

Matthew 16:13-26

13 Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" 14 And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." 15 He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" 16 Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." 17 And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. 18 And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. 19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." 20 Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ.

21 From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from 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, "Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you." 23 But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man."

24 Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. 25 For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. 26 For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?"

Community Group Study 14 Mar 2010



Introduction

Right after identifying himself as the Son of God – the very God himself, Jesus tells his disciples that he must suffer and die on the cross, and rise again: quite the stunning turnaround.

He then proceeds from that revelation to an invitation for those who follow Him to take their cross – to die. This death is the sacrifice of everything that we are: life, desires, abilities, comforts, ambitions, lifestyles and actions. We will not be able to follow Jesus unless we die.

Death, for a believer, is good news. Before we follow Christ, we are slaves to sin, trapped in a wretched existence, condemned and without true hope. Death and resurrection in Christ is utterly liberating. Death is not improvement – it is rebirth.

This is the Jesus we follow: a mighty warrior, fierce, protective, angry at sin, leading an army, once dead and tortured on a cross, reaching out to the broken and the sick, full of love and grace.

Discussion

- >>How can God die?
- >>Why is the recognition of Jesus' Godhood so closely tied to His death?
- >>Discuss the difference between improving & correcting and death & resurrection?
- >>What is God's kingdom on earth?

Explanation

- >>How does God's kingdom come?
- >>How do we follow Christ in terms of his death and suffering and resurrection on the cross?
- >>What is the character of the returning Messiah?

Application

- >>In what ways are we sacrificing the true life of our soul for the gain of the world?
- >>How can we follow Jesus in the way we treat our enemies, friends and outcasts?
- >>How can we follow Jesus in terms of our family?