

Sermon Discussion Questions & Follow-up Notes

March 23, 2026 // Pastor Andrew Keuer (andrew@firstprotestant.com)

Sermon Texts: Luke 23:26

Series: Stations of Peace (Lent 2026)

Sermon Title: "Soldiers, pt 6: Collaborating with Peace"

Link to Lent 5 sermon: <https://youtu.be/xYxmmk-TkK8?t=2488>

Key Points & Observations of the Text

Suggestion: Read the passage (Luke 23:26) aloud as a group, along with the parallel accounts in Matthew 27:32 and Mark 15:21 for additional details.

Opening discussion: Pastor Andrew referred to "the myth of unburdened Christianity" – What do you take that phrase to mean? Where do you think this "myth" has arisen from?

A bit deeper: The sermon highlighted Simon of Cyrene as a wealthy, sophisticated, upwardly mobile man from a respected civilization (not a lowly slave as has been presented in American bible culture over the past 75 years). Simon was likely strolling into Jerusalem from his large country estate for a day of Passover festivities, only to be seized and forced to carry the cross – his reaction to which teaches us a very profound lesson of discipleship.¹

The big idea: Discipleship involves unexpected, uncomfortable burdens – involuntary crosses. Sometimes, these are foisted on us from an evil source, with no obvious purpose or meaning in relation to spiritually-minded goals. When you unexpectedly carry such a weight that has no discernible purpose, the key is to find and walk behind Jesus.

I. Getting to Know Simon of Cyrene: an upwardly mobile man of piety & respectability

- Pastor Andrew described Simon's background: from Cyrene (modern-day Libya), a prosperous, advanced society with one of the earliest democratic-republican written constitutions, which founded a civilization that lasted over 1,200 years, even producing a citizen (Jason of Cyrene) who produced the book 2 Maccabees (which Roman Catholics & Orthodox consider to be Scriptural). Luke knew of the incredible wealth of the Cyrenian Jews, signaling their generosity to Jerusalem which led to provision of their own synagogue (see Acts 6:9).
- Mark's Gospel notes his sons Alexander and Rufus, suggesting upward mobility from Jewish to Greek to Roman spheres – all of which had been carefully pursued and achieved over generations.
- **Discussion:** Why would Christ allow Simon's track-record of worldly financial success to be disrupted?

II. Learning from Simon's Example: how to carry an unexpected burden

- The Gospels include this episode to warn us: don't expect too much from the world; its promises are not as dependable as God's. Even when life seems to be falling into place (financial success, new land holdings, accomplishments), an impossibly difficult burden can appear in a flash.
- Once we see Simon's example, we find a similar pattern in OT saints: Abraham (rescuing Lot), Ruth (caring for Naomi amidst widowhood), and David (fleeing Saul) – burdens appeared that they didn't ask for or anticipate.
- The world advises: keep your eye on the goal, push harder. But, even though Simon's life goals were good, this call to carry Christ's cross was a complete disruption of his pious respectability. His burden seemed meaningless. The heaviest burdens are those without apparent purpose.
- **Discussion:** Luke's Gospel says Simon "came behind Jesus" – echoing 9:23 and 14:27. What shifts when we seek Jesus' presence instead?

¹ There was not time to include this insight in the sermon, but if you look at Jesus' teaching in Matthew 5:38-42 – you'll find the word "compelled to carry" in 5:40 is the same word used in Matthew 27:32 & Mark 15:21. Thus, Simon of Cyrene fulfills this most difficult teaching of Jesus ("turn the other cheek...carry a second mile...").