

Matthew 16:21-28

“What do you do with your change?”

²¹ From that time on, Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

²² Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. “Never, Lord!” he said. “This shall never happen to you!”

²³ Jesus turned and said to Peter, “**Get behind me, Satan! (one of you is a devil)** You are a stumbling block to me; **you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.**” ²⁴ Then Jesus

said to his disciples, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. ²⁵ For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it.

²⁶ What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? **Or what can anyone give in exchange for his soul?**

²⁷ For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father’s glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done.

²⁸ “Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.”

The year 2020’s unexpected events brought drastic changes for most of us.

Unpleasant choices confront us daily.

We make adjustments few foresaw.



This Matthew text tells of sudden change.

Peter’s hopes matched many of our dreams.

Peter wanted his society transformed.

Do “hope and transformation” sound familiar?

But when Jesus told him about the change God planned, Peter become unhinged.

For what changes did Peter hope?

What transformation did he want?

What truth so devastated Peter?

Peter hoped what most of us wish to see.

We’d like for our families to live in peace, safety, and free of outside control.

Folks should love and respect one another, be able to carry out their desires and aspirations; be free to worship as they choose.

Peter and his countrymen connected happiness with liberty from foreign control and taxation.

They longed for freedom from Roman rule.

They felt that Rome unfairly restricted them.

Caesar’s soldiers mistreated them, Rome’s rulers taxed them highly, and intruded on their religion.

“We’ll be happy when we’re rid of Caesar.”

Basing their hopes on Scripture, Jews believed that God would someday grant their wish.

He'd send a specially gifted messiah to liberate them from foreigners and lead them to freedom.

A powerful ruler the likes of Moses, Joshua, and David would appear.

Most Jews longed to see that strong Messiah.

That's why Jesus fostered such hope among Jews.

Jesus' advance man John the Baptist appeared as a new great prophet like Elijah.

He promised that God's rule was at hand.

Then John introduced Jesus.

Unlike the stuffy religious scholars and arrogant priests, Jesus spoke at their level.

Folks flocked to hear this compelling speaker.

Sometimes Jesus supplied free food to great crowds.

Jesus quickly gained star status.

As groupies do now, lots of people wanted to be Jesus' friend.

But not everyone got close to him.

Jesus actually cut the numbers reducing the closest group to 12.

He carefully, prayerfully picked each one.

Think of the numbers who aspired to be U.S.

President over the past few election cycles.

Dozens emerged from each of the major parties.

In every decade, folks arise who pretend greatness.
The first century AD produced more than its share.

Many claimed to be the Christ-Messiah.

Jesus differed from the pretenders.

Unlike televangelists, Jesus used no gimmicks.

He actually gave sight to the blind.

No other person before or since ever did that.

No prophet; no miracle worker.

No healer of the past.

Nobody.

Jesus raised numerous people from the dead.

The twelve confidently believed him authentic.

He was the real deal, the true Messiah, they thought.

Jesus even empowered his disciples to perform miracles.¹

Jesus took the twelve to a place in Northern Israel called Caesarea Philippi.

After some R & R at Caesarea Philippi, Jesus asked the Twelve who people thought He was.



King Herod Agrippa had recently beheaded John the Baptist and some thought Jesus was John, the Baptist returned from the dead.

¹ This caught Dr. Luke's attention; see Luke 9:1-11

Others surmised that the long-dead prophet Elijah had returned in the person of Jesus. Perhaps he was a new Jeremiah, the prophet.

Lots of ideas; no consensus.

For centuries Jewish parents dreamed that one of their sons would be that Chosen Messiah,

Because Romans soldiers brashly marched through their towns, intimidated their sons; probably fondled and abused their wives and daughters,

Jewish Messiah hopes grew intense in Jesus' time.

Jesus asked the twelve who they thought he was.

Peter spoke up: “You are the long expected messiah, the Christ, the Son of God.”

Remember the Jewish dream of Christ calling them to arms and freeing them from foreigners.

Christ would outdo Moses, Joshua, and David.

The Messiah would not only bring them victory.

They'd dominate the world.

The Romans and all foreigners would serve the Jews and pay taxes to them.

Think of the expectations people at every presidential election.

“There's hope now.

Things will change.

They'll get better.”

Multiply those longings by thousands.

For centuries Jews hoped for the Messiah.

The twelve profoundly shared those expectations.

They confidently felt Jesus could end their misery.

- **He stopped storms.**
 - **He healed the sick.**
- **He even brought people back from the dead**



Any moment he'd restore Israel's glory days.

Things would really change for them.

Jesus promised change.

They wanted the makeover many of us want.

The Twelve likely expected they'd be high-ranking members of Jesus' new kingdom

What Jesus said and did mortified Peter:

“From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.”

Jesus meant:

No military operation or revolution will occur.

We're not going to get rid of the Romans.

Here's what will happen:

- **We’ll walk into Jerusalem, not ride on horses or in chariots as conquering heroes.**
 - **When we get there, the leaders will cause me extreme suffering,**
 - **They will kill me.**

Three days later, I’ll rise from the dead.

Imagine Peter’s shock.

He wanted change, but not that kind.

He pulled Jesus aside.

Probably in Jesus’ face, he shouted:

“You’re the Messiah. Remember?

God just told me who you are.

Messiah’s don’t suffer. They’re kings and strong generals. This is not going to happen to you on my watch!”



Think how severely Jesus reprimanded Peter:

‘Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me . . .’

Mark’s parallel scripture (8: 32b, 33a) tells us the body language involved:

“Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. "Get behind me, Satan!" he said. "You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men."

When Jesus turned to look at the other disciples Peter was probably in back of him.

Peter resembled litter ones leaves, not the rock people associate with him.

“Get behind me, Satan. You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men," Jesus said.

God sent Jesus to die for Peter’s sins and ours.

That plan included Jesus going to Jerusalem, being falsely accused, being convicted by the religious leaders, and undergoing crucifixion.²

Jesus had the power and ability to resist, but God’s plan included sacrificial love, compassion, forgiveness, and waiting for God’s justice.

Peter objected to God’s plan.

He wanted immediate change.

When we put personal success, ambition, popularity, or power before God’s kingdom, we stand in the way of Jesus’ mission.

We’re doing Satan’s method, not Jesus’ way.

Recall what Satan tried to get Jesus to do when tempting him?

- **Take the easy way.**
- **Please the crowds.**
- **Flex your muscles.**

² Peter later came to understand that Christ had to suffer. See Acts 3:17, 18

And think how we do that.

It isn't cool or popular to put God first.

We keep expecting the world to change so life will be easier, pleasanter, safer, and simpler.

So we join hands with those trying to make a perfect world.

Imperfect people can't make a perfect world.

Norma and I pray together and have been joined in marriage for 65 years. We get along pretty well, but we don't agree on many ideas.

We don't even share the same views on how to treat our dog and cat.

She has rightly implored me to get down off my high horse many times, and I hope that she has seen that my views in the Lord were correct on occasion.

Only God sees through perfect lenses.

1. Jesus does expect change and transformation.

He expects each one to change and act like Jesus.

“Unless you change (repent), you will all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3).

When the Apostle Paul became a Christian, he had to rid himself of vengeful hate and spite.

He'd been passing judgment on people who disagreed with him.

He was trying to create a perfect world.

After Paul began changing, here's what he advised:

“¹ Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to **offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.** ² Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will” (Romans 12).



How do we know God's will?

We read his word.

If you aren't spending time every day reading your owner's manual, I pray that you will begin today.

That's how we're “able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”

Power, force, and vengeance work to control folks for a time. **Unselfishness, forgiveness and love change hearts for good.**

2. Jesus expects change and transformation, but he didn't send us to change the world.

Anyone who teaches that isn't accurately telling God's word.

Here's what Jesus told the Twelve in Matthew 10: (v.7) **“Proclaim this message: ‘The kingdom of heaven has come near’ . . . ¹⁴ “If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, leave that home or town and shake the dust off your feet. . .”**

What priority does following God have with you?

Think how churches try to become popular with music, various programs, and their efforts to change society through political means.

Churches now rarely challenge people to live godly lives.

They don't ask people to give up anything or to change their ways to follow Christ.

Church leaders spend major amounts of time raising money.

Nobody's asked to deny self, take up his/her cross, and follow Jesus.

Who controls your life decisions today; God or some person or group of people?

As the Lord advised Isaiah (2:22 NASB):

“Stop regarding man, whose breath of life is in his nostrils; For why should he be esteemed?”

3. Jesus taught us to remember that he'll judge everyone fairly when he returns.

²⁷ For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he/she has done.”



Jesus lived a perfect life of obedience and he died to forgive us for our failures.

Through his resurrection, he destroyed death. God bless you as you let His Word speak to you, trust in His way, and become more like Jesus!

To see how brash Peter changed after Jesus resurrection, read this from 1 Peter 2:

¹²Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us. ¹³Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human authority: whether to the emperor, as the supreme authority, ¹⁴or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. ¹⁵For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people. ¹⁶Live as free people, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as God's slaves. ¹⁷Show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers, fear God, honor the emperor.

²⁰“But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. ²¹To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. ²²‘He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.’ ²³When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. ²⁴‘He himself bore our sins’ in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; ‘by his wounds you have been healed.’ ²⁵For ‘you were like sheep going astray,’ but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.”

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