

A man retells a humorous story of his friend's visit to his eye doctor. The doctor had him sit in the chair, take off his glasses and read the chart at the end of the room. Now his friend's eyesight really is pretty bad, but if you've ever been to the eye doctor and read the chart a few times, you know that you can squint and kind of fake your way thru at least part of the test.

The doctor asked him, "Can you read the top letter?" "Yes," my friend said, "it's an 'A.'" "Can you read the next row down?" "Yes, it says, 'CZY.'" And on it went.

Finally, the doctor said, "Ok, you can put your glasses on." "How'd I do, doc?" his friend asked. "Pretty good except for the fact that this chart contains numbers, not letters."

### **My main point today is, "How you see life defines life?"**

The way we see or don't see life shapes our life. How you see and define life determines your destiny. Your perspective on life will determine how you invest your time, spend your money, use your talents, and nurture your relationships.

I think one of the best ways to get to know other people and begin to understand what makes them tick, is to ask them, "How do you see your life?" You'll discover that there are as many answers to that question as there are people to answer it.

If I asked you this eve/morning how you see life, what image comes to mind? That image is your life metaphor, and it will determine your expectations, your values, your goals, and your priorities.

If you see life as a party, your primary value will be to have fun. If you see life as a race, you will have speed and efficiency. If you see life as a marathon, you'll value endurance. If you see life as a game, you'll value winning.

So, what is your view of life? A circus? A runaway train? One of the main reasons that God gave us the Scriptures is to teach us how God views life and to encourage us to learn to see it in the same way. In today's gospel, we're given a story of how Jesus saw both his life and the lives of those who claimed to be his disciples.

What is God's view on life? Well, we are told that Jesus must go to Jerusalem to suffer, die, and then be resurrected. He will give life so that others may have life.

The fact that Jesus Christ, the Messiah, would die for men and women and children is rooted in the reality that God sees all of us with eyes of love—even when we're at our very worst. It is God's hope that we can view life the same way.

Jesus saw life as a means to service and sacrifice so that all could be saved. Imagine if we took that on as our metaphor? There would be a whole lot less complaining.

But, at least at that moment, Peter didn't have that view. Peter's view on life is Jesus cannot suffer, because life is about us. What can you do for me? Honestly, a common view today.

Peter's understanding of the Messiah is one of glory and power and Jesus rebukes him as Satan because that is exactly how Satan tempted him in the desert to exchange his suffering for glory and power.

Power offers an easy substitute for the hard work of love. It seems easier to be God than to love God; it's easier to control people than to love people. And such people tend to be rather miserable.

+Thomas à Kempis writes of these types: Jesus has many who love his kingdom in heaven, but few who bear his cross. He has many who desire comfort, but few who desire suffering. He finds many to share his feast, but few his fasting.

All desire to rejoice with him, but few are willing to suffer for his sake. Many follow Jesus to the breaking of bread, but few to the drinking of the cup of his passion. Many admire his miracles, but few follow him in the humiliation of the cross. In that mind frame, it is all about our comforts, to be comfortable.

+There was an article in the Wall Street Journal entitled, "Rich, Healthy, and Miserable." It was based on a survey that some sociologists did to determine if making more money really made people happy. They discovered that when people got a raise, it did make them feel better for about a month, and then almost everyone began to spend up to the level of their new income.

It wasn't long before they felt as strapped and uptight and as unhappy as they did before they got the raise. At the end the article, the author made a couple of suggestions for finding happiness: Give more money away (to Cathedral!) and to invest your time serving other people. If you are depressed, do something for someone.

How we see life determines what we believe and how we'll live, and that's why Jesus tells you and me to lose our lives for his sake, because then we'll find it.

### **God's view on life must supplant the human view on life.**

Jesus severely rebukes Peter in order to get his attention. There is nowhere else in all the gospels in which Jesus takes it out on his disciples so harshly, which means it is big deal.

+I remember as a young child watching on TV a pro football player, who witnessed he had been saved by Christ and how it had changed him. I made some sarcastic comments about this conversion. My father heard me and severely rebuked me, like Jesus to Peter. Do you think his doing that may have shaped how I saw life?

+In the floods of Houston there was a story about a mother who drowned in order to save her child. When that child grows up, do you think he'll understand the sacrifice that his mother made? Do you think he'll realize that she died so that he could live? Do you think he'll see that she gave her life? That he was loved?

Yes, how we see life determines what we believe and how we act. I close as I began: *How do you see life?*