

EFCDP SERMON NOTES • April 7, 2024

Series: *One Small Step* # 4

“Ground Zero” • Matthew 16:24-28

The Big Idea: *The call to follow Jesus is a call to the cross.*

1. Every Christian is called to carry their cross. V.24

2. The only way to save your life is to surrender it to Jesus. Vv. 25-26

3. No one who surrenders to Jesus will regret it. Vv. 27-28

Digging Deeper

A guide for personal and small group study for the week of April 7, 2023.



→ Was any part of the message unclear? Which aspect of the message do you think will be the most challenging to apply to your own life?

→ Do you agree with the “big idea” of this passage? Why or why not?

1. Have you ever signed up for a college class or took a job that turned out to be very different from what you expected? If so, what happened? Who was responsible for the misunderstanding?

2. If you asked the typical person where you work or in your neighborhood, “Who is Jesus Christ?,” what do you think they would say? (Possible choices: A religious nut; the greatest man who ever lived; the Incarnate Son of God; a swear word; a mystery.)

3. Many people today would agree that Jesus was a good teacher. While that certainly is true, He is much more than that. How does John 14:1-6 eliminate the possibility that Jesus was simply a good (human) man and a good teacher?

4. If it were possible for you to “gain the whole world” and be very wealthy, where would you build your winter and summer estates?

5. Read Matthew 16:21-22. Why do you think Peter became so upset at what Jesus was saying here? What does this reveal about how Peter had been regarding Jesus’ role as Messiah?

6. How would you describe/define what it means to be a disciple of Jesus? Has your definition changed since you first became a believer? Why or why not?

7. Read Matthew 16:24. What are some ways you have heard other Christians define what it means to “take up their cross?”

8. Read Matthew 16:25. What are some ways a Christian could “lose their life” for the cause of Christ?

- What are some ineffective ways people try to “save their life”? In other words, what are some things that tempt people (both believers and unbelievers) to lose their life or exchange their soul for? How have you observed people doing this?

9. If a teenager in your church asked you what Jesus meant by saying, “...whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.”, what would you say?

10. During your childhood, did your parents reward you for completing certain tasks, such as mowing the lawn, taking out the garbage, getting good grades, etc.? If so, how effective was this as motivation—would you have done it without the promised reward? Why or why not?

11. Do you think it is possible for someone to be a true Christian and yet refuse to “take up their cross?” Why or why not?

- If it is possible, what might be some consequences for the person who tries to be a Christian and yet tries to live life their own way (as opposed to Jesus’ way)?

12. In what area(s) does Matthew 16:24 hit home with you?

13. If you could have lunch with Jesus and you asked him to outline his priorities for your life, what do you think he would say? What changes do you think he would ask to make?

14. Have you experienced rejection (or other consequences) because of your efforts to witness and/or follow Jesus? If so, briefly describe.

15. What hope do you find in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18?

16. Read the following passages, noting what they teach regarding a true believer's judgement and reward from Jesus:

- 2 Corinthians 5:10
- Hebrews 12:1-3
- 1 Corinthians 3:10-15; 9:24-27
- John 5:24
- Matthew 10:41-42
- 2 Timothy 4:8
- James 1:12
- 1 Peter 5:4
- Revelation 2:10; 4:9-11

17. To what event was Jesus referring in Matthew 16:28?

- How might these passages help?
- 2 Peter 1:16-18
- John 1:14

18. As a result of this study, how might the Holy Spirit be guiding you to change some priorities in your life? How does thinking about your eternal rewards encourage you to make such changes?