

Lord of all power and might, the author and giver of all good things: Graft in our hearts the love of your Name; increase in us true religion; nourish us with all goodness; and bring forth in us the fruit of good works; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. *Amen.*

### LOOK

Have you 'hit the wall' in regard to pandemic life? What was that like for you? What contributed to it? What helped?

### BOOK

#### Matthew 16:21-28

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 must never happen 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 his kingdom."

- 1) Why did Peter react so strongly to what Jesus was saying? (he wanted Jesus to be powerful and make change)
- 2) Discuss how Peter's response could be seen by Jesus as from Satan.
- 3) What are the earthly things Peter is focused on? What are the heavenly things Jesus is focused on?
- 4) Those who strive to save their lives will lose them; those who lose their lives for my sake will find them. What kind of death is Jesus talking about here? What does losing your life look like?

### TOOK

Peter responds to Jesus' remarks about his death with well-meaning concern. How do we counter the challenges Jesus makes to us with reasonable rebukes? (God wouldn't really want me to give up my life, home, job, family).

What do you need to let go of in order to follow Jesus to the cross?

How has the pandemic affected the way you view this passage? As a culture and a country, what are we dying to? What new life are we called to live? How are we to shift our focus from the earthly to the heavenly?

Share a time when you thought something had died, only to find it transformed into something new. What might be dying now for you, and

how might God be transforming that death into something new?

Name one thing you can do to cope with the changes that pandemic brings. Pray, give up control, bring hope, watch for God at work, be gentle with yourself, savor the moment, look for the helpers, be a helper yourself.