

The 14th Sunday after Pentecost
“Living Christ’s Mindset”
Matthew 16:21-23
August 30, 2026
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Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, our text for this 14th Sunday after Pentecost is from our Gospel reading, Matthew 16:21-23.

**“21 From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.
22 Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, “Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!”
23 But He turned and said to Peter, “Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.”**

So far our text:

What just happened to Peter? In verse 17, just 7 verses before our text, from last Sunday’s Gospel reading, we heard Peter confess to Jesus that He is “the Christ, the Son of the Living God”. And what was Jesus’ response to Peter’s right and beautiful confession of faith? **“Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.”** Peter had received the gift of faith to make this confession only by the power of the Father who had revealed it to him. Peter was a Christian. **“Blessed”** to be **“poor in spirit,”** to have a humble, repentant heart that believes in Jesus for one’s forgiveness. As Matthew 5 tells us, **“For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”**

On this rock solid confession of faith which confesses Christ is the Rock of our salvation, Jesus said He will build His church. And the believers in Christ, you and me included with Peter, are given the personally the means by which Jesus builds His church, the Keys of the Kingdom of heaven. Sins bound on earth are bound in heaven and sins forgiven on earth are forgiven in heaven. What power Jesus gives to each believer, to you and me to forgive each other’s sins when there is repentance. And, of course, to bind sin,

retain sin, until there is repentance, which we pray leads a hard heart to admit sin and receive forgiveness.

And there's even more good news! The devil can't stop the church from forgiving and binding sin. **“the gates of hell shall not prevail against it”**. God's work on earth of saving unbelievers cannot be stopped by the devil!

Well, everything seems to be going swimmingly well, except for the truth that the devil doesn't sit idly and watch believers enter the Kingdom of Heaven. He can't prevail, but he will use every trick in the book to lead, entice, dissuade, and dishearten God's people from the God's truths.

And that's exactly what happened to Peter in the continuation of Matthew 16 in today's Gospel. And, you better believe that Satan is hard at work to do the same against each of us, confessors of Jesus.

What did Satan trick Peter into thinking? Basically, that the Christ, the promised Messiah, shouldn't lower Himself to do what Isaiah prophesied in chapter 53...that would be **“wounded for our transgressions...bruised for our iniquities; that “the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.”**

When Jesus said, **“that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day,”** Peter basically ripped up God's plan of salvation that was written before the foundation of the world...you know...the plan of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. (Revelation 13:8)

Unfortunately, the devil led Peter to think that he was smarter than God...that Jesus didn't have to die to build His church...that the church didn't need the blood of the Lamb for forgiveness...that Jesus didn't have to lose His life to gain the world!

Well, through Peter the devil was tempting Jesus to also forsake His work of the Messiah, but thanks be to God, Jesus never fell. Jesus the Rock of our salvation remained solid and steadfast...and called out sin when He saw it, even to a disciple He had just blessed.

“Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.”

Talk about spiritual whiplash! Peter had become a stumbling block, an offense to the work of salvation, the things of God. Peter wasn't thinking God thoughts, but man thoughts. He was thinking about how to preserve Jesus' life, but that was the opposite of what Jesus needed to do! He was leading wrongly when he should have been following faithfully!

Yes, God would preserve His Son's life by raising Him from the dead on the third day, Jesus plainly told Peter, but first, He had to bear the sins of all people on the cross. This is the message which the church constantly preaches, today and always!

“22 For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; 23 but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, 24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.”

Why do we need to look at Jesus on the cross constantly? Because that is where we see our forgiveness and comfort for our foolish thoughts, our thoughts of man, our trying to preserve our lives, our unwillingness to take up the cross and follow Jesus.

The life of a Christian is one of daily repentance and looking up to the Jesus on the cross where our salvation was won! There is no skipping past the cross to get to the resurrection. Jesus did the saving work that He alone could do, to give us entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven.

The devil daily wages war against our minds. He tries to influence believers like you and me that we know better than God how we should live our lives.

When people wrong us, we think that we are completely justified in paying them back for what they have done, and a little more. If you talk bad about me, then I am completely within my rights to talk bad about you and ruin your reputation, right? Wrong! What did we hear in today's epistle? Those are the thoughts of man, not the thoughts of God.

“Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.” What? Yes, that's the part of taking up the cross and following Jesus, that involves people speaking bad about us and then we don't return evil for evil. What else does our epistle reading say?

“Do not be wise in your own opinion.

17 Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. 18 If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. 19 Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord.”

Do Christians have enemies in this world? Of course, because we are followers of Jesus. We should not expect anything different than what Jesus did. Jesus loved His enemies, which included you and me before we became His followers. Jesus died for His enemies and forgave them all.

“If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.”

We see Jesus’ loving invitation is given to all mankind...anyone. Why? Because Jesus died for all people! He carried the evil works of all men on the cross, our evil works, our evil thoughts. And there on the cross Jesus overcame the devil’ griphold on our soul by removing God’s wrath on us and placing it on Himself. He overcame all evil with His good death on the cross! Thanks be to God!

Does Jesus ask you then to die on the cross to pay for your sins? No, it’s done! He asks you to follow Him, doing good to your enemies by even feeding them when they’re hungry, giving them water when they are thirsty and thereby heaping coals of fire on their heads!

“21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

God calls each of us daily, to lose our life, that is deny the evil thoughts that tempt us, and fall on the mercy of Jesus our Savior. Receive His mercy as you come to the altar and eat His body and drink His blood for the forgiveness of His sins, remembering His death that has won your salvation! Lose your life, deny self and gain Jesus’ salvation!

If you try to preserve your life in the way you think, not following God’s Word, you’ll lose your life. And on the last day, everyone will receive the reward for what one has done...works in faith, or works denying faith.

So, Paul reminds us in Philippians 2:

“3 Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. 4 Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

5 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.”

Jesus lost His life to gain yours! And now calls you to lose your life, through daily repentance and gain His graciously given you through faith in His word... and follow Him to eternal life!

Amen.

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Amen. (Philippians 4:7)