



JESUS OF NAZARETH
CROSS WALKING
MATTHEW 16:13-28
8-02-20

All = bold sections – read together

Leader = regular font – leader reads (choose or rotate leaders)

Sung together = italics

NOTE: Please have a white candle ready to light.

Reflect:

Michael J. Wilkins: Jesus uses the cross and crucifixion as an image of discipleship. Although the image is often understood by modern society as bearing up under some personal hardship or life's cruel fate, as used here by Jesus the cross has a much more profound significance: One must die to his or her own will and take up God's will (Matthew 16:25–26).

Welcome

Good Morning! This is the day that the Lord has made and we will be glad and rejoice in it! Notice where you are presently. Often times we can take things for granted. Take a look around. What do you see? What have you been taking for granted right around you? Take a moment to thank God for what you noticed. Seek to make the most of this opportunity to engage with God and others as disciples of Jesus of Nazareth. As we talked about several weeks ago, seek to suck the marrow out of this time today!

May the love and joy of the Father, the grace and peace of the Son and the courage and comfort of the Holy Spirit be ours in abundance!

Call to Worship: Psalm 8 - To the choirmaster: according to The Gittith. A Psalm of David.

O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens. Out of the mouth of babies and infants, you have established strength because of your foes, to still the enemy and the avenger.

When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?

Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas.

O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

Christ Candle – Light the candle as a reminder that God is Light (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)!

Where is a dark place in your life? Maybe something from a long time ago that still haunts you? Maybe something that you have gotten yourself into but can't seem to get out? Maybe an emotion that you can't seem to shake? Maybe some thoughts that are leading you away from Jesus? Ask for God to shine his light of truth and grace and mercy and love into your situation. And may you be a light to others, pointing them to Jesus Christ.

Jesus is the Light. We are a light. Shine your light!



Song: Behold Our God -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gqrli3Lkf58>

*Who has held the oceans in his hands?
Who has numbered every grain of sand?
Kings and nations tremble at his voice
All creation rises to rejoice
Behold our God, seated on his throne
Come, let us adore him
Behold our king, nothing can compare
Come, let us adore him
Who has given counsel to the Lord?
Who can question any of his words?
Who can teach, the one who knows all things?
Who can fathom all his wondrous deeds?
Behold our God, seated on his throne
Come, let us adore him
Behold our king, nothing can compare
Come, let us adore him
Who has felt the nails upon his hands?
Bearing all the guilt of sinful man
God eternal, humbled to the grave
Jesus, Savior, risen now to reign
Behold our God, seated on his throne
Come, let us adore him
Behold our king, nothing can compare
Come, let us adore him
You will reign forever (let Your glory fill the Earth)
You will reign forever (let Your glory fill the Earth)
You will reign forever (let Your glory fill the Earth)
You will reign forever (let Your glory fill the Earth)
Behold our God, seated on his throne
Come, let us adore him
Behold our king, nothing can compare
Come, let us adore*

Responsive Reading - The Law + Psalms

As we engage God's law through this responsive reading that incorporates the Psalms, let us remember the words of Martin Luther: We are beggars. It is true.

And God spoke all these words: I am the Lord your God You shall have no other gods before me.

Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight.

You shall not make for yourself an idol You shall not bow down to them or worship them.



Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker; for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care.

You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.

O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise.

Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.

How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord Almighty! Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere.

Honor your father and your mother.

Remember not the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways; according to your love remember me, for you are good, O Lord.

You shall not murder.

Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me.

You shall not commit adultery.

You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your presence.

You shall not steal.

Have mercy on me, O God . . . blot out my transgressions.

You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

Keep me from deceitful ways; be gracious to me through your law.

You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

Turn my heart toward your statutes and not toward selfish gain. Save me from all my transgressions.

The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth. He fulfills the desire of those who fear him; he hears their cry and saves them.

My mouth will speak in praise of the Lord. Let every creature praise his holy name for ever and ever.

Centering Prayer

Take several minutes or more to pray silently. First pray praising God for who he is and what he has done. Then confess your sins to him. Follow that up with thanking him for his amazing grace, love, forgiveness, mercy, kindness, peace. Finish with asking for a greater awareness of his presence in your life throughout this day and the days to come.

Song: Yet Not I But Through Christ In Me -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zundjUFazfg>

*What gift of grace is Jesus my redeemer
There is no more for heaven now to give
He is my joy, my righteousness, and freedom
My steadfast love, my deep and boundless peace
To this I hold, my hope is only Jesus
For my life is wholly bound to His*



*Oh how strange and divine, I can sing: all is mine!
Yet not I, but through Christ in me*

*The night is dark but I am not forsaken
For by my side, the Saviour He will stay
I labour on in weakness and rejoicing
For in my need, His power is displayed*

*To this I hold, my Shepherd will defend me
Through the deepest valley He will lead
Oh the night has been won, and I shall overcome!
Yet not I, but through Christ in me*

*No fate I dread, I know I am forgiven
The future sure, the price it has been paid
For Jesus bled and suffered for my pardon
And He was raised to overthrow the grave*

*To this I hold, my sin has been defeated
Jesus now and ever is my plea
Oh the chains are released, I can sing: I am free!
Yet not I, but through Christ in me*

*With every breath I long to follow Jesus
For He has said that He will bring me home
And day by day I know He will renew me
Until I stand with joy before the throne*

*To this I hold, my hope is only Jesus
All the glory evermore to Him
When the race is complete, still my lips shall repeat
Yet not I, but through Christ in me!*

*To this I hold, my hope is only Jesus
All the glory evermore to Him
When the race is complete, still my lips shall repeat
Yet not I, but through Christ in me!*

*When the race is complete, still my lips shall repeat
Yet not I, but through Christ in me!
Yet not I, but through Christ in me!
Yet not I, but through Christ in me!*

Offering

We remember that giving is an act of faith, a practice of hope and an expression of love.

(You can give by sending your offering to the church, P.O. Box 217, Oakdale Ca 95361 or consider giving online through your bank. Our deacons can help you with this if necessary.)

Youth Celebration

Pray for one of our youth by name. Let God know our appreciation for their presence and participation!



Scripture Reading: Matthew 16:13-28

After a short break from our series, we are diving back in! A big thanks to Pastor Patrick from Escalon CRC for preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ last week. His message was about freedom and how we as disciples have been set free from our slavery to sin so that we would follow Jesus of Nazareth as his disciples and not indulge our fleshly desires (younger brother living) nor seek to earn God's grace and favor (elder brother living). The prior week we talked about not buying into the world's thinking nor strive after the world's goals and priorities (caterpillar pillars) but to put our faith in Jesus of Nazareth and learn from him; shaping our lives in his as we bend our thoughts, words and deeds to be in alignment with the truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

This week, we engage what I think is the heart of Matthew's message of being a disciple of Jesus: professing Jesus as the Messiah and taking up our cross and following him. Once again, Peter will be center stage with Jesus, being our exemplar (and not) of faithful and Christ honoring discipleship. There are three very powerful phrases that will focus our faith on Jesus, warn us of disagreeing with Jesus and guide us in living for Jesus. They are:

- (1) Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, the Son of the Living God.
- (2) Get behind me Satan! You are a hindrance (stumbling block) to Jesus of Nazareth.
- (3) Take up your cross and follow Jesus of Nazareth.

This morning we will be talking about *cross walking*. Specifically, we will look at what it means to be a cross walker, the danger of being "cross walked" and the value of being cross eyed. The first will create a more coherent faith; the second cautionary and compassionate faith and the third a more credible faith. This is fundamental discipleship. Discipleship 101.

Please read Matthew 16:13-28.

Gospel Message: Cross Walking



On September 26, 1969 a music group released an album that made a crosswalk one of the most recognizable locations in the world. Yep, the Beatles with their eleventh album, Abbey Road. Another famous crosswalk is the one in Tokyo, Japan called Shibuya crossing. It is considered the busiest crossing in the world. Ten lanes of cars and 5 crosswalks converge in one location that culminates in 2.4 million people crossing paths a day! Crosswalks are important for safe travel from one point to another through a potentially dangerous area. They create a pathway for pedestrians to safely walk across busy roads and alert drivers to slow down and stop for anyone using them. To not use a crosswalk is to "jaywalk" which simply means not walking according to the law or, being disobedient. Some people are jaywalking through life like the lost younger and older brother doing life their way, on their terms and neglecting the way, truth and life of Jesus Christ. Jesus calls us to cross walk.



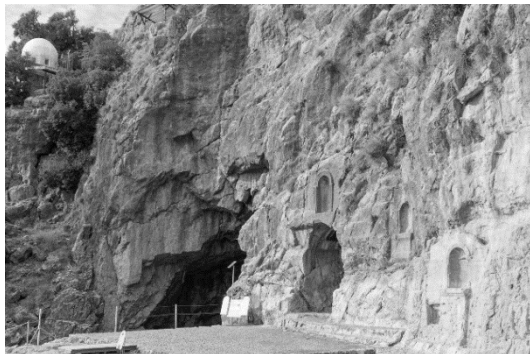
Cross walking does not come naturally. We want to jaywalk; to take shortcuts and to forge our own paths through life. We often don't like taking directions from someone else or to have someone or some authority tell us what we can or cannot do. I have on many occasions ignored the crosswalk and created my own path. And for sure, there are times when this is obviously not a big deal in real life; when there is no traffic and it is clearly safe to cross. However, this is not the case for discipleship



where we are called by Jesus to take up our cross and follow him – we are to cross walk. Jaywalking will get us into trouble. In order to consistently and confidently and wisely crosswalk, we will need to be cross-eyed. So, there will be three parts to cover this morning: our identity as a cross-walker, the danger of jaywalking and the importance of being cross-eyed so that we might faithfully follow Jesus of Nazareth as his disciples today. We will navigate this in reverse order starting with verses 24-28. In order to be a cross-walker, we must be cross-eyed and beware of the dangers of jaywalking.

Jesus tells his disciples that if they want to follow him (come after him), then they must “take up their cross.” Our reflection was from Michael Wilkins who says, “Jesus uses the cross and crucifixion as an image of discipleship. Although the image is often understood by modern society as bearing up under some personal hardship or life’s cruel fate, as used here by Jesus the cross has a much more profound significance: One must die to his or her own will and take up God’s will.” **Cross-eyed is therefore living in a manner in which I willingly align my will and desires and ways and truths with Jesus’ will and desires and ways and truths.** It is keeping the full gospel of Jesus of Nazareth in view; a gospel that transforms our hearts and minds to be humble, others orientated, to hold the truth in love and strive to stay off the pendulum of lostness. This is discipleship. It is counting the cost and moving to the cross. It is essentially to die to one’s own will apart from Christ to God’s will in Christ. Jesus modeled this par excellence when he said in the Garden of Gethsemane, “Not my will but yours be done.” Humility and generosity are core character virtues.

Taking up our cross is the opposite of “gaining the whole world.” Gaining the whole world is valuing and prioritizing the ways of the world over the kingdom of heaven. It is to fall back onto the pendulum of lostness. It is to value anything over and above (or even on par with) Jesus of Nazareth. **Nothing is to rival Jesus. Nothing. He is supreme. He is Lord. He is Savior. He is Messiah. He is the Son of the living God.** The apostle Paul echoes this in Philippians 3:7-9: “But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.” The Greek word for “rubbish” is *skubala* which literally means crap, dung, waste. **We are to gain Christ and not the world because that is where the surpassing greatness is. Jesus is our delight. Jesus is our treasure. Jesus is our joy. Jesus is our security. Jesus is our comfort. Jesus is our light.** When we are cross-eyed we become credible witnesses of Jesus because we take up the way of Jesus – humility and the obedience of faith that see others as better than ourselves and seeks to love our enemies by praying for them and looking to do good towards them as image bearers of Christ.



Jesus and his disciples are in the region of Caesarea Philippi, about 37 miles northeast of Capernaum and the Sea of Galilee and at the foot of Mount Hermon. It has been called “the city of pagans.” This city was the religious center for the worship of the Greek god, Pan. In fact, the original Greek name of the city was *Pania* but when



the Romans and Herod Philip took over, it was changed to Caesarea Philippi. However, the pagan worship of Pan continued. The two pictures show the main sanctuary area and inside the cave, an altar to Pan. At one time, a spring flowed directly out of the cave and for the locals, this indicated that it was directly connected with the underworld, where the fertility gods lived during the winter and came out each spring. The cave was a natural path the gods would use to travel from the underworld. The cave and the spring acted as a gate. **The people of Caesarea Philippi literally believed they that their city was located at the gates of the underworld, or hell.**

It is this setting where Jesus asks his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?” In a city full of false deities (Baal, Pan, Caesar) and pagan worship Jesus asks an identity question. They respond with three wrong identities that people are saying about Jesus: John the Baptist (remember Herod thought this), Elijah and Jeremiah or one of the prophets. Not these. Jesus then asks, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter, the spokesperson of the group profoundly says, **“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” These words and what they stand for are eternally important!** Peter correctly identifies Jesus as the Messiah and as the Son of God. Now the Messiah is an extremely important term for the Jews. It is the one that they expected to come and save them from their enemies. In the OT, the word for messiah means anointed and this term was used only in relationship to prophets, priests and kings. Jesus is the fulfillment of all three and Matthew is bringing that to the forefront of Jesus’ identity. Jesus is the Messiah; the fulfillment of all the OT prophecies and hopes! Jesus of Nazareth is the one who would save them from their enemies. Peter also made it clear that Jesus was vitally connected to the “living God” unlike the lifeless false gods of the Greeks (and Romans). **Peter was making it crystal clear that Jesus of Nazareth was not like Pan or any of the other false gods in the area that people worshipped and shaped their lives around.**

Jesus calls Peter “blessed.” There is that word again! Jesus utilized this word extensively in his sermon on the mount, laying the foundation for that “sermon” by establishing that we are blessed not because we are poor in spirit or meek or hunger and thirst for righteousness but because the kingdom and the earth is ours and we will be satisfied. We are blessed because of what God has done and will do in and through Jesus Christ, his one and only Son, our Lord and Savior. So to, Peter is blessed not because he said this profoundly true statement of Jesus’ identity. **He is blessed because the “Father who is in heaven” revealed this to him!** It’s not the confession that gets him blessed by Jesus but that he is blessed by the Father and therefore makes this powerful profession of faith in Jesus! By extension, the disciples who believed this were blessed too as are we today. Again, not because of anything they or we said or did but because God’s electing grace has revealed this truth to us through the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit.

Peter recognizes Jesus’ true identity as the Messiah; as the greater Prophet, Priest and King and in getting Jesus’ identity right, he is able to get his identity right. Jesus says to him, “You are Peter.” Peter in Greek means “rock.” Peter, you are a rock. Not because of anything you did, but because God’s saving and electing and transforming grace has revealed the truth about Jesus to you (and by extension to the rest of his true disciples to this day). Jesus then says that Peter will play a pivotal role in the establishment of his church. He is going to be a leader that helps launch the global Church to both Jews and Gentiles. This is what Jesus is getting at when he says that Peter has the keys of the kingdom and that whatever he binds or loose on earth will be bound and loosed in heaven. The Church, with its gospel proclamation that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the living God is the entrance to the kingdom



of Heaven. Peter will formally open this door to the entire world when God calls him to go to Cornelius, a Gentile and baptizes him. Peter opens the door to the kingdom and it remains open today.

Furthermore, the binding and loosing will later be clarified in Matthew 18 to refer to the authority of the Church to disciple and discipline, to “let in” and to “remove” from the Church.

Of course, Jesus Christ is THE Rock and we are only “rocks” in him like Peter. Peter, the rock will help establish the Church and the gates of hades (hell) will not prevail over it! The gods Pan, Baal, Caesar are non-gods. **They cannot undo the will and work of God. They are inert, dead, lifeless and worthless. The Rock of Christ is an eternal rock that cannot be shaken not broken nor destroyed.**

May we, like Peter find our identity in Jesus, our Messiah and the Son of the living God. May we, amidst the pluralism of false gods (health, wealth, success, self-esteem, material things etc.) boldly believe and profess our allegiance to Jesus of Nazareth. May our anthem be, “Jesus, you are the Christ, the Son of the living God!” This sole allegiance to Jesus of Nazareth and finding our identity in him creates a coherency to our faith. Coherent means, “harmonious”, “unified”, “connected”, “togetherness”, “clear”, “sensible” and “consistent.” When everything is filtered or viewed through a single lens, there will be coherence. It is when we engage with a plurality of identities that we become incoherent for the differing identities will compete with one another. We were created to have one identity: one who bears the image and likeness of God. Other expressions of this one identity are: child of God, beloved, blessed, Christian, disciple, saint, soldier, cross walker.

But Peter is a cracked rock. He jaywalks. **In less than three verses he goes from being called blessed to being called Satan and a hindrance or stumbling block to Jesus!** Ouch!! Jesus tells his disciples shortly after Peter rightfully acknowledges him as the Messiah, that he would not conform to their expectations. He was not going to be the political power that was going to reunite the political nation of Israel and lead them in triumph over their human enemies but a suffering king that was going to be killed (and raised again the third day – they seem to have missed that point). Peter will have nothing to do with Jesus being persecuted and we can sympathize with him. We would not want our mentor, friend and leader persecuted. What is it that stirs such a response from Jesus? Basically, Peter does not live in line with his own profession of Jesus. Peter disagrees with Jesus. Jesus says he is headed for Jerusalem, for persecution and suffering and death and resurrection (again, they don’t understand that last part). Instead of being a revolutionary liberator, Jesus will be a suffering Messiah, something that even his own disciples, let alone the crowds, have great difficulty fathoming. Peter says that you are not going to be a suffering Messiah. Peter gets in the way. He is a “hindrance” or stumbling block. He does not yet fully get the good news of Jesus. By attempting to admonish Jesus, Peter sinks to new depths of human misunderstanding. The Greek construction used here (*ou me* plus a future tense verb) is one of the strongest negations in Greek, as though Peter himself will intervene and not let his Master suffer and die at the hands of the religious leadership in Jerusalem. **Peter goes from being a rock to being a stumbling block!** Lesson: don’t disagree with Jesus. Listen: what Jesus says is truth.

Peter is going to be a cross walker but he got cross walked instead. To be cross walked is to get hit while crossing the street. Peter, with likely good intentions goes rogue and wants his way and not Jesus’ way. He crossed where he should not and gets cross walked by Jesus! You are Satan to me when you do not listen to me. You are Satan to me and a hindrance when you do not obey me. You are Satan to me and a hindrance when you go and do your own thing, apart from me. You are Satan to me and a hindrance when you change my identity to something other than Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ, the Son



of the living God. You are Satan to me and a hindrance when you operate from a legalistic or licentious posture. You are Satan to me and a hindrance when you defend a country on earth more than the kingdom of heaven.

Peter is a rock, but he still can get things terribly wrong. And so can we. We can become a hindrance to Jesus instead of a help to Jesus. It is easy to fall back onto the pendulum of lostness; especially when dominant expressions of Christianity embrace lost ways as normative. In America, we can be so individualistic that corporate ways of engaging as disciples (gathering as the church) become optional and entertainment driven – options for the spiritual consumer. We can be so nationalistic that American principles of capitalism and democracy and politics shape our faith more than the doctrines and dogmas of Scripture. We can be so materialistic that we can't imagine life being any good or worthwhile without them. We can be so political that we cannot even speak one word of kindness or find one good thing to say about the other party. We can be so focused on comfort and security that we fail to obey Jesus if it means we might get persecuted. We are so soft that we think temporarily not being able to meet indoors is persecution! We can be more American than we can be Christian. We can be more Republican or Democrat than we are Christian. We can be more consumer than we can be Christian. We can be more licentious or legalistic than we are gospel orientated.

May we live for Jesus and not for ourselves. May our identity in Christ and the good news proclamation that Jesus is the Christ drive the way we engage with our American culture – the political, social and economic dimensions. **May we not get lazy and complacent and drift back onto the pendulum of lostness. May we not over-identify with anything in this world and get cross-walked. May we stay cross-eyed so that we might cross-walk as a coherent and credible witness of Jesus.**

Communion Meditation

Professing: (Apostles Creed)

**We believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary,
Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose and ascended to heaven
Where he is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come to judge the living and the dead.
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church,
The communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,
The resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.**

Proclaiming: 1 Corinthians 11:23b-25 (Paraphrased)

On the night of his betrayal, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it saying, "this is my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." After the meal he took the cup of wine and pouring it out said, "this wine is my blood, a new covenant of grace poured out for the forgiveness of sins."

Remember and believe that the body and blood of Jesus was given and shed for the forgiveness of sins.

Song: From The Inside Out --

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=6&v=9azOSb_bONA&feature=emb_title



*A thousand times I've failed
Still Your mercy remains
And should I stumble again
I'm caught in Your grace
Everlasting, Your light will shine when all else fades.
Never ending, Your glory goes beyond all fame.
Your will above all else
My purpose remains
The art of losing myself
In bringing You praise
Everlasting, Your light will shine when all else fades.
Never ending, Your glory goes beyond all fame.
In my heart and my soul
Lord I give You control
Consume me from the inside out,
Lord, let justice and praise
Become my embrace
To love you from the inside out
Your will above all else
My purpose remains
The art of losing myself
In bringing You praise
Everlasting, Your light will shine when all else fades.
Never ending, Your glory goes beyond all fame.
In my heart and my soul
I give You control
Consume me from the inside out,
Lord, let justice and praise
Become my embrace
To love You from the inside out
Everlasting, Your light will shine when all else fades.
Never ending, Your glory goes beyond all fame.
And the cry of my heart
Is to bring You praise
From the inside out, Lord my soul cries out*

Sending as Disciples of Jesus: Matthew 28:18-20 (Paraphrased)

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Jesus. Therefore, as we are sent into the world by him, let us make disciples of all, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that Jesus has commanded us. And let us remember and treasure that Jesus is with us always, even to the end of the age. Amen!