

# In His Place

*Putting our hearts in Jesus' heart; our hands in Jesus' hands; moving beyond thinking into the realm of doing*

## *Seeing through Jesus' eyes*

In this final week before Easter, we return to the problem of temptation, specifically the temptations of greatness and cowardice. The disciples knowing that Jesus would be leaving them try to figure out who would lead them, who would be the greatest among them. And poor Peter, who pledges to follow Jesus to prison and to death, will succumb to the temptation to deny Jesus before following him again.

Looking back with nearly 2,000 years of hindsight we can be tempted to look down on the disciples and how they just didn't get it but there are many times when we are trapped by the same temptations they were so long ago.

Read Luke 22:24-30 and think about when you have been tempted to claim the throne instead of the serving tray at a banquet.

Jesus reminds the disciples, who are dreaming of greatness, that his has been a mission of service and not of being served. It is often hard to remember that some of the best service for Jesus is done by those who get their hands dirty and not those worried about dirt on their robes.

Think of the ladies at your church who serve meals at funerals, fundraisers and conferences. Year after year they provide fellowship for the bereaved, money for missions and special needs like medical bills. How many charge conferences occur without at least a dessert? You'll find them clearing the tables and washing the dishes long after the speaking is done, but you won't find them trying to gain a piece of the spotlight. Like Jesus they are among as ones who serve.

This is the type of service that Jesus wanted the disciples and us to hold above service that gains the spotlight. Jesus wanted us to remember that the greatest service was that done without hope of recognition.

What other types of service does Jesus call us to?

Read Luke 22:31-34 and 54-62. Think about why Peter denied knowing Jesus.

Jesus tells Peter that he has prayed for him that his faith not fail. Yet he knows Peter will deny him so Jesus' real prayer is that Peter will be strengthened in his faith by failing the test of acknowledging Jesus when he thinks his life is

on the line. And we know that Peter denies Jesus three times before the cock crows. We may think it understandable that Peter would deny Jesus because he thought he would be killed beside Jesus if he admitted knowing him. That's a safe assumption, but there is a legend that Peter was crucified upside down in Rome because of his preaching of Jesus' word after Jesus ascended. The legend says that Peter asked to be crucified upside down because he was not worthy to die as Jesus did.

Peter knew before Jesus was crucified that following Jesus could lead to prison or death but it wasn't until after Jesus was crucified that Peter was willing to give his life for Jesus.

So what changed in Peter that he went from the model of the weak disciple to become the leader of the disciples?

What kind of changes does Jesus require of you to be a true disciple?

Sixth Week  
of Lent  
(Passion Sunday)

(Year C)

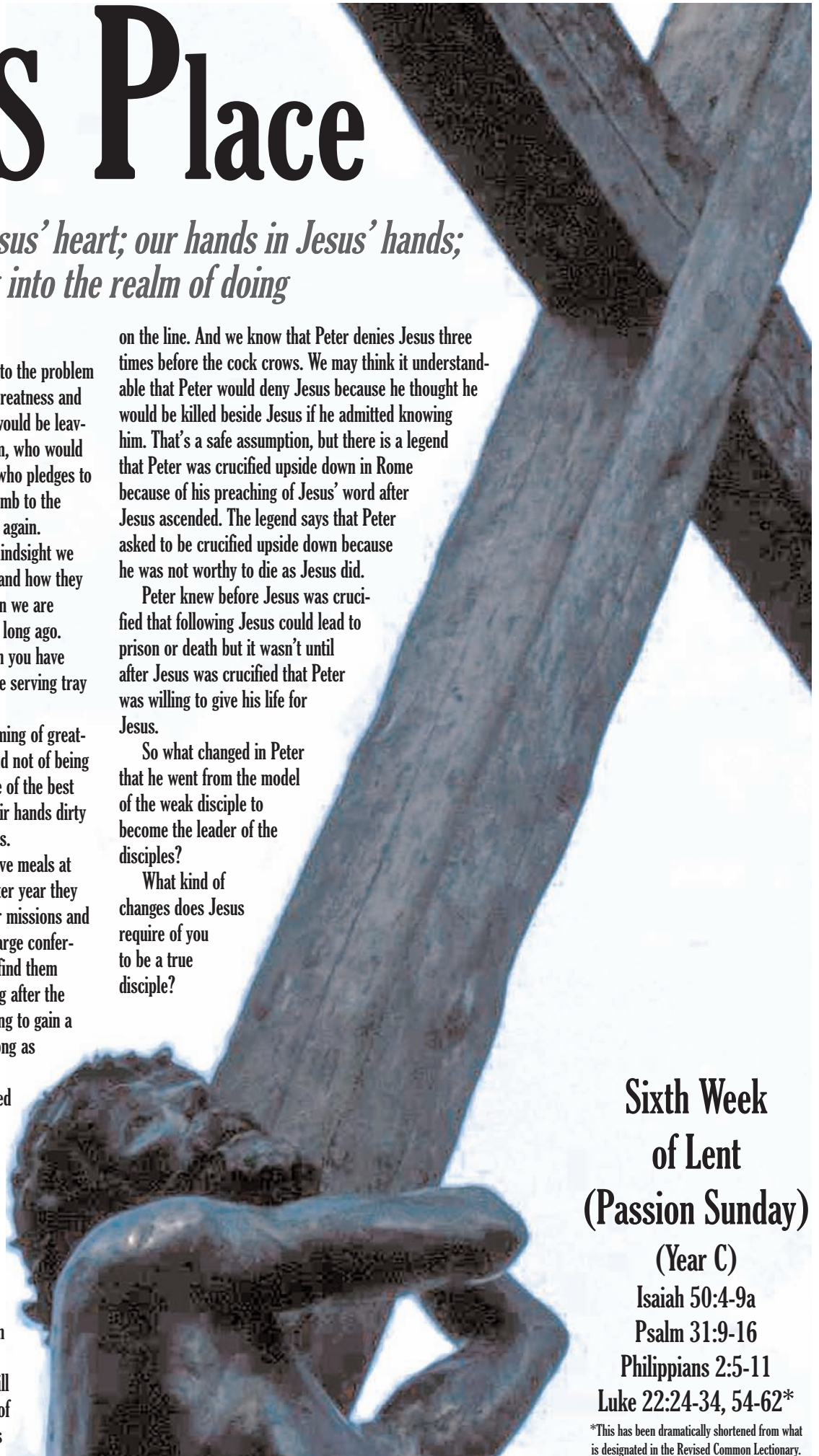
Isaiah 50:4-9a

Psalms 31:9-16

Philippians 2:5-11

Luke 22:24-34, 54-62\*

\*This has been dramatically shortened from what is designated in the Revised Common Lectionary.



# Urging responsibility through boycotting, letters

## Isaiah 50:4-9a

“The job of newspapers is to comfort the afflicted and to afflict the comfortable.” This is a paraphrase of a John Peter Finley quote that I kept by my desk while working at newspapers for many years. The other important task of newspapers is to inform the public so that we send an “educated populace” to the polls, this educated populace being the key to democracy according to Thomas Jefferson.

But too often the “media” does not fulfill these higher purposes. “The unprecedented impact the media (principally television and movies) are having on Christian and human values within our society becomes more apparent each day. ... the entertainment industry often advocates the opposite, painting a cynical picture of violence, abuse, greed, profanity and a constant denigration of the family. The media must be held accountable for the part they play in the decline of values we observe in society today.”

We are called “to support and encourage parental responsibility” in regards to TV, movies, radio and Internet usage. We are also called to express opposition to the needless portrayal of “violent and sexually indecent shows” by writing to the shows and their sponsors. And we are urged not to buy the products of sponsors of the offensive programs.

It is not enough to simply stop purchasing products, you have to write them and tell them what they are doing wrong by supporting the programs. It is easy to dismiss this issue as one that is “silly” when the best way to avoid the programs is to turn the TV off, don’t attend the movies or monitor children when they are on the Internet.

But with enough resistance to the images then the media may choose to once again speak with “the tongue of a teacher,” the duty that was deemed so important as to have the right to a free press included in the First Amendment with the right to free expression of religion.

¶ 162 - Q Book of Discipline

## Becoming disciples

### Monday

Read Isaiah 50:6 and Jeremiah 20:1-2. These prophets of the Hebrew Scriptures had to endure pain for standing up to spread the Word of God in regards to overturning the social order, yet they did it.

What keeps you from standing up for God?

### Tuesday

Read 2 Corinthians 8:9. What kind of response do you have to this passage? What does this say about the theology of Paul in regards service to others?

### Wednesday

Read Philippians 2:5. What does it mean to have the “mind of Christ?” What does this say about Paul’s understanding of the life of Christ versus the divinity of Christ?

## Philippians 2:5-11

In this passage Paul holds Jesus up as a figure who “became a servant to the lowliest on earth, whom we would consider beneath us; and who, by enduring all that the typical sins of men can do, revealed how respectable people (with whom we would feel quite at home) may be the chief enemies of the living God who seeks their liberation,” according to The Interpreter’s Bible commentary.

It is when the powerful and privileged realize the damage that they may be causing and act responsibly that the greatest changes can be seen. Often it isn’t until the people on the margins find a way to speak that the powerful are even aware of a problem.

“Upon the powerful rests responsibility to exercise their wealth and influence with restraint,” is written in the church’s call to powerful countries. The church calls on the powerful countries to “use their nonviolent power to maximize the political, social, and economic self-determination of other nations rather than to further their own special interests.”

As citizens of these countries we are to “encourage the governments under which (we) live and the economic entities within (our) societies to aid and work for the development of more just economic orders.”

This is an appeal not just to our governments but to the companies that make products by paying pennies a day and dump chemicals into the rivers and ground because they don’t have the Environmental Protection Agency looking over their shoulder.

This urging needs to take place through letter writing and product boycotts. While we are urging our government and companies to be more responsible it also requires us taking more responsibility for our actions in grocery and retail stores.

It is through these seemingly small acts that we can make great change for people being taken advantage of by the powerful.

¶ 165 - B Book of Discipline

### Thursday

“Alexander and I both founded our empires on force. Jesus alone founded his on love. And to this day countless thousands would die for him.” — attributed to Napoleon.

Why do you think this is?

### Friday

“We believe in the present and final triumph of God’s Word in human affairs and gladly accept our commission to manifest the life of the gospel in the world. Amen.” — “Our Social Creed,” paragraph 7, from Book of Discipline 2004, page 125.

## Prayer

### Morning

Dear God, we often dream of greatness yet when the time comes to stand up for what is right, we run away. Help us to find our feet to stand for what is right. Amen.

### Evening

Almighty God, who strengthens us to resist temptations, help us to see how our actions effect others and open our hearts, minds and lives to those that we have thought ourselves better than. Make us servants as Jesus served. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.

### Psalm reading

Psalm 31:9-16

Write down a phrase that sticks out to you in the morning and carry it with you throughout the day. Think about it when you can.

If you are doing journaling write your thoughts about the phrase at night.

Pick a new phrase each day.