

INTRODUCTION 引言

“Tell me about yourself?” That was a question in my first formal interview for a summer job. What did the person really want to know? It turned out to be a disaster. I mumbled something. Within minutes, the lady thanked me and asked me to go home and wait for a phone call. That was a nice way to say: “Sorry, you are out!” Later I learned that the key is not about the content of my answer. People only want to see how I respond to that question. In our passage today, Jesus turned the question around and asked His disciples who they thought He was. The incident was a watershed moment in the ministries of Jesus. Jesus warned the disciples beforehand not to reveal His real identity to others. But since then, Jesus talked explicitly that He was going to the cross. The disciples’ knowledge about Jesus is closely related to Jesus’ calling for them. They had to imitate after Jesus’ example of suffering. Today, Jesus also calls us to be His followers. Just like what He and His disciples went through: the road to glory must go through suffering.

EXPLANATION 解釋

1. True Meaning of Christ 基督的真正意義

First, let us consider the true meaning of Christ. Jesus asked the disciples: **“Who do people say I am?”** Some people thought Jesus was John the Baptist. Jesus showed John’s boldness by calling people to repent. Then others said Jesus was Elijah or another prophet who came back to life. Jesus taught with authority. He foretold things about the future. Jesus also performed miracles. Those were signatures of the Old Testament prophets. Then the Lord asked the disciples: **“Who do you say I am?”** As usual, Peter the impatient man spoke up. He said: **“You are the Christ.”** “Christ” is a transliteration of the Greek word. The same word in Hebrew is “Messiah.” In this context, it means a king. In the gospel of Matthew, Jesus praised Peter for his right answer. Such information can only come from the Heavenly Father. However, the disciples’ expectation of the Christ was very different from Jesus’ mission on the earth. Like most Jews, the disciples thought the Messiah would liberate their country from the oppression of foreign power. Jesus corrects their misconception in verse 31: **He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again.** The disciples might expect to hear enjoy, welcome and enthrone. They did not anticipate suffer, reject and kill. On hearing that, Peter pulled Jesus aside and rebuked Him. He loved his Master so much that he did not want anything bad to come to Him. Jesus in turn rebuked Peter in verse 33: **... “Get behind me, Satan!” he said. “You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men.”** Poor Peter! Jesus commended him just moments ago. Now he got an earful. By stopping Jesus, Peter was essentially manipulated by Satan to frustrate God’s salvation plan. Jesus would be crowned as King, and would receive praise and glory. All that would occur after Jesus rose from the dead. Jesus came as the suffering Christ. Nowadays, many people have a wrong impression about Jesus. They think He was the founder of a religion, He taught good moral lessons and He was a great example of sacrificial love. When we share the gospel, we have to emphasize that Jesus was the suffering Christ. People equate suffering with weakness. Jesus humbled Himself to become a man. He died on the

cross for the sin of mankind. People will get uneasy when we bring up the notion of sin. However, people will not realize that they need the Savior until they admit that they are sinners. The gospel is more than an ideal way of living or a ticket to heaven. It is an invitation to receive the suffering Christ as one's Savior and Lord.

2. True Meaning of Christians 基督徒的真正意義

After clarifying the true meaning of Christ, Jesus explained the true meaning of Christians. He says in verse 34: ... **“If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.”** True believers must also be Jesus' followers. The audience knew exactly what it meant to take up one's cross. A prisoner carried a heavy beam to the site of execution. He would finally be nailed on that piece of wood. He had no choice but to submit to the authority. But for Christians, we willingly submit to Jesus. We do not die to ourselves once, but daily and continuously. To a certain extent, it is easier to die for Christ because Christians know where they will go. However, it is harder to live for Christ. Satan never stops attacking believers with temptations, lies and persecution. We have to decide whether we love God or we love ourselves more. Jesus makes a statement in verse 36: **“What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul?”** So many people want to win everything from the world. At the end, the world also wins everything from them. Our body only lasts a few decades. But our soul will last forever. However, Jesus did not ask us to quit our jobs, sell our home and move into a monastery. We live as His followers in our office, campus and neighborhood. Two words we need to keep in mind are priority and ownership. How do you spend your time and do you own everything or God owns it all? Do we put God first or last? Jesus says in verse 38: **“If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels.”** Jesus was not talking about the occasions when we are too timid to admit that we are Christians. Even Peter denied Jesus three times. But Jesus later restored Peter's faith and used him as a key leader in the early church. Here, Jesus referred to those who intentionally reject Him. They will eventually be rejected by God if they continue to harden their hearts. We live in a world hostile to the truth. It is no surprise that Christians will be hated by the world. Since today is Youth Sunday, let me encourage our graduates: some people will like you as a person, but others may not because of what you believe. College life is exciting and fulfilling. But there will be many tough tests for your faith. Your parents will no longer be around you, but God is always with you. You cannot fight this spiritual battle alone. Get to know some mature Christians to encourage one another in spiritual growth. Attend a good church that faithfully teaches the Bible. Do not just go there on Sunday morning, but find opportunities to serve. The next four years will not be a vacation time. It will be a war zone. There will be victory when you rely on God. There will also be setbacks. Then you realize that you really need God. Just get up, dust off and march on.

CONCLUSION 結論

The road to glory must go through suffering. A correct knowledge about Christ will lead to a proper understanding of Christian life. Jesus and His followers throughout history suffered pain and shame, and so will we. We should not question if we believe in something wrong when people ridicule or even mistreat us. Suffering is part of Jesus' calling. But we are never alone, for the Lord always protects us and He will give us wisdom and strength to live a victorious life.

INTRODUCTION 引言

「請你自我介紹。」這是我第一次正式面試暑期工作時被問到的問題。她到底想知道什麼？結果證明那是一場災難。我胡亂地回答。幾分鐘後，那位女士謝謝我，然後要我回家等電話。這是很客氣的方式說：「對不起，你出局了！」後來我才知道，關鍵不在於我回答的內容。人們只想看看我如何回應這個問題。在我們今天的經文中，耶穌扭轉了這個問題，祂問的門徒他們認為祂是誰。這件事情是耶穌事工的分水嶺。耶穌在之前警告門徒不要向別人透露祂的真實身份。但從此之後，耶穌明確地說祂要去十字架。門徒對耶穌的認識與耶穌給他們的呼召有密切關係。他們必須效法耶穌受苦的榜樣。今天，耶穌也呼召我們成為祂的跟隨者。就像耶穌和門徒所經歷的那樣：通往榮耀的道路必須經過苦難。

EXPLANATION 解釋

1. True Meaning of Christ 基督的真正意義

首先，讓我們思考基督的真正意義。耶穌問門徒：「人說我是誰？」有些人認為耶穌是施洗約翰。耶穌呼召人們悔改，就像約翰那樣的直言無諱。然後其他人說耶穌是以利亞或另一個先知復活了。耶穌的教導帶著權柄。祂預言關於未來的事情。耶穌也行神蹟。這些都是舊約先知的標記。然後主問祂的門徒：「你們說我是誰？」像往常一樣，急躁的彼得開口了。他說：「你是基督。」「基督」是希臘文的音譯。同一個稱號在希伯來文是「彌賽亞」。在這個情況下，它意味著君王。在馬太福音中，耶穌稱讚彼得的回答正確。這樣的信息只能來自天父。然而，門徒對基督的期望與耶穌在世上的使命大不相同。像大多數猶太人一樣，門徒們認為彌賽亞會把他們的國家從外邦人的壓迫下解救出來。耶穌在第 31 節糾正他們的想法：從此，他教訓他們說：「人子必須受許多的苦，被長老、祭司長，和文士棄絕，並且被殺，過三天復活。」門徒期待聽到的可能享受、擁戴和登基。他們沒有預料到受苦、棄絕和被殺。彼得聽到之後，便把耶穌拉到一邊責備祂。祂非常愛祂的老師，他不希望耶穌碰到任何不幸的事情。在第 33 節中，耶穌倒過來斥責彼得：…「撒但，退我後邊去吧！因為你不體貼神的意思，只體貼人的意思。」可憐的彼得！耶穌剛剛才稱讚他。現在他卻被打了一個耳光。通過阻止耶穌，彼得實際上就是被撒旦操縱來挫敗神的救恩計劃。耶穌會被加冕為王，並會得到讚美和榮耀。但是這一切是發生在耶穌從死裡復活之後。耶穌來是要成為受苦的基督。現在，很多人對耶穌有錯誤的印象。他們認為祂是一個宗教的創始人，祂給人很好的道德教訓，祂是犧牲之愛的一個好榜樣。當我們分享福音時，我們必須強調耶穌是受苦的基督。一般人把受苦視為軟弱的表現。耶穌謙卑自己成為一個人。祂為人類的罪死在十字架上。當我們提出罪這個觀念時，人們會覺得不舒服。然而，除非人們承認自己是罪人，否則他們不會意識到他們需要救主。福音不僅

僅是一套理想的生活方式或通往天堂的門票。這是一個邀請，接納受苦的基督作為自己的救主和生命的主。

2. True Meaning of Christians 基督徒的真正意義

耶穌闡明了基督的意義之後，接下來祂解釋基督徒的真正意義。祂在第 34 節說：…
「若有人要跟從我，就當捨己，背起他的十字架來跟從我。」真正的信徒也必須是耶穌的跟隨者。在場的聽眾清楚知道背起十字架是什麼意思。當時的囚犯扛著一根沉重的木頭走到刑場。他最終會被釘在那塊木頭上。他別無選擇，只好屈服於掌權的人。但對於基督徒來說，我們心甘情願地順服耶穌。我們不是向自己死一次，而是每天不斷地重覆過程。在某種程度上，為基督而死看來比較容易，因為基督徒知道他們會去哪裡。然而，為基督而活更加困難。撒但從不停止用試探、謊言和逼迫來攻擊信徒。我們必須決定是愛神還是愛自己更多。耶穌在第 36 節說：「人就是賺得全世界，賠上自己的生命，有什麼益處呢？」有很多人想從世界上贏得一切。結果世界也從他們的生命贏得了一切。我們的身體匆匆幾十年便過去，但是我們的靈魂會永遠存在。耶穌在這裡不是要求我們辭掉工作、賣掉房子、搬進修道院。我們在辦公室、校園和社區中要活得像祂的跟隨者。我們需要記住的兩個用詞是優先次序和擁有權。你如何運用你的時間，是你擁有一切還是神擁有一切？我們是把神放在首位還是放在最後？耶穌在第 38 節說：「凡在這淫亂罪惡的世代，把我和我的道當做可恥的，人子在他父的榮耀裡，同聖天使降臨的時候，也要把那人當做可恥的。」耶穌描述的情形不是我們因為膽怯而不敢承認自己是基督徒。就連彼得也三次否認主。但耶穌後來恢復了彼得的信心，並使用他作為早期教會的關鍵領袖。在這裡，耶穌指的是那些故意拒絕祂的人。如果他們繼續硬著心，他們最終會被神拒絕。我們生活在一個敵視真理的世界。基督徒被世界恨惡也不足為奇。今天是青年主日，讓我鼓勵我們的幾位畢業生：有些人會喜歡你這個人，但有些人可能會因為你的信仰而不喜歡你。大學生活令人興奮和有成就感。但是你的信心會經歷許多艱難的考驗。你的父母將不再在你身邊，但神永遠與你同在。你不能單槍匹馬打這場屬靈戰爭。你必須結識一些成熟的基督徒，幫助你在屬靈成長上互相鼓勵。你也要參加一所忠實教導聖經的教會。不要只在星期天早上去聚會，要找一些服事的機會。未來四年不會是渡假，而是去戰場。倚靠神就能得勝。當然你也會碰到挫折。然後你意識到你真的需要神。再度站起來、拍掉身上的灰塵，並繼續上路。

CONCLUSION 結論

通往榮耀的道路必須經過苦難。對基督的正確認識使我們對基督徒生活有正確的理解。綜觀歷史，耶穌和祂的跟隨者受苦和受辱，我們也將會碰到同樣的遭遇。當別人嘲笑甚至以不友善的態度對待我們時，我們不應該質疑我們是否信錯了。苦難是耶穌呼召的一部分。但我們永遠不會孤單，因為主總是保護我們，祂會給我們智慧和力量來過得勝的生活。