



The Road Ahead

First Friday in Lent

Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, 'Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.' **Mark 8:31-33**

I can understand Peter's reaction to this news. It isn't exactly the kind of thing that a man of action, like Peter, is going to take sitting down. I can hear him declaring: "We'll just see about that!" Taking Jesus aside, away from the others (nothing was to be gained by embarrassing him before them), Peter sets out to talk some sense into him.

Rejection, suffering and death were not at all a part of the script for Israel's long-awaited Messiah—at least as they and everyone else read it—and it sure wasn't what they had signed on for when they had chosen to follow Jesus—conflict, even bloodshed, but not a quiet acceptance of rejection, suffering and death. If this is what Jesus anticipated for himself, what, Peter wondered, did he anticipate for them?

Get behind me, Satan! Jesus said to him while looking at the disciples behind him—a clear indication that the rebuke was meant for them as well. The words had to sting deeply, but this was Satan talking through the fears and the expectations of Peter. In the days after his baptism, Satan already had tempted Jesus to be Messiah on the world's terms, and this is now what Peter desires for the one he calls "Lord." Jesus, though, recognizes that God has another plan.

Jesus' rebuke of Peter reminded him and it reminds us, too, where disciples really belong—behind Jesus, following his example, even if it is to Jerusalem and to a cross.

Prayer

Help me, dear Lord, to walk in your ways and to do your will in this day. Amen.