

Service for Week 24th – 30th Aug 2026

By Chaplain Andy

Our Opening Prayer.

Lord Jesus Christ, forgive our mean and selfish spirits- our desire so often to safeguard pleasures for ourselves, to provide for our own well-being while ignoring the needs of others. Help us instead to give of ourselves freely, just as you gave for us.

Amen

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be Thy name,
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done,
on earth, as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive them who trespass
against us. And lead us not into
temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory
for ever and ever.

Amen

Bible Reading Matthew 16:21-28

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, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!" Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling

block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men." Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it.

What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? 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 he has done. I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."

Holy words, Holy wisdom,

Thanks be to God.

Reflection

In our text from Matthew's gospel Jesus starts to explain to his disciples what he knows will happen to him when he goes to Jerusalem. What he tells them comes as an absolute shock. The disciples can't believe what they are hearing- Jesus their leader, their friend is going to suffer and be killed? How can that be? They will prevent anything like that happening to Jesus, they are thinking.

It was Peter who then takes Jesus aside and says "Never, Lord!" "This shall never happen to you!". Jesus

knows exactly what is going to happen to him and if anything alters the path, he is to take then that must be the work of the devil. 'Get behind me Satan' he tells Peter.

Jesus then tells his disciples, if anyone would come after me, they must 'deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me'. 'Whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it.' We may ask ourselves today what does 'taking up your cross' mean? At that time the Romans ruled over Judea and were ruthless in their methods of dealing with rebels and crushed any riots which may have led to a rebellion. They imprisoned hundreds of people and the worst offenders' men and also some women were killed by the inhuman method of tying and nailing them to wooden crosses out in the sun until they died a long and painful death. It is estimated that thousands of people were killed in this way by the Romans.

Those condemned to die were made to carry the heavy crossbeam of the wooden cross on their way along the road as Jesus was. Everyone who saw them knew from the cross they were carrying that they were on their way to die. When Jesus said 'take up your cross', he means not that we should be prepared to die, although professing to be a Christian in several parts of the world today may endanger

your life and even lead to being killed, but thankfully not in the U.K. It means submitting to a different way in life. Of showing all that we are prepared to face opposition and ridicule for our faith and that we are prepared to sacrifice our own desires in order to serve others.

Jesus goes on to say that 'whoever wants to save their life will lose it'. To 'lose your life' does not mean to physically die, what Jesus is asking us to do is give up the selfish human aspect of our lives, to reject and be dead to sin and wrongdoing. If we do that then we will find through our relationship with God what life is truly all about, as Jesus said in John's gospel "I have come that you may have life, and have it to the full."

Jesus tells us that what is most important in life, more than earthly things and material possessions is our soul -and our personal relationship with God. As Jesus said- what good will it be for us if we have all the riches in the world yet lose our relationship with God? **Amen**

Closing prayer

Lord Jesus, it is easy to think of taking up my cross and following you, but the reality is different. Give me a heart Lord overflowing with generosity, eager to share the good things you have given to me.

Amen

Prayers inspired by Prayerfully Yours by Nick Fawcett