

# Coffee to Go | Proper 19 | Year B

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

Jesus, discipleship, Messiah, suffering, cost, God, crowds

## SPEAKERS

Blake Smith, Karin Peter

### **Karin Peter** 00:27

Welcome to Coffee to Go where we center ourselves in the scriptures, seasons and holy days of the Christian tradition. I'm Karin Peter here with Blake Smith. We welcome you on the journey. So our question as we pose each week, where are we with Jesus? We have been on a journey with Jesus through this period of ordinary time, the time between Pentecost and Advent, and during this time, the first part of it, Jesus teaches about healing and compassion. But we're at a change point now, and there's a shift starting as Jesus turns toward Jerusalem and what awaits there. So let's, let's dive into what this shift looks like. Blake?

### **Blake Smith** 01:13

Alright. Well, our passage comes from the Gospel of Mark. It's the eighth chapter and the 27th through the 38th verse.

Jesus went on with his disciples to the village of Caesarea Philippi, and on the way, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" And they answered him, "John, the Baptist, and others, Elijah, and still others, one of the prophets." He asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" And Peter answered him, "You are the Messiah." And he sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him. Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the scribes and be killed. And after three days, rise again. He said all this quite openly, and Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, but turning and looking at His disciples, He rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind Me, Satan, for you are setting your mind not on divine things, but on human things." He called the crowd with his disciples and said to them, "if any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow Me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake and for the sake of the gospel will save it." For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them, the Son of Man, will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

So why does this matter? Well, that question, "Who do you say that I am?", is not a question that was just asked that day. It is a question that has been asked for generations and is still being asked today. When we look at the variety of denominations, I mean, there are some argument that we are worshiping and following a different Jesus, because we see Jesus in different ways. So we have to

answer that question. And Peter had finally grasped, or so we would think, that Jesus is the awaited Messiah. And Jesus tells him, you know, don't tell anyone, and that is because this vision of what Peter had in his mind, of who the Messiah was, or what the Messiah would accomplish, was not the vision that Jesus as the Messiah had for the world. And Jesus knew that. I mean, there were, there were a couple things. First of all, every time the word got out, he was followed by millions of people. That's maybe an exaggeration, because we hear five...

**Karin Peter** 04:09

Just a little bit of exaggeration here.

**Blake Smith** 04:12

Yeah, there were big crowds, and we've talked about the fact that he was probably exhausted at times, but this is a turning point in Mark, and Jesus has been doing the healing and the teaching of the crowds, and now they're turned toward Jerusalem, and he has to get serious with the disciples and do some real teaching, because their time is running short. The reality even today is that there are militaristic images associated with the Messiah, just as there were back then that, you know, Jesus is going to come and liberate God's people, literally by throwing out foreign oppressors. And Jesus didn't want those images associated with his purposes. He had come for a different reason, and it was going to look completely different. Jesus instead talked about the reality of suffering for others and for the way of peace. So, not the image that the disciples had, and not the image that some Christians even today have. Peter, of course, wasn't happy with this kind of talk.

**Karin Peter** 05:23

I would not be. I would not be happy with that kind of talk. I don't want to hear about suffering and all the hard things out in the world. Most of the time, it's just too painful. I relate with Peter, right?

**Blake Smith** 05:38

Yeah, I think Peter was definitely there, you know, I think back when I read this passage and think about, you know, why did these men who were happy in their professions, perhaps, or whatever, why were they willing to give up and leave? Well, it was, again, probably at least partially because of this misunderstanding of who the Messiah was and what that was going to mean. And so now they're getting down to the nitty gritty, and they're finding out this is about suffering and about serving and Peter didn't want to hear that, yeah. So we probably would all like for a great figure to come and fix all the wrongs of the world, but the reality is that change, which is necessary if we're going to accomplish the building of God's kingdom on earth, but change, even change that leads to God's purposes, comes with a cost. So it's not something that's necessarily a hot topic to talk about.

**Karin Peter** 06:38

And I wonder, like if that isn't really the crux of the matter, that it comes with a cost. Jesus talks about the cost quite often. We talk about the cost of discipleship. Great theologians have written about the cost of discipleship, there is a cost to following Jesus, and it's not always easy, and it's not always the comfortable thing, and it doesn't always feel like we hope it would, because there's a lot of work to be done to bring about the kind of change that Jesus talked about. So it is that cost, I think, that makes us sometimes not want to hear the underlying messages in the story.

**Blake Smith** 07:26

Yeah? It's much easier to just hold on to this vision of a militaristic leader who's going to come and do the work for us.

**Karin Peter** 07:33

Yeah, or a Divine Being that's going to come and do the work for us, yeah, alright, or or just somebody that I can, you know, believe in, if I believe in Jesus, then the work's going to happen. And I'm, I'm okay,

**Blake Smith** 07:48

Yeah, yeah. So, in our walk of following Jesus, again, we have to ask ourselves the question that Jesus would ask is, "Who do you say that I am?" So, we need to determine for ourselves, who is this Jesus for us? What is it that we're expecting? What is it we're hoping for? Is Jesus the Divine Being that one should believe in and worship, or was Jesus a teacher and healer and companion? Was Jesus one who points the way, points to the way ... God's peaceful community? Or, was Jesus a holy troublemaker who turns the status quo upside down? Or, was he a little bit of everything? Whatever it is, it really informs how much we're willing to struggle and push through and persevere and stand up for as we move forward.

**Karin Peter** 08:51

Yeah. This is one of those Scriptures where you have to, you have to really unpack it to see what's happening here. So one of the ways that we might experience this scripture, this "Who do you say that I am?" Scripture, is to select three words that describe who Jesus is to you, just whatever they may be in your mind when you think about Jesus, wherever you are with Jesus, believer, doubter, follower, worshiper, whatever it may be, pick the three words and at some point during each day this week, repeat those words to yourself just several times as a quiet time of reflection and see what insights come to you as you go through the week. It can be a little mini spiritual practice at some point each day ... stop in your mind, repeat those three words several times, and then go on with your day. See what insight comes.

**Blake Smith** 09:54

Alright. Well, our blessing for today comes from Edward Hayes, and it is from *Prayers for the Domestic Church*, and listen, you might hear some names that you would use as you consider Karin's practice for this week.

Lord our God, incomprehensible one, your sacrament of suffering, the mystery of pain has burst into our lives. We have been offered the cup of bitterness so that we may share in the sorrow of your Son, Jesus, and so help to heal the sickness of our planet. We thank you for this opportunity to explore with those around us and with all the world the puzzle of pain, may we only seek the fullness of life, not rejecting the element of pain inherent in all growth and essential in each search for wholeness. We, as disciples of Christ, follow in the footsteps of the suffering Savior, asking that this pain have special

meaning for us and for all the earth. Blessed are you Lord our God who shares pain and suffering as part of the mystery of life? Amen.

So thanks for joining us this week, listeners. We're glad to have you with us here at Coffee to Go, and we invite you to join us next time for the next part of our journey through the liturgical seasons and holy days of the Christian tradition.