

The Great Example (Luke 9:20-26)

The Greatness of the Cross pt. 3

Pastor Tim Peck

THE BIG IDEA

As the great example, the cross invites us to find true freedom by denying ourselves, to discover what's truly important by turning our back on the world's empty promises, and to look for future glory by embracing Christ's shame.

OPENING

- How does our culture today encourage self-indulgence instead of self-denial?

DIGGING DEEPER

- Why do you think Jesus warned his disciples in Luke 9:21 not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah?
- Read Matthew 16:21-23. Dietrich Bonhoeffer comments on this passage that it *“shows that from its very beginning the church has taken offense at the suffering Christ. It does not want that kind of Lord, and as Christ’s church it does not want to be forced to accept the law of suffering from its Lord. Peter’s objection is his aversion to submit himself to suffering. That is a way for Satan to enter the church. Satan is trying to pull the church away from the cross of its Lord.”*¹ Why do you think this is? How do you see this happening today?
- Theologians sometimes call this understanding the cross “The Moral Exemplar” view. There are some churches that teach that the cross is *only* an example and that reject the Bible’s teaching that the cross is also a ransom and an exchange. This has caused some Christians to be cautious about viewing the cross as an example. In his message, Pastor Tim says, *“The cross is not merely an example, but it’s certainly not less than an example.”* How does this fit with Jesus’ words in Luke 9:23?

¹Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship in Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works* 16 Volumes (Fortress Press), Vol. 5, p. 85.



- Pastor Tim talked a lot in this week’s message about the “German Christian Movement” and the “Confessing Church Movement” during World War II.² The “German Christian Movement” rejected the cross of Christ. According to historian Susanna Heschel, by rejecting the cross, “Jesus was transformed from a Jew prefigured by the Old Testament into an antisemite and proto-Nazi.”³ What does rejection of the cross risk turning Jesus into today?

PUTTING IT TO WORK

- What parts of your “self” are you struggling with denying? How are these parts of your “self” holding you back from full devotion to Jesus?
- Reflect on the lyrics of this Christian hymn. Read it as a prayer each day:
*I have decided to follow Jesus;
I have decided to follow Jesus;
I have decided to follow Jesus;
no turning back, no turning back.*
*Though none go with me, I still will follow;
though none go with me, I still will follow;
though none go with me, I still will follow;
no turning back, no turning back.*
*The world behind me, the cross before me;
the world behind me, the cross before me,
the world behind me, the cross before me;
no turning back, no turning back.*⁴

PRAYER REQUESTS

²To learn more about this, you can see Victoria Barnett, *For the Soul of the People: Protestant Protest Against Hitler* (Oxford University Press, 1992) and Dean Stroud (editor), *Preaching in Hitler’s Shadow: Sermons of Resistance in the Third Reich* (Eerdmans Publishing, 2013).

³Susanna Heschel, *The Aryan Jesus: Christian Theologians and the Bible in Nazi Germany* (Princeton University Press, 2008), p. 27.

⁴“I Have Decided to Follow Jesus” is a hymn from India attributed to Simon K Marak.