

## Homily for Pentecost 13, 2020

Matthew 16:21-28

*'Coming behind Jesus'*

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### TEXT

*<sup>21</sup> From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. <sup>22</sup> And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, 'God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you.' <sup>23</sup> But he turned and said to Peter, 'Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling-block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.'*

*<sup>24</sup> Then Jesus told his disciples, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.'*

*<sup>25</sup> For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. <sup>26</sup> For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life? <sup>27</sup> 'For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done. <sup>28</sup> Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.'*

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### INTRODUCTION

When I was a child I had some trouble following others when I was meant to,  
As most children do.

I remember when I first got to go out bike riding on the street with my dad,  
And I wanted to go out in front,  
But had to learn that the right place for me was behind dad.

Later on when my brothers would come on the rides dad cleverly explained that I needed to  
go right at the back to make sure my little brothers didn't get left behind,  
That was okay,  
But I still wanted to be out front.

When we would go out bushwalking perhaps up to a lookout on holidays,  
I wanted to rush ahead along the track,

But I had to learn that I didn't always know the way,

There were dangers ahead I may not know about,  
as a child my place was behind mum or dad,  
following,  
learning.

One way of thinking about the basic problem in today's text,  
is that it has to do with whether we take our place behind Jesus as his followers,  
or whether we want to get out ahead of Jesus and set the course ourselves.

So we're going to look at this text through that lens, if you like,

And we'll see first the danger of not staying behind Jesus,

Second the call to come behind Jesus,

And third the result of being behind Jesus.

The danger, the call and the result of coming behind Jesus.

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**DANGER OF NOT STAYING BEHIND JESUS** (v 21-23) - *thinking our own thoughts when it comes to the spiritual order and so becoming a satanic stumbling block on Jesus' way to the cross*

So what is the danger in not staying behind Jesus but wanting to get out in front?

Well, basically that you get in Jesus' way,

But according to this text getting in the way puts you in some seriously bad company,  
Because becoming an obstacle on his way to the cross is actually the work of Satan.

Last week we heard Peter's great confession of who Jesus is,  
*'You are the Christ, the son of the living God'*.

Yes, they've got it,  
That's lesson 1, who is Jesus,  
He is God's anointed one promised of old,  
The Christ, the Messiah.

But now this week it's time for lesson 2,  
What sort of Christ is Jesus to be?

The lesson this week is not so much who Jesus is,

But what he's come to do.

Jesus begins to teach his disciples that he's come to suffer and die,  
Before being raised again from the dead.

Now Peter can't cope with this.

*'God forbid it Lord!'*

And who can blame him from one perspective.

If you'd been with this master and come into close friendship with him and had it revealed  
now that you were in the presence of God's anointed one,

Of course you wouldn't want him to suffer and die!

But when we read the text more closely we discover the problem isn't only what Peter says,  
But how he says it as well.

He rebukes Jesus it says,  
Really tells him off,

If you like he's decided to get out in front of Jesus now and has taken it upon himself to tell  
the master what's what,

Hence the very strong words back from Jesus.

*'Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling-block to me; for you are setting your mind not  
on divine things but on human things.'*

*Illustration of a 'stumbling block' that is getting in the way on a mountain bike ride or bush  
walk*

*Nothing will block Jesus from his mission to go to the cross*

*Application? Shying away from talk about the death of Jesus, the cross, shed blood, etc,  
because we think we know a better way?*

**CALL TO COME BEHIND JESUS AS HIS DISCIPLES (v 24)** - *you are disciples, now make sure  
you find your proper place behind me, what does this look like? Self-denial (turning away  
from self, cross bearing (embracing suffering when it comes), following Jesus where he leads*

**RESULT OF COMING BEHIND JESUS (v 25-28)** – deep lasting life, beginning now but fully in  
eternity, not *because* of our following but because of the *one* we're following