

Jesus Revealed as the Suffering One

Matthew 16:21-23

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Introduction:

Brothers and sisters, we have come to very wonderful section in Matthew's gospel.

- Up until now, Jesus has not been so open about declaring who He is...
 - but when we get to chapter 16 where Matthew begins to present to us the final year of Lord's life on earth,
 - Jesus begins to speak to His disciples with openness and clarity about His person and about the work that He has come to do.
- Through Matthew's gospel, we have the privilege of listening in to what was spoken to them in private.
 - Although He gave many hints, Jesus waited until now to begin to speak openly...
 - It was not that He did not know or that He was trying to conceal His identity,
 - but it was rather that the disciples (and even less the multitudes) were not at all ready for the truth about Him...
 - They believed it was time for the Messiah at hand,
 - but they understood the Messiah to be something altogether different than what God had purposed.
 - Though saw Him as more of a political deliverer and social reformer...
 - The last thing they expected Him to do was die on a cross!
- If Jesus had simply come forward and announced that He was the Christ,
 - there would have been a great disturbance among the people.
 - They would have given Him all sorts of earthly honours and rallied together to overthrow Rome.
- But because Jesus did not do these political things, most people did not think He could possibly be the Messiah...
 - They supposed that He was a prophet because of His miracles and teaching...
 - but almost no one thought Him to be the Messiah!
 - He simply did not act the part of the kind of Messiah they were looking for.

However, as we saw last week,

- His disciples had at last come to the conclusion that He truly was the Christ (or the Messiah to use the Old Testament word), the Son of the living God.

- They believed that He was the One God had promised that would come and save His people.
- Peter, as the spokesman for the disciples, makes this good confession about Jesus:
 - He says,
 - “You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God...”
 - And Jesus assures Peter that he is correct...
 - He says to him,
 - “Flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven.”
 - He goes on to explain that He will build His church on the foundation of rock—rock like Peter—
 - apostles who know Him by divine revelation from the Father in Heaven.
 - And he assures the disciples that the gates of Hades will not be able to prevail against His church so established.
 - Even the very gates of death will be burst asunder and the church will be set free to serve God!

Peter’s confession was a marvellous thing...

- It was truly a revelation from the Father...
 - It was marvellous because Peter and the others had come to believe even though Jesus was not acting according to the expectations that everyone had about the Messiah!
- And so it is that after Jesus hears this confession,
 - He knows that they are ready to learn more about the work that the Father has given Him to do...
 - And so in verse 21, we read that He begins to show them that work...
 - a very strange work that went completely against all their pre-conceived ideas!
 - It says:
 - Matthew 16:21: “From that time Jesus began to show 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.”
 - From this time forward, there is a change in Jesus’ ministry.
 - Before His ministry was largely public announcement of the kingdom accompanied by miracles with occasional private ministry to His disciples...

- From this time on it is largely private teaching of His disciples with occasional public teaching and miracles.
- He is preparing them for His coming crucifixion at Jerusalem in just a few months!
- As the passage before us unfolds,
 - we see that the disciples having a really hard time accepting the idea of the cross...
 - The idea of a crucified Messiah goes counter to everything they had expected!
 - Peter, as the most outspoken of the disciples, tries to dissuade Jesus from this plan and receives for himself a sharp rebuke!

Now of course we can look upon the disciples with some amusement about all this...

- We are in the know about all this, and they were in the dark!
 - We can smile at their blindness, not because we think they were stupid,
 - but just because they were so in the dark about what Jesus had come to do just as we would have been!
 - Their blindness was something they could look back and laugh at as well after they came to understand Jesus' true mission.
- But before we get to smug about all this and assume that we understand the cross just because we know what happened,
 - I think we would do well to take a good hard look at what is revealed to us about the cross here,
 - for I am quite certain that there is much here that we are all much too fuzzy-headed about.
 - A recent survey conducted at an evangelical Christian conference found that only 20 per cent of the people attending could correctly answer the question:
 - What is the gospel?
 - They did not understand the cross...
 - They knew that Jesus had died, but they could not explain why.
 - Let us look carefully then at this passage that we might understand the cross.

I. The first thing we see in our text is the announcement by Christ that the cross is necessary.

- Now I am sure that all of you know that Christ **was** crucified...
 - but do you know that it was **necessary** for Him to be crucified.
- . In verse 21, Jesus uses the language of necessity.
 - He uses the word **must**.
 - He tells His disciples that certain things **must** happen to Him.
- 0. What were these things?
 - He must go up to Jerusalem
 - He must suffer many things
 - He must suffer them from the elders and chief priests and scribes
 - He must be killed
 - He must be raised the third day.
- 0. This is the language of absolute necessity!
 - . Jesus is not simply **predicting** that He will end up on the cross,
 - Nor is He merely saying that given the opposition He is now facing, this is something that is bound to occur.
 - . He is rather looking at the cross as something God has appointed as a non-negotiable—as part of His eternal plan.
 - There are no options here—
 - It is an absolute necessity that these things be done.
 - . You should never look at the cross as something that happened and that God then tried to sort out and make the best of.
 - In Revelation, John calls Jesus
 - “the Lamb that was slain before the foundation of the world.”
 - Of course He does not mean that Jesus was actually crucified until He came in the events of world history,
 - but He means that this is part of the eternal arrangement and plan of God.
 - As Peter says in his epistle that was written after he fully understood about Jesus,
 - 1Pe 1:20: He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you
 - This great sacrifice was appointed from before mankind had even been created,

- The great triune God of eternity had purposed that the Son would come and die on the cross.
- There is nothing random about it at all—
 - It was according to God's pre-determined counsel and foreknowledge.

TRANS> Each of the five things Jesus mentions in verse 21 were things that were essential to God's plan...

- . Consider in what way each of these was necessary:
 - To avoid confusion, let me say that I will not follow the order in which they occur...
- 0. First, consider that it was necessary for Christ to **suffer**...
 - . It was necessary for Him to suffer because God had purposed to pardon the sins of His elect people.
 - In order that He might display His glory to all His creatures,
 - God had purpose that the whole human race should fall into sin and rebellion against Him of their own free will...
 - His infinite justice demanded that they be sentenced with everlasting punishment for their sins and visited with the same.
 - God could not break with His perfect justice, nor would He want to.
 - The price of sin would have to be paid.
 - God must act to man according to justice and truth because He cannot deny Himself.

TRANS> Yet, still, He was determined to pardon a people chosen out by Him from before the foundation of the world...

- How was this to be done without violating His perfect justice?
- . How could God pardon a sinner who deserved everlasting punishment and remain true to Himself?
 - In His divine wisdom,
 - God purposed to send His only Son to come in human flesh and to pay the penalty of His people's sin...
 - He would come as their representative to stand in their place.
 - In this way, His divine justice could be perfectly satisfied and His people could be forgiven without any violation of justice.

- In fact, by this method, God's justice and love would be clearly revealed before all His creatures.
 - He would display to them the excellences of His glory to enrich them for all eternity... so that they might marvel before Him!
- . You can be sure that Christ's suffering was absolutely necessary.
- There was no way for anyone to be saved without it.
 - Not only does Jesus tell us that it was necessary here in our text,
 - but we also read of his experience in the Garden of Gethsemane when, just before He was crucified, He earnestly prayed in great agony and asked the Father:
 - "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me."
 - If there had been any other way for sinners to be saved, His Father would have used it...
 - But there was no other way, and so Christ had to drink the cup of suffering...
 - He had to experience the full wrath of His Holy Father against sin.

TRANS> Jesus' suffering was necessary if the plan of God to save sinners was to be accomplished.

- Secondly, and related to this...
0. It was a must that Jesus suffer these things at the hands of the elders, chief priests, and scribes.
- . These made up the highest court of the Jewish assembly or church.
 - We might call them the supreme court of theocratic Israel.
 - As such, they were God's representatives on earth, appointed to render His judgements.
 - And so, in a very twisted way, when they pronounced that Jesus must be crucified, they were speaking for God.
 - . The great horror of the cross for Christ was not the physical aspect (though that was very great and very real)
 - but the great horror of the cross for Jesus was the shame of being cursed by the Father for sin...
 - We are told that He who knew no sin was made sin for us.
 - We are told that our iniquities were laid upon Him.
 - In other words,

- on the cross, the spotless, sinless, Son of God who utterly abhorred sin was counted as the chief sinner for our sake.
- Perhaps you have been in a situation where you were falsely blamed for something that you did not do...
 - and perhaps even for something you would not do.
- On the cross, Jesus willingly took the reproach and bore the same for all the sins of His people.
 - We can't even begin to fathom the grief that He endured...
 - He who alone loved righteousness and hated lawlessness!
 - He who alone abhorred the very thought of sin...
 - There He was, laden with the sins of the world for our sake before the Father He infinitely loved!
 - The Sanhedrin spoke for God when they sentenced Him to death.
 - It was the Father's voice, looking upon Him as the bearer of all our iniquities!

TRANS> And so you see why it must be that He suffer and that He suffer at the hands of the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes...

0. Third, Jesus says that it was necessary that He be taken to Jerusalem.
 - . Jerusalem was the one and only place in all the earth that God had appointed for sacrifices to be offered.
 - It was here that thousands of Passover lambs were offered,
 - It was here that the morning and evening sacrifices were offered each day...
 - It was here at Jerusalem that the great sacrifice was offered in the holy of holies on the Day of Atonement.
 - It could not be that a prophet perish outside of Jerusalem.
 - . As Jesus was to be the true sacrifice for sin that all the other sacrifices only represented,
 - It was necessary that He also should be offered up at Jerusalem.
 - This showed very clearly that He was offered up as substitutionary sacrifice in place of His people.
 - His death was not a mere display of the forces of evil, though it was that...

- Much more, it was an offering to God to take away His people's sins that fulfilled the promise implicit in all the other sacrifices that had been offered up until that time.

TRANS> Thus it was necessary that Jesus suffer at the hands of the Sanhedrin at Jerusalem...

0. Fourth, Jesus said that He would not only have to suffer, but also be killed.
 - . The Bible teaches that there is no remission of sin without the shedding of blood.
 - The wages of sin is **death**,
 - Therefore, if Jesus was to pay the full penalty, He must die.
 - Philippians tells us that in offering Himself for us, He was obedient to the Father to the point of death, even death on the cross.
 - He did not cut short His sufferings, but paid the full penalty.
 - . This is why He told His disciples that He had to be killed.
 - How strange it seemed to them to know that He was the Son of the living God who could give life to whomsoever He chose...
 - They saw Him break up many funerals that way!
 - Yet to be told that He Himself would die!
 - As the Son of God, it was true that He could not die...
 - But He came in human flesh in which He might die and in which He did die.
 - Now it is our great confession of hope that Christ died for us.
 - And that because He died for us, death no longer had dominion over us.
 - We are set free from death and given eternal life, whoever of us has trusted in Him.

TRANS> So here are four things—Jesus must suffer at the hands of the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem to the point of death...

- but there is yet one more necessity!

0. Fifthly, Jesus says that He must rise again from the dead on the third day.
 - . This was necessary because it was impossible, as we saw last week, for God's holy one to see corruption.
 - God would not allow His Son to rot in the grave.

- He could not be held by death, but must be raised victorious.
- . And the reason, of course, is because He was not Himself a sinner, but a sin bearer.
 - As such, after He had finished all His sufferings, even to the point of death, the Father fully accepted His work in behalf of His sinful people...
 - And He declared that acceptance by raising Jesus from the dead.
 - Though Jesus went to His death justly because He went there for our sins,
 - it would have been unjust for Him to remain in death because of His righteousness.
 - The Father could not justly reject the sacrifice that had fully paid that penalty of our sins and had perfectly satisfied His holy justice.
 - He had to be raised from the dead!

TRANS> And so you see that all these things were necessary if God's plan to save sinners was to be carried through.

- Jesus must go to Jerusalem and He must suffer at the hands of the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and He must be killed and raised up on the third day.
 - There was no other way for God to be gloried in the salvation of sinners than this.
- When Jesus first told His disciples these things,
 - They recoiled at the thought of the Messiah dying because they did not understand that it was necessary.
 - I am convinced that one of the greatest problems in the church today is that many who are called Christians do not understand that it was necessary for Christ to die...
 - Yes, they know that He did die,
 - but they are offended at the idea that God sent Him to the cross as an act of justice...
 - To them, it can only be an act of injustice!
 - And I would venture to say that some degree or another, we all struggle with this problem...
 - Yes...

II. You must all beware of the problem of sentimentalism evidenced by Peter in our text.

- . What is sentimentalism?
 0. Sentimentalism is the notion that no one should ever have to suffer in this world.

- It is not the denial that there is suffering,
 - but it is the denial of the divine necessity of suffering.
 - The sentimentalist always thinks things have gone wrong when there is any kind of suffering in the world.
 - The god of the sentimentalist is a god who doesn't want any suffering in the world,
 - but who has to put up with it because it is there.
 - He is the god we cry to when there is a great disaster and who weeps with us,
 - but He is not the God who sends the suffering.
 - 9-11 and hurricanes and floods are not seen as acts of God's judgement, but as things that just happen...
 - To the Sentimentalist, God would never do anything like that!
0. Peter shows that he had a problem with sentimentalism.
- . Now don't get me wrong!
 - Peter did not have nearly as serious a case as some do today.
 - 0) Peter would have readily acknowledged that God in history often judges His people...
 - He would have fully confessed that when Israel was taken into captivity and when they were visited with so many atrocities by the hands of Assyria and Babylon,
 - It was the hand of God that had done it.
 - That as we read in Isaiah, the Assyrian was "the rod of God's indignation,"
 - that is, his instrument to punish his people.
 - Peter believed that...
 - And He would have acknowledged that famine and sickness and the all the rest were not just things that happened,
 - but that they were sent by God as we read in Amos 4 where God says, "I sent this, and then I sent that..."
- 0) If Peter had erred in any way about this,
- it would have been in the same way that Job's friends erred...

- When they saw Job afflicted they immediately supposed that Job has committed some sin that he was trying to hide...
- They wanted to attribute every affliction to some particular sin instead of seeing that we are all sinners together and that God's judgements in this world do not fall upon us in exact proportion to our personal sins.

TRANS> But you see that Peter was not a full-fledged sentimentalist,

- and I hope that none of you are either.
- I hope that you can confess with Amos
 - Am 3:6: If there is calamity in a city, will not the LORD have done *it*?
- . How then did Peter (and do we) exhibit sentimentalism?
 - 0) Verse 22 shows what he did as soon as he heard that Christ must suffer!
 -) He basically said, "No way."
 - He actually took Jesus aside and began to rebuke Him for saying that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer and be killed!
 - He said,
 - v. 22: "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to you."
 -) He just could not accept that Jesus, whom He had just confessed to be the Christ, the Son of the living God, should have to suffer.
 - This just did not fit into what he knew about the Messiah!
 - The Messiah was coming to unite the nation and bring peace to all...
 - It was not His place to suffer and die!
 - This just could not be!
 - Peter was sure it was wrong!
 - 0) I want you to consider what we find in Peter's actions toward Christ in rebuking Him like this...
 -) First, Peter is 100 % sincere!
 - . He just does not believe it is right for Jesus, the one he believes to be the Christ and the Son of the living God—to suffer and die!
 - Peter is speaking out of love for his master.
 - He is sure that he is right.
 - There is no question in his mind at all.

- Everything he says bears true witness in his conscience.
 - Perhaps he even felt like Moses when the Lord threatened to destroy Israel and Moses,
 - “But you can’t! What about your promise? What will the surrounding nations say?”
- . Sentimentalists almost always mean well. They are almost always sincere.
- Surely it is just not right for a young child to be afflicted with a painful disease!
 - Surely it is not right for a teenager to be made a quadriplegic because of a drunk driver.
 - Surely it is not right for there to be poverty and shortages in the world or for people to be wiped out by a tsunami!
-) But I tell you that even though Peter and everyone else who acts according to sentimental notions are perfectly sincere,
- **they are perfectly wrong.**
 - How are they wrong?
- . First, let me say how they are **not** wrong.
- 1) They are **not** wrong to say that the people who crucified Jesus did wrong...
 - or that the drunk driver who injured the teenager did wrong,
 - or the greedy business man who contributed to poverty did wrong.
 - These persons have serious sin and they will have to answer to God for it.
 - They sinned against both God and against the persons they injured.
 - 2) And neither is the sentimentalist wrong to **care** about the person who is suffering and to have compassion on him and to try to relieve him.
 - We saw recently how this was something that Jesus constantly did—
 - He refused to send the multitude away fasting!
 - I am convinced that we need **more** compassion—

- more of the kind of compassion that actually does something in our church and in our world!
- There is no question about that!

3) And, neither is the sentimentalist wrong to call all these things evils in the world...

- God does not teach us to call evil good,
- Human suffering is truly an evil—it is something that would not be if it were not for human sin.
 - It is here as a result of the fall...
 - But it is here in justice because God has sent it...

TRANS> And this is where the sentimentalist goes wrong!

. The sentimentalist goes wrong in saying that these afflictions are not right and just for **God** to inflict upon mankind!

- There are different ways that sentimentalist do this...
 - One sentimentalist errs by claiming that God is **not** the one who sends suffering into the world...
 - that He only allows it or that He can't stop it...
 - Another sentimentalist errs by claiming that God is evil because He afflicts the sons of men with so many things.
- I would submit to you that in both cases,
 - the sentimentalist is saying that it would be evil and unjust **if** God did send these things—
 - That is what is behind his thinking.
 - And since we know from scripture that God **does** send them,
 - the sentimentalist either directly or indirectly charges God with injustice.

. This is where compassion can go dead wrong...

- When compassion is motivated by the claim that God has not dealt fairly with us,
 - with fist shaking at him declaring that “I am going to straighten out this injustice that God has made!”

- And this is so, to a certain extent, even when there is no fist, but a sincere love toward an imagined god who would never put suffering upon His people.
- This is the kind of compassion that Peter had when He rebuked Jesus!
 - He was saying that it would be wrong for God to decree that Jesus must go to Jerusalem and suffer and be killed.

TRANS> I am sure that Peter meant well when He rebuked Jesus!

- He was expressing His love and care and respect.
 - But just look at how Jesus responded to him!
- . Jesus issues one of the sharpest rebukes against this wicked sin found anywhere in the Bible!
- He actually calls Peter Satan and tells him essentially to get away from me!
 - He says,
 - v. 23: “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.”
0. Understand, brothers and sisters, that when you act as if the afflictions God has sent are unjust, you are speaking for Satan!
- . I am sure Peter was shocked by this response!
 - He probably expected Jesus to be pleased that he cared so much for him!
 - . But Jesus saw Peter’s action as a demonic attack against God!
 - There was no injustice in Christ’s coming sufferings—none at all!
 - Through the ages, God had promised that He would provide a sacrifice to take away His people’s sin.
 - And in passages like Psalm 22 and Isa 53, He had made it clear that the Messiah would be that sacrifice.
 - Jesus, going to the cross, was not an expression of the injustice of God, but the justice.
 - But of course Satan, the great flatterer of sinners,
 - considers such measures to be far to severe.
 - God is surely exacting a greater penalty than He ought.
 - You see, it all comes down to pride about man and man’s goodness!

- That is what is at the bottom of sentimentalism!
- . In putting forth the notion that God is somehow unjust in the sufferings of the world,
 - you are, like Peter, doing the work of the devil...
 - Do not ever let such words out of your lips!
- 0. And not only that, but Jesus also tells Peter that he is an offense to Him.
 - . The word “offense” means something that causes a person to stumble.
 - It literally refers to the bait in a trap that, if one takes, causes the trap to close in on him.
 - An offense is something that causes a person to sin,
 - to be caught in the trap of sin.
 - . Peter was essentially telling Jesus that He must **not** do the Father’s will because the Father’s will was not good...
 - This is the very thing that Satan told Eve in the Garden—He questioned what God had appointed for her and for Adam.
 - God’s will is not right...
 - When you approach someone in a well-meaning way with sentimental compassion rather than godly compassion,
 - you are not being kind to that person at all,
 - You are putting a stumbling block in their way...
 - And if they are too blind, they will stumble over it!
 - You are saying to your little child whom you love,
 - “This is not fair for you to have this suffering.”
 - “God has not been just to you.”
 - “Nobody should have to bear something like this!”
 - There will be sentimentalist women who tenderly sought to comfort their suffering children whose children will be in Hell because of them!
 - . This is an awful thing to do to another person!
 - That is why instead of commending Peter for his love and concern,
 - Jesus told him that he was an offense to him and to get away from Him.
 - If Jesus had not seen the trap that Peter had set and had fallen into it,

- He would not have gone the cross and Peter would have undone the salvation for the whole world.
 - Of course, this was not possible with Jesus,
 - but as far as Peter was concerned,
 - that is where his “kind” advice would have led if it had been followed.
- Be sure that you are not found saying things to God’s people that will lead them away from doing the will of God!
 - How many pastors have been led away from preaching the truth by friends who told them that they would jeopardise their ministry if they preached this or that...
 - How many husbands have done their part to harden their wives when they felt sorry for them and did not call them to faithful service to the Lord.
 - How many well meaning Christians have encouraged their friends to be unfaithful to the Lord because
 - “What you are going through is too much to bear...”
 - When the Bible says that God is not unfaithful to give us more than we can bear.
 - Be careful lest you become a stumbling block to others.
 - The most dangerous kind of stumbling block is a sincere, well meaning, stumbling block.
 - An enemy is not nearly as dangerous as a loving, well-meaning friend.

TRANS> And so you see that Jesus not only calls Peter Satan, but He also tells him straight out that he is an offense to Him—

- He is an arrow in the Devil’s bow trying to keep Jesus from doing the Father’s will to save His people from their sins.

0. Finally, Jesus tells Peter what his problem is...

- He says,
 - “For you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.”
- . How well this sums up the problem of the sentimentalist!
 - When you act on sentimentalist principles, you are not looking at things from God’s perspective!
 - Instead of seeing a person’s suffering as something that God has sent to test them or to sanctify them or correct them,

- you look upon it as a great injustice.
- . But what is far worse, the sentimentalist always misunderstands the cross!
 - He may even love the cross and sing of the cross and speak highly of the cross.
 - He may even say things that are true about the cross—
 - He may say that because Jesus has suffered on the cross, He understands what we are going through...
 - He has already been there and He cares for us and feels our pain...
 - That is all true—it is wonderfully true...
 - But the sentimentalist says it with poison under his tongue because he does not think from God's perspective but only from man's.
 - To him, Jesus' suffering is just another tragedy—a grave injustice—that Jesus has to try to make the best of...
 - To the sentimentalist,
 - when every thing is put in the balance from the human perspective, the cross really makes no sense, and neither does any other suffering.
 - The sentimentalist can never say that the cross had to be...
 - For him, it is something that definitely ought not to have been.
 - And of course it was indeed something that men should not have done...
 - They should not have sinned and they should not have crucified the Lord of glory.
 - From the standpoint of the flesh, it never should have happened.
- . But how different the cross looks from God's perspective!
 - 0) When you see the cross from God's perspective, you understand it!
 - It was not merely an act that was **not unjust**,
 - but it was **an act of supreme justice** that displays the justice of God like no other act!
 - In Christ crucified, you see publicly displayed the penalty that human sin deserves from God's hand!
 - That the holy Son of God must take human flesh and suffer all the shame and affliction of His Father's curse in order to set us free!

- Now instead of crying “foul,” you cry “glory to God!”
 - He has meted out perfect justice upon His Son to set His people free!
- 0) But oh what a despised doctrine this is to the world!
- It is despised because it says that we deserve a hundred times worse than what we have ever received in this world!
 - It tells us that the most horrific sufferings and afflictions we experience now are only a small foretaste of the trouble to come for those who are not redeemed!
 - If the Son of God had to suffer so to pay the penalty of our sins,
 - pity those who will have to pay for their own sins!
- 0) Let me give you a test to see if you believe rightly about the cross...
- What do you think...
 - Have you ever been treated (not from a human perspective but from God) in an unjust manner?
 - Has anything ever happened to you that was worse than what you deserve?
 - Has anything ever happened to a child or a nation or any member of that nation that was worse than they deserved?
 - Has God ever treated any human being unfairly?
 - I tell you, if your answer to any of these questions is yes,
 - then you do not understand why Christ had to go to the cross.
 - You are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.
 - You simply don't understand who God is and our sinfulness before Him.
 - You can't understand why it would be necessary for the Son of God to die for our sins...
 - Why couldn't God just overlook the sin without all that?
 - You are so used to living in this sin filled world that it all seems acceptable to you.
 - But you see, my brothers and sisters...
 - The cross of Christ is the very best revelation of God we have to teach us about the Father and His justice and grace.

- Peter did not understand so well because the cross had not yet been revealed to Him...
 - But after Jesus had been crucified, he understood!
 - He understood and he gloried in the cross, just as you must glory if you would be a true a Christian!
 - In his first letter he explains how Jesus patiently bore the cross because He committed Himself to “Him who judges righteously”
 - and that Jesus “Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness, by whose stripes you were healed.”
- If you are like Peter was and you think Christ did not need to die,
 - you must change as he changed if you would be saved.
 - The cross is not something about which to be ashamed at all...
 - It is something to glory in with thanksgiving to God.
 - Next week, we will take up part 2 of this message and consider how we are to follow Jesus into a cross-bearing life.
 - But this week let us first come to terms with what Jesus did for us,
 - and with what the Father did to Jesus for us in holy justice and love.