



## **THERE IS HOPE...WHEN YOU FOLLOW JESUS**

**Matthew 16:21-28**

- **Some truths are easy to understand but hard to live out.**
- *“From then on Jesus began to tell His disciples plainly that it was necessary for Him to go to Jerusalem, and that He would suffer many terrible things at the hands of the elders, the leading priests, and the teachers of religious law. He would be killed, but on the third day He would be raised from the dead.” (Matthew 16:21)*
- **Following Jesus is not an easy endeavor and your faith will be tested all along the way.**
- Jesus - *“You can enter God’s Kingdom only through the narrow gate. The highway to hell is broad, and its gate is wide for the many who choose that way. But the gateway to life is very narrow and the road is difficult, and only a few ever find it.” (Matthew 7:13-14)*
- **Following Jesus requires making some difficult decisions and committing to a challenging calling.**
- *“Then Jesus said to His disciples, ‘If any of you wants to be My follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me. If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for My sake, you will save it. And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul? Is anything worth more than your soul?’” (Matthew 16:26-28)*
- **What decisions do we need to make if we want to follow Jesus?**

***If You Want To Follow Jesus You Must:***

### **CHANGE YOUR PERSPECTIVE**

- *“Jesus turned to Peter and said, “Get away from Me, Satan! You are a dangerous trap to me. You are seeing things merely from a human point of view, not from God’s.” (Matthew 16:23)*
- **We spend too much time trying to convince others that we know what we are doing, and not enough time accepting the truth that God knows what He is doing.**
- *“My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts,” says the Lord. “And My ways are far beyond anything you could imagine.” (Isaiah 55:8)*
- **Real followers trust the Lord and have concluded that God’s plan is beyond their understanding.**

- *“Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek His will in all you do, and He will show you which path to take.” (Proverbs 3:5-6)*

***If You Want To Follow Jesus You Must:***

**SURRENDER YOUR WAY**

- *“Then Jesus said to His disciples, ‘If any of you wants to be My follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow Me.’ (Matthew 16:24)*
- **When you give up your own way and take up your cross you submit yourself to God’s process of transforming the way you think, the way you feel, the way you speak, and the way you act.**
- *“Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.” (Romans 12:2)*
- **The growth of a disciple is measured by how much they have changed.**

***If You Want To Follow Jesus You Must:***

**CARRY YOUR CROSS**

- *“Then Jesus said to His disciples, ‘If any of you wants to be My follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow Me.’ (Matthew 16:24)*
- **Christ can’t fully live within you until you have sacrificed yourself, your will, and your way.**
- Paul - *“My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” (Galatians 2:20)*
- **The world teaches that Birth proceeds Death, but the Holy Scripture teaches that Death proceeds Birth.**
- *“This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!” (2 Corinthians 5:17)*
- **When were you spiritually born and when did your new life in Christ begin?**

***If You Want To Follow Jesus You Must:***

**COUNT THE COST**

- Jesus - *“If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for My sake, you will save it.” (Matthew 16:25)*
- **It is foolish and short lived to make any decisions without first considering the costs, consequences, and implications of the choices we make.**
- *“But don’t begin until you count the cost. For who would begin construction of a building without first calculating the cost to see if there is enough money to finish it? Otherwise, you might complete only the foundation before running out of money, and then everyone would laugh at you. They would say, ‘There’s the person who started that building and couldn’t afford to finish it!’” (Luke 14:28-30)*
- **What does it cost a person to truly follow Jesus?**

***If You Want To Follow Jesus You Must:***

## **PAY THE PRICE**

- **Not everyone who counts the cost is willing to pay the price.**
- Jesus - *“And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul? Is anything worth more than your soul?”* (Matthew 16:26)
- **The worth you gain from following Christ is far more valuable than any price that you are asked to pay.**
- Paul - *“I once thought these things were valuable, but now I consider them worthless because of what Christ has done. Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For His sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ...”* (Philippians 3:7-8)
- **Something is worth what anyone else is willing to pay for it.**
- *“God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body.”* (1 Corinthians 6:20)
  
- **Real followers of Jesus make the commitment to never look back.**
- *“But Jesus told him, ‘Anyone who puts a hand to the plow and then looks back is not fit for the Kingdom of God.’”* (Luke 9:62)
- **Once you’ve been exposed to the ways of Christ you know that nothing else would fulfill you.**
- *“At this point many of His disciples turned away and deserted Him. Then Jesus turned to the Twelve and asked, ‘Are you also going to leave?’ Simon Peter replied, ‘Lord, to whom would we go? You have the words that give eternal life.’”* (John 6:66-68)