

Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost, Year A

Deceived No More

Matthew 16:21-28

Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Analysis by Glenn L. Monson

21 From that time on, 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. 22 And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you." 23 But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance[\[a\]](#) to me, for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.

24 Then Jesus told his disciples, "If any wish to come after me, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. 25 For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. 26 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?

27 "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. 28 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."



*Domine, Quo Vadis – Annibale Carracci –
[From Wikimedia Commons](#)*

Christ denies himself, takes up the Cross, loses his life, forfeits his life, all that we might gain our life.

DIAGNOSIS: Satan the Life Giver

Step 1: Initial Diagnosis (External Problem): Human Things

Satan is championing life! Now there's a novel concept. We thought he was the Dealer of Death, the Deceiver, the pitchfork carrying lord of Dante's Inferno. It turns out he wants life for

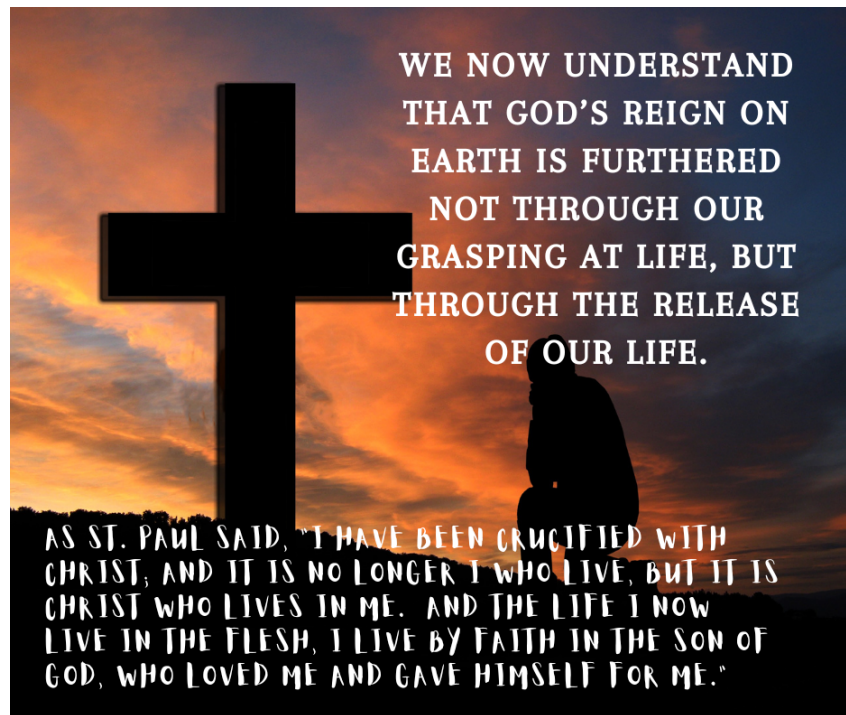
us. Who knew? Human things, worldly things—that's what he wants for us. Sounds good. What could be wrong with that? Isn't that what the abundant life is all about? Aren't we supposed to embrace prosperity?

Step 2: Advanced Diagnosis (Internal Problem): Jesus, we got this!

We are disciples of Jesus; of course, we aren't going to let Jesus die. That would be to abandon him as well as our plans for the kingdom we are helping him bring in. Jesus must be confused. We know what is best for the furthering of God's reign on earth. Step aside, Jesus. We got this.

Step 3: Final Diagnosis (Eternal Problem): Scammed!

It turns out that we've been scammed by the Ultimate Source of Disinformation. Attempting to save one's life leads only to misery and death. It leads to the death of everything we thought was ours. Satan's claim to want life for us is just one more lie, but this lie is the lie that is the basis for all other lies. To follow Satan's lead is to forfeit one's life completely.



From Canva

PROGNOSIS: Jesus the Death Giver

Step 4: Initial Prognosis (Eternal Solution): Church: Divine Things

Jesus is the real champion of life, but it comes in a form we did not conceive, it comes through the Cross. Christ denies himself, takes up the Cross, loses his life, forfeits his life, all that we might gain our life. His plan for life does indeed involve death, but death that leads to life eternal.

Step 5: Advanced Prognosis (Internal Solution): Jesus, you got this!

We now understand that God's reign on earth is furthered not through our grasping at life, but through the release of our life. As St. Paul said, "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

Step 6: Final Prognosis (External Solution): True Abundance

Divine things, the fruits of the Spirit, and life as a member of the Body of Christ are my greatest treasures. The abundant life is defined now as a life of abundant compassion, overflowing hope and joy, never-ending justice and love. My life is not consumed by the pursuit of treasure and pleasure, and Satan's lies have no power over me. Christ is my all in all.