

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit

When it comes to Calvary, there are no fifty shades of grey.
Jesus speaks of only two ways: God's way and Satan's way—and nothing in between.
And though, just a few verses earlier, Peter made his great confession that Jesus is the Christ,
he quickly took up Satan's way when it came to Calvary.
He wouldn't have *that* sort of Christ.

Calvary, you know, is where the cross takes place.
It's where *Golgotha* is—the place of the skull.
It's bloody and dirty, full of cries and bones and death and shame.
It's the sort of place we'd typically look at and say: "*that's bad.*"

So did Peter.
When he heard Jesus' plans for being Christ, Peter spoke his "*that's bad*" over Calvary.
When Jesus said it's *necessary* for the Son of Man
*"to go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes,
and be killed, and on the third day be raised"* (Mt 16:21),
Peter said "*No.*"

In fact, the text says:
"he took Him aside, and rebuked Him, and said 'Lord, have mercy on you.'" (16:22)

Peter had decided to know nothing other than Christ and Him *successful*.
He could only hold on to a living Jesus—
one who rises to power,
and gains multitudes of followers,
and who turns everything He touches to gold.

But that's not the Calvary way.
That sort of story has been told a hundred times and more—but it never saved anyone.
That's what myths are about and fairy tales and fortune 500 companies.
They're about delivering hope and ambition and a good feeling deep inside—
but they've never brought anyone back from the dead—
they've never taken sin away.

For that, you need the Calvary Christ.
The Christ who picks up His cross and walks a very lonely way.
To have Christ without Calvary is to have a false Christ—no Christ at all—
and certainly no salvation to go with Him.

And because Peter has certainly got Christ all wrong, he get's Satan's rebuke:
*"Get behind Me, Satan!
For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man."* (16:23)

The ways of man are never as clear cut as it is at Calvary.

We prefer grey—a little of this and a little of that, moderation, the golden middle, and so on.
We think that it's the thought that counts, or a good effort, or batting over .500.

But with Jesus there's no plan B, or going part way.
There's no salvation-lite or detour around Calvary and into glory.
For Jesus, Calvary *is* the Glory of God.
Death *is* life; humiliation *is* glorification; the criminal's cross *is* the throne of God.

But for Peter, and for us, that makes no sense at all.

It's foolishness to look at a dead man and call Him the living God.
Foolish to call losing, winning; and certain defeat, victory.
That's why St. Paul called the preaching of the cross *foolishness*.
Because when it comes to Calvary, to the suffering, death, and resurrection of Christ—
everything gets turned on its head.

St. Paul determined to know nothing but Christ and Him crucified.
St. Peter determined the opposite.
His Christ wouldn't go *that* way.
He'd keep the miracles, and the multitudes, and the healings and exorcisms and the best wine.
He'd keep sticking it to the Pharisees, and one-upping the teachers of the Law.
He'd cleanse the temple twice over and pay his taxes from the mouths of fish.
He could listen to this Christ all day long—
just as long as He doesn't mention Calvary.

To that sort of Christ—
that cross-less, pain-free, successful, victorious, apart-from-Calvary-sort of Christ—
get behind me, Satan!

As Jesus said, He *must* go the way of the cross,
and suffer death at the hands of the chief-priests, scribes, and Pharisees;
and on the third day, rise.

He *must* do it, because that's the only way to be Christ.
That's the way the Old Testament prepared the saints of old.
That's the way the Book of Revelation describes the vision of all time:
the Lamb was slain before the foundation of the world. (Rev 13:8)
It was for the cross that God became man in Jesus;
for the cross that the Angels sang His praises and the shepherds knelt in awe;
for the cross that He was baptized;
for the cross that He preached good news
and healed the sick and freed the prisoners and cast out the demons.

It was all for the sake of the cross.
Because that's what is to be Christ—
to suffer under Pontius Pilate, be crucified, buried, and on the third day, rise again.

But all that Christ is and all that the Christ does—Calvary included—is *for you*.
 Jesus doesn't do anything to keep His distance from you.
 In fact, it's just the opposite: everything is for your sake, for your life, with Him.
 So He says, "*follow me.*"

"If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?"

But how?
 How are we to follow Him on the Calvary road?
 How are we to be the Christ?

To follow Jesus is to be brought into His life.
 And that happens through Baptism.
 St. Paul says,

"Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with Him in a death like His, we shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His." (Rom 6:3-5)

You are the Baptized.
 You are those united with Christ in His death and His resurrection.
 Your suffering and death can't save you. But His can and does.
 Your cross is the one given you by water with the Word.
 There you were joined to Jesus:
 you put on Christ, you were clothed with Him and called by His name.

So don't go looking for a cross, as if you get to pick your own.
 You've already got one.
 It was put on your forehead and on your heart—
 and it marked you as one redeemed by Christ the Crucified.

So "*make the sign of the cross,*" the Catechism says, "*every morning and every evening,*"
 remembering your baptism.

For there, in those waters, you saved your life by losing it;
 and you forfeited the world to gain your soul.

And now you have the mind of Christ.
 Which means you walk the Calvary way—the lonely way of suffering, persecution, and rejection.
 Live as though dead to this world; for you've died, and your life is now hid with God in Christ.

So what goes for Christ, goes for you—for you've been baptized into Him.

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