

God With Us

A Study of Matthew: "A Mission of Sacrifice"

Matthew 16:21-28

*"Then Jesus told His disciples, "If anyone would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me."
(Matthew 16:24)*

I. "My Time is Near" (vv.21-23)

- a. *From that time...*the Lord's words in this text are the main theme for which He has come into the world. Jesus came to suffer, die and rise again. (v.21)
- b. *He must go*, means "absolutely necessary."
- c. Can we truly blame Peter for misunderstanding the Lord's words? The Scriptures foretold that the Messiah would politically and spiritually deliver Israel. Then why is Jesus talking about dying now?
- d. We can almost hear Peter saying, Master can you at least get rid of these Romans before you go.
 1. "Lord, wait a minute You just got here." "No Lord, not now!"
- e. Why did Peter misunderstand? We too will avoid pain and suffering whenever necessary.
 1. Peter did not want His Master to suffer, but he also did not have God's mind in the matter.
- f. Peter had enough faith to believe that Jesus is the Son of God, but he did not have the faith to believe that Jesus would have to suffer and die. Where do we find the mind of God?
- g. We too may misunderstand the Lord's ways when we do not consider the Word (mind) of God.
- h. No wonder he warned His disciples *not to tell anyone that he was the Christ* (16:20).
- i. According to the Bible, what are Christians supposed to suffer?

II. Faith, Denial and Sacrifice (vv. 24-28)

- a. To "deny self" does not mean to deny things. It means to give yourself fully to Christ and share in His shame and death. (Read Romans 12:1-2 and Philippians 3:7-10)
- b. What does it mean to take up the cross? What is the expectation of Jesus in our suffering?
- c. To "take up the cross" does not mean to carry burdens or to have problems. It means to identify with Christ in His rejection, shame, suffering, and death. Suffering for Christ leads to glory.
- d. Why did Jesus have to suffer? Jesus' suffering on the cross showed the devastating nature of sin, the wrath of God, the cruelty of humanity, and the hatred of Satan.
- e. One day Jesus will appear in His glory and repay each person (v. 27). This promise makes the cross worthwhile.
- f. Let's discuss verse 28. *There are some standing here who will not taste death until they see...*

III. No Fight, No Cross, No Victory

- a. Spiritual struggle is a mark of authentic Christianity. Following Christ is not an easy thing.
- b. Regardless of one's spiritual maturity, sin and failure are found in all the saints. The struggle is real. Spiritual battles are real. The victory can also be your reality if you keep your eyes on Jesus and stay in the fight. Victory is achieved only through ceaseless vigilance.
- c. Jesus showed us how to suffer, what to suffer, and how to be victorious overcomers in life.
- d. If you are truly following Jesus, you will face attacks, ridicule and rejection. You will battle your personal demons and live with temptation. *"I have said these things to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."*(John 16:33)
- e. "I need Thee, oh, I need Thee; Every hour I need Thee; Oh, bless me now, my Savior! I come to Thee"