

Sideways with Jesus

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

We all understand cause and effect, and thusly we look for causes when we see undesirable effects. It's simply human nature. However when we apply this clockwork universe idea to "good and evil", it becomes much more problematic.

1. Talk about things people say that refer to this cause and effect idea? For example "he got what he deserved". [Leader's note: Also discuss the classic: "How could God let this happen?"]
2. How do you feel these phrases help or hinder people, when they are dealing with a difficult situation?
3. Do you feel that a person makes the events, or that events make the person? Or is there perhaps another option?

Book

Matthew 16:21-28

Peter find himself starkly at odds with Jesus' intentions in this passage. Perhaps even more interesting is how he addresses all the disciples with "If any want to become my followers". Something is different now about the expectations of the disciples.

1. Why is it significant that this passage starts with the phrase "From that time on"?
2. Being honest for a moment, in what way do you sympathize with Peter in this passage?
3. How much of what Jesus states to the disciples do you feel is addressing internal motivation versus external action?

Took

Discipleship is messy. It can be difficult in a worldly physical way. It can be even more straining from an introspective angle as well. We all want, and perhaps expect, our lives in faith to be "easy". It is the difficult times that we can find ourselves distorting Jesus' calling to us.

1. How can looking for causes for events get in the way of hearing God's call for us?
2. What is a "human thing" that routinely gets in the way of focusing on the "divine things" of discipleship?
3. How can you practice, this week, listening better for God's call for you and being the "effect" as a response to a situation?