



MATTHEW

The Savior-King and His Kingdom

The King's Cross and Crown!

Matthew 16:21-28

Message #46 of 80 – S1079

Sermon given on January 7, 2024



Sunday Morning Service

Pastor Rick Lancaster

The King's Cross and Crown!

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Opening Comments

- Open your Bibles to **Matthew 16**
- Today, we continue a series through the gospel of Matthew – **The Savior-King and His Kingdom**
- Let's open this time in our service with a word of prayer. - **Pray**

Teaching

- **The King's Cross and Crown!**
- In the previous message Jesus asked the disciples who they thought He was.
- Peter responded by saying, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God!'
- Jesus then proclaimed that He would build His church upon that confession.
- Then Jesus begins preparing His disciples for what is coming.
- **Matthew 16:21**
- 'began' – Jesus was always going to end up on the cross.
- He knew that from the beginning.
- This was always the plan and Jesus knew it – the disciples didn't.
- The disciples had grown in faith to the point where Jesus felt they were ready for that truth.
- 'to show' – The disciples had an idea about the Messiah they had learned from the Jewish religious leaders.
- It was God's will that Jesus teaches people about the kingdom of God and work miracles.
- It was also His will that Jesus takes our sins to the cross (**Isaiah 53:4-6**).

Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. ⁵But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. ⁶All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

- There was no other way to deal with the sin problem.
- For hundreds of years, millions of innocent animals had been sacrificed in Jerusalem to try to deal with the sin problem.
- Jesus was going to Jerusalem to offer Himself as the perfect sacrifice that takes away sin.
- And for anyone who believes, His sacrifice cleanses them of their sin and they are acceptable to God.
- ‘suffer many things’ – Christ’s suffering was a part of God’s plan of redemption for the world.
- Our suffering, though it does not compare with Christ’s, also serves a purpose for God’s kingdom.
- Every true believer is going to experience suffering in this world.
- And Peter says we should endure it patiently (**1 Peter 2:20b-21**).
...when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this *is* commendable before God. ²¹ For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps...
- This is referring to suffering for doing the right thing.
- ‘be killed’ – Jesus is telling them plainly that He will die because of the ‘chief priests and priests and scribes.’
- ‘be raised’ – Jesus predicted not only His death but that He would be resurrected on the third day.
- Peter responds to Christ’s announcement that He is going to die – proving that Peter doesn’t understand God’s plan.
- **Matthew 16:22**
- Peter’s rebuke is an expression of disapproval.
- Peter is saying, ‘God has a wonderful plan for your life, and it doesn’t include pain and suffering.’
- Do you ever wish your pastor would teach that sermon.
- Not going to happen, it is not true!
- God doesn’t think or act like a human (**Isaiah 55:8-9**).
“For My thoughts *are* not your thoughts, nor *are* your ways My ways,” says the LORD. ⁹“For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.”
- So, it should be no surprise when His plan for our lives is difficult to understand or accept or confuses us.

- As we get to know God better, we learn to trust Him, and then we simply accept His plan as the right one and choose to believe that it is good.
- Christ responds strongly to Peter's rebuke.
- **Matthew 16:23**
- Is Jesus calling Peter Satan? Why does Jesus say it this way?
- Because, without thinking, Peter is tempting Jesus to skip the cross.
- Satan did the same thing in the wilderness temptation after Christ's baptism.
- He suggested Jesus take the easy way to setting up the kingdom of heaven.
- This was a temptation to skip Gethsemane and Golgotha and go directly to Glory. There can be no glory without the cross.
- 'an offense' – Jesus had just told them what God's will was and Peter responded by telling Jesus He couldn't do it.
- Peter was looking at things from a human perspective.
- That is the natural way people view the world.
- But, because we have the Holy Spirit, we can see things from the perspective of God.
- Then Jesus reminds us of something He has already said.
- This is why we sometimes respond to the things of God the Peter did.
- **Matthew 16:24-26**
- 'deny himself' – This is exceedingly hard for us as humans.
- When Jesus said, 'Follow Me', He wasn't telling us to follow the King of heaven.
- He was telling us to follow the Christ who would suffer and die on a horrible wooden cross. **Dietrich Bonhoeffer**
- **"When Christ calls a man He bids him come and die."**
- 'take up his cross' – Our cross may be almost anything in life.
- What qualifies something as a cross is that you are bearing it while denying yourself.
- To deny yourself is to refuse to put your needs, desires, wishes, dreams, hopes, ambitions, and cares before the will of God.
- It is to treat yourself as the last person you consider or think about.

- It is to put your trust so fully into God's hands that you will respond to Him without thinking about what it means for you.
- We often want to know what's in it for us.
- A person who denies themselves knows that what is in it for them is Jesus! And that is enough.
- In this life we must choose a crown or a cross.
- Jesus is making it clear that there is no option C.
- If someone desires to save his life, he chooses the crown – the cross is what awaits him.
- If someone loses his life for Jesus' sake, he is choosing the cross and a crown awaits him.
- The apostle Paul understood denying himself and losing his life for Christ's sake.
- He expressed his hope (**2 Timothy 4:8**).

Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

- The cross comes before the crown – no cross = no crown.
- Jesus then says something to get them and us to take our eyes off the present and looking forward to the future.
- **Matthew 16:27**
- 'will come' – Jesus is referring to the Second Coming.
- In Christ's first coming, which we celebrated a couple of Sundays ago, He came to save lost sinners by dying on the cross.
- The next time, He will come as righteous judge, and King of the kingdom of heaven.
- 'He will reward' – Jesus will give them what they deserve.
- It is human nature to think, 'What's in it for me.'
- This verse tells us that there is something in it for us.
- It doesn't tell us what that something is.
- As Christ-followers, our rewards come with our crown when Jesus comes back.
- Until then make it all about Jesus and less and less about you.
- This chapter closes with a verse that is a little challenging to interpret.
- **Matthew 16:28**

- The most common interpretation is that Jesus is referring to what comes next in this gospel, the Transfiguration. But that is for next time.
- Jesus is the Christ – the Son of the living God!
- Jesus **IS** King of kings and Lord of lords, but that is not how we are to relate to Him today – that is Jesus at the Second Coming.
- Today, Jesus is the crucified and resurrected Christ.
- While we wait for the King of kings and Lord of lords Jesus to come again, we are called to live lives of self-denial – the Christ-life.
- Three things about being a Christ-follower before the worship team comes back up.
- **Being a Christ-follower!**
- First – **Lift Christ up higher!**
- One of the things you hear from me regularly is that we ought to allow the Word of God to fill us with awe and wonder.
- Christ Jesus stepped down out of the perfection of heaven so that we could relate to Him as a man.
- At the same time, He never stopped being God.
- And He did that for you and for me. Wow!
- The better we know Jesus, the easier it becomes to lift Him higher.
- Second – **Deny yourself more!**
- This is hard but try to catch yourself when you are responding to things based on how they affect you.
- Third – **Lift others up to Jesus!**
- Jesus didn't come just to save you!
- As you lift Christ up in our own heart, the more you will want others to meet Him.
- And the better you learn to deny yourself for Christ's sake, the more others will experience Christ through you.
- That's why we are still here – so that just one more person will meet Jesus!
- Let's pray and ask the Holy Spirit to help us lift up Jesus. **Pray**
- Have a radical week!
- Worship Team comes up to play the last song!