

Bible reading Matthew 16 21-28

Hymn 476- Singing-The Faith- One More Step along the World I go

### **Jesus Predicts His Death**

<sup>21</sup> From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

<sup>22</sup> Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. “Never, Lord!” he said. “This shall never happen to you!”

<sup>23</sup> Jesus turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.”

<sup>24</sup> Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. <sup>25</sup> For whoever wants to save their life<sup>[a]</sup> will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. <sup>26</sup> What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? <sup>27</sup> For the Son of Man is going to

come in his Father’s glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done.

### ***New International Version (NIV)***

### **Reflection**

Jesus overcame evil rebuking it. When Peter tried to stop Jesus from taking about his death. Jesus rebuked Peter by saying “get away from me Satan” . Jesus knew it was not Peter talking but the devil speaking through Peter. Before his death Jesus spoke to his disciples, encouraging them to deny themselves. Denying oneself is to come out of one's comfort zone. It is in our comfort zones that we find ourselves stuck in the standards of the world. Our comfort zones encourage us to live sinful lives. In our comfort zones we live lustful lives. 1 John 2 16 says for everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world. By being lustful we focus on things of the world that perish. Paul said a conformed heart is humble and not boastful about what we have but to think less of ourselves. Therefore when Jesus said to his disciples deny yourselves he meant thinking less of themselves and their old ways. I’m struck by what Jesus said if one hold on to their life they will lose it but if they follow him they will gain

it because Jesus is the way the truth and the life. Hallelujah! Jesus is asking what good is it to gain the whole world and lose your soul to the world. We should not be attracted to the perishable things of the world that do not last for ever but should conform our lives to the standards of the world that last for ever. Jesus said to his disciples those who lose their lives for him will regain their lives for Jesus will come in the glory of God and angels and reward those who followed him according to their works. Hallelujah! This is a challenge for us in this world as we listen to this message. Are we willing to conform our lives and be righteous before God or lose our lives to the world and perish with the world. Salvation is a gift given unto us by God. We are blessed because God has opened our hearts to hear this word. Are we going to deny ourselves and follow Christ. The message is clear let us repent from our sins and follow the way of Christ the way to life. Let us change our ways as Paul is encouraging us not to conform to the standards of the world and he tells us what we should do to please God. Hallelujah! Let us be new creations in Christ as our hymn says One more step along the world we go. From the old on to the new keep me travelling along with you. Hallelujah!

## Prayer

Heavenly father I thank you for encouraging me to deny myself and follow you. You have realised that I love myself by holding on to my earthly treasures. I do not want to let go the things of the world and come out of my comfort zone. It is in my comfort zone that I find solace but you have asked me to leave everything behind and follow you. Hold the hand of my heart and give me spiritual eyes to see the way. I thank you Lord for telling me that you are the way, the truth and the life. Open my heart so that I may hear you when I'm overcome with pride, greed and jealous. Help me to cleanse my heart and be the person that you want me to be. In Jesus's name. **Amen**

*Prepared by **Rev Mary Sachikonye Methodist Minister for (Mile Cross, Costessey, Trinity Thorpe Marriott, Hosford and Drayton) for a time as this. We are a church without walls. We should therefore, continue to proclaim the good news. I will be sending **Words of Hope** every week so that we may continue to nourish our spirits and continue to live in HOPE!***