Whose plan is it anyway? Mark 8:31-38

Jesus is telling his disciples a difficult truth about what will happen to him in his death and resurrection, but Peter finds it hard to take and argues with Jesus. Jesus sets out that God's ways are different from human nature: we must forget about our earthly desires and follow Jesus.

Read this week's passage:





Some Christians choose to 'give up their lives' by entering a religious community. Read the reflections of a Novice from the Community of St Francis on her calling to give up a 'normal' life. https://bit.ly/4cZcqnh



Give up some time this week to 'share your life' with someone else, perhaps someone lonely or housebound.



The earliest Christians used secret symbols to help believers to identify each other and avoid persecution. Use a search engine to find out about the ancient symbols 'Chi-Rho', 'Ichthus', and 'IHS'. Design your own symbol to communicate your faith.

Living Scripture

'Indeed, what can they give in return for their life?' Mark 8:37

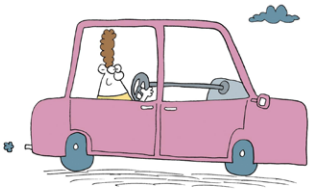
Jesus tells us that your life is more valuable than anything, so why does he ask you to give it up? Perhaps to remind us that while God asks us to give him what is valuable, that does not mean money or special skills. Rather, God wants nothing more – and nothing less – than you.

"Give up your life – then get it back"? Not a straightforward life plan, can't we just hang onto it to begin with? Peter and the disciples have no idea what to make of this. But later on, things will be different. Here, Jesus rebukes Peter, but after the resurrection, when all these mysterious predictions have come true, Jesus will ask Peter another question: 'Do you love me?' (John 21:15-19). Then Peter will understand. In loving, we give ourselves wholly to another person, and this doesn't leave us poorer, instead it makes us richer. This is what God does for us in Christ: he gives us his all and asks us to do the same, calling us to love him and love each other.

When is it easy to offer your life to God and when do you struggle? Where do you see people giving themselves in love to each other in your community?

First impressions

- Would you rather be the driver or the passenger?
- And in your spiritual life...?
- What might 'taking up your cross' involve this week?



Maude was a real back seat driver.

Pray



Loving Lord,
you knew that you were going to suffer many things.
You took it all and rose again.
Lord, even though we're different from each other,
we are all part of your great plan.
We are strengthened in faith and give glory to God.
Amen.



Listen to the song, 'Jesus you have called us' by Joel Payne. How would it feel to hear Jesus speak about his suffering like this? Have you ever felt like Peter – wanting to argue with God? Are there any situations or activities this week where you feel God asking you to give up your plan and follow his?

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