

Seedling Group Questions for the week of September 16 – Lectionary 24B

The sermon for September 16 can be found at www.saidanotherway.org

Questions for opening up

When was the last time you wandered off track on your way to somewhere else? What happened?

Which person (other than your spouse) could give the best description of who you are? Explain why.

Read Isaiah 50:4-9a

This section is taken from the part of Isaiah that has come to be known as “The Suffering Servant,” and early Christians found it to be an apt prophecy of Jesus’ ministry. Which lines/verses point most clearly to Christ? Which ones seem to contradict or confuse your understanding of Christ, and why?

What could be gained from this type of teacher or leader?

Is this type of leadership considered a worthy or honorable model in our world today? Where? Can you give examples?

Read Mark 8:27-38

What is the significance of Jesus’ link to John the Baptist, Elijah, and the prophets?

What is Jesus hush-hush about? What, in contrast, does he declare openly? Why the difference?

Putting things together

According to verses 34-38, what is involved in being a follower of Christ? In your observation, do you think this how the church typically frames or “advertises” discipleship?

Pastor Phillip says, “Like little Caesarea Philippi all over the place [social media, etc.], we construct all kinds of facades and monuments that we want people to think about when they think about us, when really they should look at us and see someone carrying a cross.” What are the challenges surrounding identity in culture today?

How might people look at Jesus followers in the midst of these challenges and see people “who carry the cross”? How do commands like “deny yourself” and “lose your life” come across in today’s world?

Making it personal

In *The Cost of Discipleship*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer says, **“The cross is laid on every Christian. The first Christ-suffering which every man must experience is the call to abandon the attachments of this world. It is that dying of the old man which is the result of his encounter with Christ.”**

How has your faith in Jesus caused you to “abandon the attachments of this world”?

How would you concisely answer the question, “Who is Jesus and why does he matter?”

Isaiah 50:4-9a

⁴The Lord God has given me
the tongue of a teacher,
that I may know how to sustain
the weary with a word.
Morning by morning he wakens—
wakens my ear
to listen as those who are taught.
⁵The Lord God has opened my ear,
and I was not rebellious,
I did not turn backward.
⁶I gave my back to those who struck me,
and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard;
I did not hide my face
from insult and spitting.

⁷The Lord God helps me;
therefore I have not been disgraced;
therefore I have set my face like flint,
and I know that I shall not be put to shame;
⁸he who vindicates me is near.
Who will contend with me?
Let us stand up together.
Who are my adversaries?
Let them confront me.
^{9a}It is the Lord God who helps me;
who will declare me guilty?

Mark 8:27-38

²⁷Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" ²⁸And they answered him, "John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets." ²⁹He asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Messiah." ³⁰And he sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him.

³¹Then 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. ³²He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. ³³But 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."

³⁴He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ³⁵For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of

the gospel, will save it. ³⁶For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? ³⁷Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? ³⁸Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”