

ULC Sermon Study Resource
Why Jesus? // He is Challenging
Pastor Marcus
10 8, 2023

Prayer: Pause for a few moments to go to the Lord in prayer. Ask that He would draw near to you in this time, and open your heart and mind to hear His Word.

Icebreaker: Have you ever had to make a challenging decision in your life? If so, what was it?

Reading: (Matthew 16:21-28)

1. His Cross (Matthew 16:21-23)

- A. Jesus' cross becomes a regular part of his teaching to his disciples.
- B. Peter's response»NO WAY! You're the Messiah! You can't die!
- C. The cross is central to Jesus' identity as Messiah; To worship him is to worship him as the crucified Messiah.

Q: Why does Jesus call Peter out after Jesus praised Peter in the previous passage for his confession?

2. Your Cross (Matthew 16:24)

- A. Not only does calling him the Christ mean worshiping him as the crucified one; it means taking up a cross and suffering with him.
- B. Self-denial and cross-bearing is always carried out in the "follow me."
- C. Our cross is ultimately about reflecting his cross, and his cross is about the world's forgiveness.

Q: How do we know when we are called to pick up our crosses and follow him?

3. Your Life (Matthew 16:24-26)

- A. The word for life/soul is the same throughout this section; the part of you that makes you you.

- B. If you spend your days trying to preserve your you-ness, you will lose you. But if you spend your days giving it up for the sake of Jesus, that is where your real you-ness is found.
- C. Following Jesus can be hard sometimes, but we need to extend forgiveness to receive forgiveness.
- Q: How can we show forgiveness to others who have wronged us?

Reflection/Application Questions:

1. What does your cross look like for you?
2. What makes it hard to follow Jesus sometimes?
3. How can you get yourself on the path that follows Jesus?
4. Why do we need to forgive others so that people can forgive us?

Suggestions for further study:

- 1 Corinthians 1:22-25 What does this say about our own crosses?
- Luke 9:23-27 How does the account in the book of Matthew differ from the book of Luke?
- Nehemiah 6:8 Can this relate to what Jesus said in verse 23?

Closing Prayer:

Dear Lord, Thank you for this time that we get to take out of our day to spend time in your word. Help us to take up our cross in life and follow you. We know that we can often stumble when it comes to our faith, so we ask that you may guide us and lead us down the path that you had laid out for us before we were even born. Help us to understand and recognise your grace and forgiveness through the suffering of your son, Jesus Christ. It is in his name that we pray, Amen.