

Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost August 30, 2026

Prayer of the Day

O God, we thank you for your Son, who chose the path of suffering for the sake of the world. Humble us by his example, point us to the path of obedience, and give us strength to follow your commands, through Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord. Amen.

Gospel: Matthew 16:21-28

21 From that time on, [after Peter confessed that Jesus was the Messiah,] 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 hindrance to me, for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.”

24 Then Jesus told his disciples, “If any wish to come after me, 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.”

A bit of commentary this week

Sometimes knowing details helps us focus in on the message that Jesus' life has for the church (the entire Christian movement, that is).

21: “From that time on”—Many commentators identify Peter’s affirmation that Jesus is the Christ as the key turning point in Matthew’s Gospel (Jack Dean Kingsbury, being one such expert). After “this time” Jesus begins to **show** the disciples the events that await Jesus. One wonders if the words “and on the third day be raised” sunk in at all for disciples then. After all, can we truly get our heads around those words even now?

22 *Peter* is the disciple who is like a ‘stand in’ for all the others; saying what others are thinking and doing what they might hesitate to do. Traditional

commentary also holds that Peter is a 'stand in' for disciples/the church in present day. Like it or not we have much in common with Peter and have much to learn from both his better moments and his disastrous failings.

Peter took him (Jesus) aside. The language is rather tame here. The words used for both Peter's action and Jesus response paint a picture of a very highly charged emotional moment—likely with some lapel grabbing and shouting!

23 "*Get behind me, Satan*" The turn from "blessed are you, Peter" and on this rock I will build my church (lots of debate exists about whether the Rock is Peter or his profession that Jesus is God's chosen Messiah) to "get behind me Satan" is jarring! The word Satan is derived from a word used to describe "throwing" as in accusations and even taunting. Another helpful synonym would be "adversary". Peter's agenda and Jesus' are clearly opposed to each other in this heated exchange.

You might recall Jesus ordeal in the wilderness in which the "adversary" tries to get Jesus to sell out his identity and mission. "if you ARE the Son of God...." Peter's objections remind us that there is plenty of resistance to the sort of Messiah Jesus is—historically, many expected a Messiah to be a military and political deliverer, dispatching occupying empires...such figures included the Macabeus brothers, whose revolt eventually failed.

24-*Let them take up their cross* suggests that following Jesus comes with a price. Our contemporary idiom about cross bearing (dealing with everyday struggle) really isn't apt.

25-26 "*Those who want to save their life will lose it*". There are multiple meanings for the word life and different words for the concept. Biology has borrowed one word (zôe—as in zoology) to describe life. Another word for life *psyche* describes the soul or self. So to lose one's life might involve zoe (biological life) or psyche (our sense of self or integrity of who we truly are). The word Matthew uses is "psyche".

27-28 Refers in part to the last judgement. What of those in Jesus own generation who see HIS glory? Matthew (and Mark more so) emphasize that the true mark of Jesus as Messiah is his suffering and rising on the third day. For a member of the violent opposition (the Roman executioner) to affirm Jesus as God's begotten serves as buttress to the idea that Jesus' glory culminates with his execution and resurrection.

annndddd?????

Following a Messiah whose mission includes death (failure in the eyes of the political/military/religious establishment) and resurrection requires a rejection of the present empire and its false promises of endless prosperity and progress. Following such a Messiah involves living in hope of resurrection that God always gets the last life-giving word. For the here and now means living in God's commonwealth (a rough quote of the pastor Josh Scott).

Consider religious groups claiming they know Jesus' agenda—many of the claims are very 'triumphalistic' and couched in conquering and retribution language. Many pastors name Jesus as they seek to oppress women, people of colour, immigrants, LGBTQ people and anyone who disagrees with them.

The church's true calling as it's always been, is humility, service and loving God and neighbour. The church's 'fate' or future is up to God; the one who now and again raises the dead.