

**Bible Study:** There is a Blessing in the Paradox of Sacrifice

**Scripture:** Matthew 16.24-27

**The Big Idea:** Although what it means to Sacrifice does not make sense there is a blessing in the Paradox of Sacrifice

### **There is a Blessing in the Paradox of Sacrifice**

The implication of Scripture is that if you have faith in God you must offer sacrifices to Him.

The Christian makes sacrifices to God in modernity by **surrendering** something of **value** to them. We can sacrifice our:

1. **Time** (our most precious and crucial resource)
2. **Talent** (natural aptitude or skills, avail yourself)
3. **Treasure** (Give how God has prospered you to give, giving should reflect how you are blessed and want to be blessed)
4. **Testimony** (This is your story. Your story is valuable.)
5. **Ties** (mobilizing your social network to support. Invite your friends and family to join you.)

In our text, Jesus spells out what it means to follow Him. He shares that there can be no faith in Him without there being sacrifices made like Him. If there is going to be faith in Him, if you are going to follow Him, He says you must:

1. **Deny yourself**
2. **Take up your cross**
3. **Follow Him**
4. **Lose your life for Him**

Jesus presents a practice that goes against the grain of societal norms. These requisites for being a disciple of Jesus present a paradox. A paradox is a

seemingly absurd statement. It can be a proposition that sounds self-contradicting.

Examples of paradoxical statements:

- Youth is wasted on the young.
- Less is more.
- The only constant is change.
- You have to spend money to make money.
- The only rule is there are no rules.

The requisite of discipleship appears to go against the grain. These four things just don't fit:

### **Deny your self**

This involves a **Deliberate decision of dissociation of self**. Dissociation from self is the act of removing from association with oneself. It is when you undertake the action of proving untrue to your nature and become true to the Lord's nature. Self-denial is when you restrain yourself from your natural personality and operate in your spiritual personality. It's when you place limitations on yourself resisting what you would do and substitute it for what brings the Lord glory.

When the believer denies themselves, they no longer live for themselves but for the Lord. (**Gal. 2.20; 2 Cor. 5.15, 2 Cor. 4.11**). You can't love the world and deny yourself. (**1 John 2.15; Lk. 6.13; The danger is that you will fall: Matt. 23.12; Prov. 11.2**)

### **Take up your cross**

This involves an **Abandoning of Self-preservation**. Self-preservation is when you go through the extremes of protecting yourself from harm or looking out

for your interests. Sacrifice does not involve **self-preservation** it is one of **selflessness** and divine **dependency**. When taking up my cross I understand that I don't have to **look out for myself** because **God is looking out for me**. I don't have to **fight for myself** because **God will fight my battle**. (Matt. 6.19-21, 25-33)

### Follow Him and Lose your life for Him

We discover that there is a **Recompensing connected to sacrifice**. Jesus presents the metaphor of the exchange of your life vs your soul. He paints this picture that if you **Lose your soul** there is **no regaining it**. There is a **void** in gaining the world only to lose your soul (Matt. 16.25-26). The Bible says, "*He will reward each person according to what they have done.*" The word reward is *apodidomi* in Greek. It is a verb that has an active grammatical voice which signifies that the subject is performing the verbal action or is in the state described by the verb. This would mean that when you make the decision to follow Jesus and become His disciple making sacrifices for Him you will lose along the way, give up some stuff along the way, and give up your will for His. Jesus is in the state described by the verb. He is in the state of rewarding. He is performing the verbal action of rewarding.

Although what it means to Sacrifice does not make sense there is a blessing in the Paradox of Sacrifice