine if you can what it would be like to somehow possess the whole world"
  1. Every toy in the world, All the money in the world, Every vacation home in the world
- iii. If I offered you one day with an unlimited bank account to buy anything you want and do whatever you want but at the end of the day you lose everything you have and live in complete poverty and destitution on the streets for the rest of your life, would you do it?
- iv. That is essentially the parallel to reality. This life is like a day compared with eternity. Brief, fleeting, like a vapor. If we live for this life alone and ignore the "long tomorrow" we are making a poor decision.
- v. At the same time, we can enjoy the simple blessings of this present life.
  1. **Ecclesiastes 5:18** Here is what I have seen to be good and fitting: to eat, to drink and enjoy oneself in all one's labor in which he toils under the sun *during* the few years of his life which God has given him; for this is his reward.

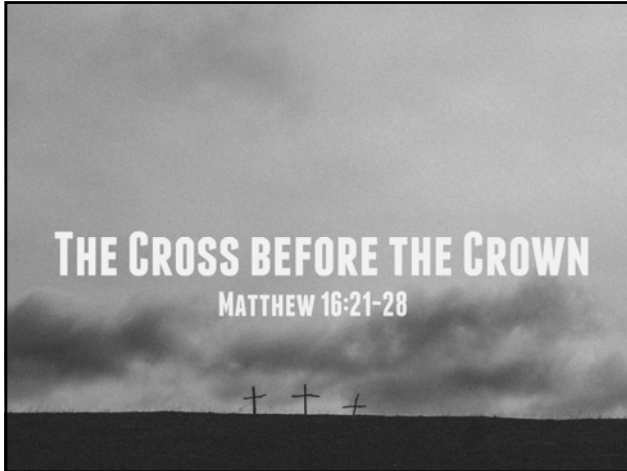
d. Jesus will **return** and when He does, He will **reward** each person according to what he has done. (v. 27)

- i. **2 Corinthians 5:10** <sup>0</sup> For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.
  1. Our good works don't save us, but they aren't irrelevant either.
- ii. Not referring to salvation, that is solely by grace through faith.

e. His return will be in **glory** – the crown will follow the cross. (v. 28)

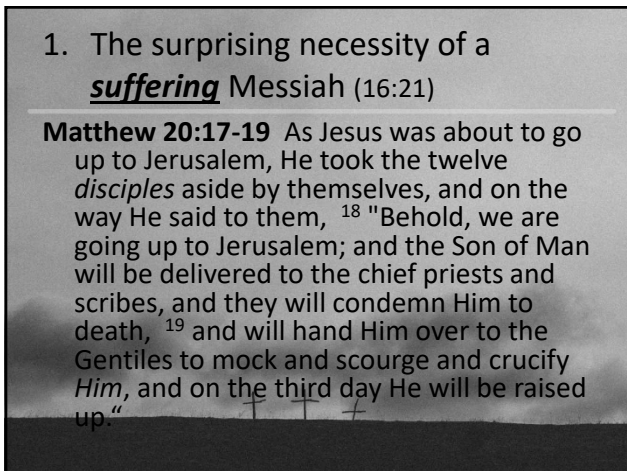
- i. I think the best way to take this is that Jesus is talking about His transfiguration that occurs right after this in ch 17.
- ii. A glimpse of His glory, glimpse of His kingdom, will be seen in 6 days time.

Communion



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