

Matthew 16:21 to End. Christ Reproves Peter.

by Favell Lee Mortimer

Jesus rebukes Peter for advising him not to endure suffering, and teaches that true believers must deny themselves and take up their cross to follow him.

Scripture: Matthew 16:23-27, Matthew 17:1

Topics: "Self Denial", "Martyrdom"

Description

Favell Lee Mortimer preaches about the rebuke of Peter by Jesus, highlighting how even true believers can displease the Lord by prioritizing their own desires over God's will. Jesus emphasizes the importance of denying oneself, taking up the cross, and being willing to sacrifice everything for His sake, echoing the spirit of martyrdom in every Christian. The sermon also reflects on the story of missionary John Williams, who gave up worldly comforts, faced martyrdom, and ultimately sacrificed his life for Christ, showcasing the profound impact of choosing to follow Jesus above all else.

Transcript

In our last reading, Peter was called "blessed," and was promised many privileges; now he is rebuked as "Satan." Yes, the meek and gentle Jesus uttered this severe rebuke, "Get you behind me, Satan." Thus we see that a true believer is liable to displease the Lord.

Peter was a true believer; yet on this occasion he acted the part of Satan towards his Master, by advising him not to endure suffering. No doubt he was partly actuated by affection, but his Master did not overlook the fault on that account. Peter ought to have had the glory of God more at heart than to have wished the Son of God not to fulfill his glorious work, even unto death. Christ therefore calls him an offence, or a stumbling-block. Those are not our best friends, who endeavor to persuade us to please ourselves, rather than to please God. We should be afraid to listen to them, and we should prefer the friendship of those who counsel us to endure hardness, as good soldiers of Jesus Christ.

Probably there lurked at the bottom of Peter's heart a desire himself to escape suffering with a suffering master; therefore Jesus told him plainly that he must deny himself, and take up his cross. Nor did he speak to him alone, but to each of us. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself," that is, his earthly desires, for ease, pleasure, riches, esteem--"and let him take up his cross," that is, let him prepare even to die for my sake. The spirit of a Christian is the spirit of a martyr; he is ready to give up all things, even life itself, for Christ.

Many souls have been converted by this solemn appeal, "What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" It was a sermon preached upon this text that first led the missionary John Williams to care for his soul. He was an ungodly youth at the time he heard it; but afterwards he gave up the world, took up his cross, and followed Christ. At length he lost his life in his service. Having landed upon the island of Erromango, in the New Hebrides, hoping to preach the gospel there, he was pursued by the natives. He had just reached the sea, when he fell down, was overtaken, and bruised to death by the clubs of the savages. His blood was mingled with the waves, his flesh was devoured by cannibals, and his bones made into fish-barbs. But will he regret the choice he made, in the day when the Son of man shall come in his glory? When we consider what the Son of God gave up for our sakes, how little every sacrifice appears that we can make for him! Our great motive ought to be "gratitude" to him who shed his blood for sinners; and it is the great motive of all true Christians.

What did Jesus mean when he said, "There be some standing here which shall not taste of death, until they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." He could not mean that some of his apostles would live until he came to judge the world; for he has not come yet, and they have long been dead. Did he mean that some of them should soon see him in his glory? In the next chapter there is an account of his glorious appearance upon a mountain, in the presence of three of the apostles. Could men now see Jesus as he will appear when he comes in clouds as King of kings, and Lord of lords, how mean and worthless all earthly glory would appear!

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