

# Coffee to Go | Proper 17

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

Jesus, Peter, cross, suffering, disciples, prayer, discipleship, scriptures, followers, systems, powers, LGBTQIA2S+

## SPEAKERS

Karin Peter, Blake Smith

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

Welcome to Coffee to Go, where we center ourselves in the seasons, scriptures and holy days of the Christian tradition. I'm Karin Peter, and I'm here with Blake Smith, and we welcome you on the journey. So every week, we look to see where we are with Jesus this week. And this week is proper 17, or the 17th, Sunday in Ordinary Time, the season of Ordinary Time in the Christian calendar, and we are with Jesus, as we make the transition from what one of the commentaries I read, said kind of an introduction to discipleship beginner level, to the cost of discipleship, intermediate level. So this is a serious turning point in the scriptures, as Jesus is shaping and forming disciples. And poor Peter, because Peter, Peter gets the brunt of, you know, shaking our heads and rolling our eyes. But Peter is having a hard time transitioning. I mean, that's just how it is. He he, he just heard, and those with him heard that, that he's foundational to the formation of community of followers, just as each of us are, and he has to be feeling pretty good about that, that, you know, Next thing, you knows Jesus has turned around and go up, Get behind Me, Satan is like, whoa. This is a little difficult here to understand what's going on. So let's hear the Scripture. And let's get that in context.

### **Blake Smith** 02:14

All right. So our passage today is from the Gospel according to Matthew, and it is the 16th chapter, verses 21 through 28. It's coming right after Peter has proclaimed Jesus is the Son of God, the true Messiah. So here we go. 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. And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him saying, "God forbid it, Lord, this was never happened to you." 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." Then Jesus told his disciples "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, will find it. 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, 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. Truly, I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in the kingdom."

We've got this real... We talk about come to Jesus meeting times, this is a come to Jesus time. We've got to be ready when we say something. It can't just be words that come have come out of our mouth. I mean, Jesus says, okay, you've said this, Peter, and you're right. And you were right to say it, and I think you've got it. But here's what it's gonna mean. Peter doesn't quite get it yet.

**Karin Peter** 04:22

I mean, he's not thrilled about what that means. Yeah,

**Blake Smith** 04:26

He's got the words, but now Jesus is going to tell him what it means to have those words. We often in the church have the words but are we, do we have what it takes to stand behind that? It's a turning point where the disciples began to hear the hard truths about what it what is in store for Jesus, I mean, what it looks like for them too if they're going to be followers of Jesus. And quite honestly, it's a passage that makes us really and it makes me really uncomfortable. And when we when something makes us uncomfortable, We often trivialize it. I mean, how many times we say, oh, yeah, that's my cross to bear. But the cross in Roman times was an intimidating symbol of the violent death, waiting for those who defy Roman imperial authority to take up your cross and follow Jesus is to live as a disciple in the face of those oppressive powers and violence and social stigma and systemic oppression, which can and will include suffering. I mean, it's not an easy road. Not many of us want to sign up for suffering. So we're

05:39

I'm just naming that out loud.

**Blake Smith** 05:43

I'm just gonna jump right over that because I don't either. So we trivialize that phrase to take up our cross. And say it's, well my cross to bear like I said, in regard to the everyday inconveniences, I didn't get enough sleep because I've got to do this, or I've got to do that, but that's my cross to bear. I've got three kids to raise, that's my cross to bear, I got to work two jobs, that's my cross to bear. I missed my television show that I always watch last night, but that's my cross to bear. Way, way over Tripoli, trivializing this thing. But standing against the prevailing cultural trends and systems that diminish and oppress others is more than not getting enough sleep or, you know, getting stuck in traffic because we have to drive a long way to work or whatever. And we're living in a world where issues like gun reform, and women's health care rights, trans rights and support for trans kids, and really any of the youth and members of the LGBTQIA2S+ community. I mean, it's it's huge. Racial justice is glaring issue in our, in our current culture. Prison reform. Economic disparity. That is the kind of things that are involved in taking up our cross and following Jesus, because that's what mattered to Jesus. And when we take up one of these, we're standing up to those oppressive powers, that violence and social stigma, which again, will and does include suffering. So that leaves us with some questions to ponder some real serious questions. I mean, like you said, we've gone from, from discipleship 101, and now we're moving into something deeper. Okay? I can tell you the word. I'm saying the words, and it's comfortable to say the words as long as it doesn't require anything of me. But now, I recognize that it does require something on me. And so we might ask ourselves, the question is, are we willing to move from this introduction, discipleship, the beginner level, to the cost of discipleship, intermediate level? Can we

even I mean, can we even explore what that means? This, we're not even to the high level where we're doing it? Are we willing to explore and consider it and have the conversations that are necessary? And what does take up your cross really look like in your community, in your life? And in your circle of influence? Where you are?

**Karin Peter** 08:35

What are the injustices that my community is facing? What are what are the oppressive powers that I participate in? On a daily basis? And, and don't really want to address because it's inconvenient? Yeah. Yeah. Okay, so how do we experience it this week? And it's just what you said, like it's considering those in your own town or neighborhood or village who suffer? And what are the systems or powers or policies that contribute to that suffering? And take some time in your week for prayer or reflection, whatever centering time looks like for you and think about what can I do to alleviate or reduce the suffering of others? What are steps I can take to do just that. So having said that, we we have a blessing today, and it comes from Woman Prayers, the text called woman prayers that I picked up at a secondhand bookshop and appreciate it very much and this is Prayer was written by Regina Sarah Ryan. And we'll give it a shot and see if I can get through, see if I can get through it. Some days are like this, you wake with an ache in your chest that isn't even yours. You know that somewhere great rivers of blood are being shed. Somewhere mothers are weeping over children, bodies strewn like wildflowers. Somewhere, men and women eat a bowl of pain. A man tells his wife that he's leaving, a woman waits in an empty bed or puts her hand to an empty place where a breast was. Somewhere in the screeching of breaks, there is a shattering of glass of lives. This earth is covered in a sea of suffering. If, for a few moments we managed to forget, do not begrudge us our wine, our prayer, our reaching out for a word, a touch, even from a stranger.

**Blake Smith** 11:27

Karin, thank you so much for sharing that blessing. I think that is that in itself is such an incredible example of really getting at the heart of why we are called to take up our cross. And it draws out emotion in us. If it doesn't, if it's easy, then we're probably not digging deep enough. So thank you for that. And thank you to all of our listeners for joining us again this time on Coffee to Go we invite you to join us here for the next round of coffee to go as we continue to explore our journey through the liturgical seasons and the holy days of the Christian tradition.