

Matthew 14-16

by Chuck Smith

In this sermon, Chuck Smith explores the miracles of Jesus in Matthew 14-16, emphasizing faith, compassion, and the challenge of religious traditions.

Duration: 59:57

Scripture: Matthew 16:16-17

Topics: "Following Jesus", "Discipleship"

Description

This sermon delves into various events in Matthew's gospel, including the ministry of John the Baptist, the feeding of the 5,000, Jesus walking on water, and the transfiguration. It emphasizes the importance of recognizing Jesus as the Messiah and the need for disciples to deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow Him, highlighting the eternal value of the soul over worldly gain.

Transcript

Let's turn in Matthew's gospel to chapter 14 as we continue our journey through the New Testament now as we've been going through the entire Bible from Genesis to Revelation. Matthew chapter 14. In the first 12 verses, Matthew is going to write concerning the ministry of John the Baptist.

In verses 13 to 21, he's going to record for us the feeding of the multitude of 5,000 men plus women and children with just the five loaves and the two fish and the 12 baskets that were left over. Verses 25 to 31, Jesus walking on the water and then 34 to 36, the ministry of Jesus in Gennesaret. So looking at the ministry of John the Baptist verses 1 through 12.

At that time, Herod the Tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus and he said unto his servants, this is John the Baptist. He is risen from the dead and he shows forth themselves in him. And he shows forth themselves in him.

For Herod had laid hold on John, bound him, put him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife. He had actually sort of vamped his brother's wife and she saw greater advantages with Herod than with his brother Philip. And so he had married her, Ariad took her as his wife.

And so John rebuked him for that. And he said, it is not lawful for you to have her. And so she had a thing against John and wanted to see John dealt with.

And so when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude because they saw John as a prophet. But when Herod's birthday was kept and the daughter of Herodias danced before them and pleased Herod, whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she would ask. And she being before instructed by her mother said, give me the head of John the Baptist in a charger.

And the king was very sorry. Nevertheless, for the oath's sake, and for them which sat with him at meet, he commanded that it be given to her. And he sent and beheaded John in the prison.

And his head was brought in a charger, given to the damsel, and she brought it to her mother. And his disciples came and took the body and buried it. And they told Jesus.

So the death of John the Baptist recorded for us here. And it was to actually please the mother of Herodias. The daughter of Herodias had danced for Herod.

And so the reward for her performance was the head of John the Baptist. Now, the recording when Jesus heard it, he departed from there in a ship to a desert place apart. And when the people had heard thereof, they followed him on foot out of the cities.

And Jesus went forth and saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion toward them. And he healed their sick. In the upper end of the Galilee, it is easy to run around the upper end of the Galilee.

It isn't that many miles. And you can watch a ship as it takes off from Capernaum and goes across the sea. And you can see it all the way over to the other side of the Sea of Galilee.

So they watched the disciples as they got in the ship with Jesus. He was going out to a deserted area. And he was just wanting to get alone and probably just, you know, meditate on John's being put to death by Herod.

And just, you know, one of those things. But the people saw where he was going to go. And so they ran around the upper end of the Sea of Galilee.

So that when he came to the other side, they were already there waiting for him. And so he was moved with compassion toward them. And he healed their sick.

I love that phrase moved with compassion. Whenever Jesus saw a hungry group of people, people hungry for a work of God, an experience of God, it always touched his heart. It always moved him to do special works.

And so when the evening had come, his disciples came to him and he said, this is a deserted place. And the time is now past. Send the multitudes away that they might go to the villages and buy themselves vituals.

But Jesus said unto them, they don't need to depart. Give them to eat. And they said unto him, all we have is just five loaves and two fish.

And he said, bring them hither to me. And he commanded the multitude to sit on the grass. And he took the five loaves and the two fish.

And looking up to heaven, he blessed and broke. And he gave the loaves to the disciples and to the disciples to the multitude. And they did eat and were filled.

That word filled in the Greek is gluttoned. They ate until they couldn't eat anymore. You've experienced that, I'm sure, at picnics and other times when you ate so much, you wondered, you know, why in the world did I eat that much? Thanksgiving's coming.

Watch out. And so they took up of the fragments that remained 12 baskets full. And this, you remember, 5,000 men beside the women and children eating until they were gluttoned.

And this is just from the five loaves and the two fish. And they that had eaten were about 5,000 men beside the women and children. So quite a remarkable miracle that Jesus brought in the blessing of the five loaves and the two fish.

Now, there are those who claim to be Bible scholars and Bible teachers, and they don't really believe in miracles. And they have a hard time with stories like this concerning Jesus. And so the explanation that they give on this is that here they were gathered 5,000 men beside the women and children in this deserted area.

And Jesus had them all sit on the grass. And they said that in those days, people had these long robes and sort of tied at the wrist, and they would carry their lunches and all in their robes there. And when they were hungry and going to eat, no one was willing to share what they had with others.

And so there was this little boy that was there. And when the disciples said, there's a little boy, he has just five loaves and a couple of fish. But what is that among so many people? And Jesus had them sit on the ground.

And this little boy gave what he had, that it moved the other people. And they thought, you know, they became sort of ashamed of themselves for their hoarding. And so they all untied their lunches and pulled them out and shared it with others.

And that's how they had so many baskets full left over. And they tried to totally explain away the miraculous aspect of this miracle of Jesus. But, you know, well, they say that figures don't lie, but liars sure can figure.

And so here's one of those cases where these fellas try and give you a rational explanation, taking the miraculous out of it. Of course, they have a difficulty with the next one. Straightway, Jesus constrained his disciples to get into the ship and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away.

And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray. And when the evening was come, he was there alone. But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with the waves, for the wind was contrary.

And in the fourth watch of the night, Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It's a ghost. And they cried out for fear.

But immediately Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer. It is I. Don't be afraid. And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it is you, bid me come unto thee on the water.

And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid and beginning to sink.

He cried, Lord, help me or save me. And immediately Jesus stretched out his hand and caught him and said unto him, O thou of little faith, why did you doubt? And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased. And they that were in the ship came and they worshiped him, saying, Of a truth, you are the son of God.

And when they were gone over, they came to the land of Gennesaret. And when the men of that place had knowledge of him, they sent out into that country roundabout and brought unto him all that were diseased. And they besought him that they might only touch the hem of his garment.

And as many as touched were made perfectly whole. So the beautiful ministry of Jesus given to us here in chapter 14 of Matthew. There again, Peter in the ship when they saw Jesus walking on the water and when he assured it is I, you know, Peter said, Lord, if it's you, bid me come to you.

And Jesus said, Come on. There are people that are, you know, finding fault with Peter. He started to walk on the water to Jesus and until he saw the waves and all and got a little panicky and began to sink.

And Jesus took him by the hand and helped him back into the ship. And people sort of get after Peter for his, you know, lack of faith, you might say, sinking and, and all, but at least give him credit. He got out of the ship and started to walk on the water, was doing all right until he got his eyes off of Jesus and on the water.

And then when he began to sink, it's sort of true of us. You know, we do all right as long as we keep our eyes on Jesus. But when we start looking at our circumstances, we begin to doubt and we wonder, what am I doing here? And, you know, we begin to sink.

And so the key or the secret, keep your eyes on Jesus. Don't look at the circumstances. They can rob you of your faith.

They can just really drain you of your faith. Keep your eyes on Jesus and you can walk on water. So that's the key here.

Getting into chapter 15, we start out the first nine verses, Jesus dealing with the scribes and the Pharisees. Verses 10 and 11, Jesus dealing with the multitudes. Verses 20 or 12 to 20, Jesus and his disciples.

So with three different groups, the scribes, the Pharisees, the multitudes and with his disciples. And then Jesus going over to the coastal cities of Tyre and Sidon. And then verses 29 to 31, his return to Galilee and his ministry there.

And then in 32 to 38, he is now again going to feed the multitude of people. But this time it's 4,000 men with women and children. And he has seven loaves and a few little fish.

And of course, there were seven baskets of food left over from this feeding. So a similar miracle to chapter 14. And again, feeding the multitudes with just a few loaves of bread and a few fish.

So then came Jesus and the Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem. Then came Jesus to Jesus, the Pharisees and the scribes, which were from Jerusalem. And they said to Jesus, why do your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread.

But he answered and said to them, why do you also transgress the commandment of God by your traditions? For God commanded saying, honor thy father and thy mother, and he that curses his father or mother, let him die the death. But ye say, whosoever shall say to his father or to his mother, this is a gift by which you might be profited by me. And they honor not their father or mother, he shall be free.

And thus you make the commandment of God of no effect with your traditions. So there were a lot of traditions that the Jews followed. It's interesting, you had Ten Commandments.

Then, of course, they had books that they wrote, explaining what the Ten Commandments meant. And in that book of explanations, they had several volumes of just expanding on the Ten Commandments. And then they had books that explained the explanations that they had given.

And so it ended up with a whole, like an Encyclopedia Britannica of explanations and all of, you know, what the Ten Commandments were all about, and all of the traditions that developed with them. Now, the washing of hands, there was a certain ritual in the washing of hands. And so, when you say they didn't wash their hands, they didn't follow the traditional washing of hands.

That was, you know, that was sort of popular in those days. The tradition was, you could not wash your hands in a basin, you had to wash your hands over running water. And as you would wash your hands over the running water, you could not allow the water to flow on your arms, but you had to keep it on your hands.

And so, you would put your hands out in front of you, and then they would pour the water over, and you would hold them out so that the water would just drip off your arm, not run up your arms, and rubbing your hands back and forth under the running water. And this was the traditional way that they washed their hands. If you just, you know, got it in and did like we do, you know, just, well, that was considered eating with unwashed hands.

And so, that's the thing that they were accusing Jesus of. The disciples weren't following this traditional method of washing hands. And so, that's what they were complaining about to Jesus.

But Jesus pointed out that, you know, they were observing traditions, not the commandment of God. And there was no commandment in, you know, that said, you've got to wash your hands a certain way. Even there wasn't even a commandment that you had to wash your hands.

But of course, we know that from a sanitary purpose, that is important. And so, we don't object to washing your hands before you eat. We know it's a good practice.

But yet, we don't have traditional ways to wash our hands. And so, they weren't following the tradition of the elders, for they don't wash their hands when they eat their bread. That is, they don't follow the traditional means or ways of washing their hands.

But then, he showed how that through their traditions, they actually nullified the law of God. Because the law of God said, honor your father and your mother. And if a person did not honor their father and their mother, they were to be put to death.

But they developed the tradition. If you say, dad, now I'm telling you this for your own good. And then, you could just tell him anything you wanted.

And you know what a rotten, you know, no good person he was. But as long as you prefaced it by saying, this is for your good, this is for your benefit, then you were free. You could tell him anything you wanted.

And thus, by their tradition, they nullified the law of God, which Jesus is pointing out to them. And so, he said, you hypocrites. Well, did Isaiah prophesy of you saying, this people draw near to me with their mouth, and they honor me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.

But in vain, they do worship me, teaching for doctrines, the commandments of men. So, they took and they would teach this as biblical doctrine, and it was just really the traditions of men. And he called the multitude, and he said unto them, hear and understand, not that which goes into the mouth defiles a man, but that which comes out of the mouth, this defiles the man.

And then, his disciples came, and they said, don't you know that the Pharisees were offended after they heard this saying? But he answered and said, every plant which my heavenly father hath not planted will be rooted up. Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind.

And if the blind lead the blind, they will both fall in the ditch. Then answered Peter and said unto him, declare to us this parable. And Jesus said, are you also without understanding? Do you not understand that whatsoever enters in at the mouth, goes into the belly, and is cast out through the draught? But those things which proceed out of the mouth, they come from the heart, and they defile a man, for out of the heart proceeds evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, and blasphemies.

These are the things which defile a man, but to eat with unwashed hands doesn't defile a man. And so, Jesus is explaining, of course, what he is referring to as, you know, his explanation for the disciples not washing their hands before they ate. And then Jesus went from there, and he departed to the coast of Tyre and Sidon.

That is over these coastal cities that are today in Syria. And behold, a woman of Canaan came out of their coast, and she cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David. My daughter is grievously vexed with the devil.

But he answered her not a word. And the disciples came, and they begged him, saying, Lord, send her away, because she's bugging us. She's crying after us.

But he answered and said, I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And then she came and worshiped him, saying, Lord, help me. And he answered and said, It is not right to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs.

And she said, That's true, Lord. Yet the dogs do eat the crumbs which fall from their master's table. And then Jesus answered and said to her, O woman, great is your faith.

Be it unto you, even as you will. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour. Now, I think that it is important that we have an understanding of this particular story, because it would appear that Jesus was reluctant to help this desperate mother whose daughter was vexed with the devil.

And she came, but he acted as though he didn't hear her, as though she weren't there. But Jesus knew all things. He knew from the beginning that he was going to heal her daughter.

But he also knew that she had a very deep faith in him. And he was seeking to draw out the expression of that faith that she had. And so that's why he seemed to back away.

But every time he would back away, she would move in that much closer. And so he was drawing her in. And thus, if you read it in that light, he answered her not a word in the beginning.

And his disciples came and said, Lord, you know, do something. She's just bugging us something terrible. And Jesus said, I'm not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

In other words, she's outside of my boundaries. She heard him say this. And yet she is still pressing in.

And so she came and worshipped him and said, Lord, help me. And he answered and said, it isn't right to take the children's bread and to cast it to the dogs. Now, he is using a different word for dogs in the Greek than usually the word that they talk about dogs as a mutton as a sort of a other word, a lot of them around Israel, and they were sort of wild and, and hated by people.

But then they had their little puppies, the children had their little household pets, their puppies, and Jesus used the word puppies here, the little household pet dogs. It isn't right to take the children's bread and cast it to the little puppies. And she said, That's true, Lord.

But the little puppies, they eat the crumbs that fall from the master's table. In other words, she is saying, Lord, all I need is just crumbs. And so it isn't right to take the children's bread, cast it to these vicious dogs.

But the little puppies eat the crumbs that fall from the master's table. Oh, woman, great is thy faith. Be it unto you even as you will.

And her daughter was made whole from that very hour. But her faith opened the door for Jesus to do a work in that area among many. So Jesus departed from there, and they came nigh to the Sea of Galilee.

And he went into the mountain, and he sat down there. And great multitudes came unto him, having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them at Jesus' feet. And he healed them, insomuch as the multitude wondered when they saw the mute to speak, the maimed to behold, the lame to walk, the blind to see.

And they glorified the God of Israel. Jesus had said to his disciples, let your light so shine before men, that when they see your good works, they glorify your Father which is in heaven. It is possible to let your light so shine before men that they see you.

You can draw attention to yourself. And I've seen a lot of this kind of stuff happening where people are seeking to draw attention to themselves through the working of God's power and so forth through their lives. But they do it in such a way as they receive glory, they receive credit, they receive, you know, the praise of man.

But that's not what Jesus said. Do it in such a way that when they see the good works, they glorify your Father which are in heaven. I'm always a little reluctant when people begin to tell me how wonderful a person I am.

It makes me realize I must be doing something wrong. I'm drawing attention to myself. I've had, you know, well, this thinking about this one lady, her husband was a psychiatrist.

And he had a practice out in the Pomona Valley area. In fact, he had his offices there and quite a large practice. And he was an agnostic.

And so, she wanted me to witness to her husband. So, she invited Kay and I over for dinner. And after dinner, she and Kay retired to the kitchen to do the dishes so that her husband, Bud, and I would have to sit there together and talk in the living room.

So, we sat and we talked. And after a long conversation, I said to him, Bud, we've been talking for quite a while. And I said, I know that you've been psychoanalyzing me.

And as you have, you understand me a little bit. I mean, I've been open with you in answering your questions, telling you what I feel and how I react and respond. Tell me, what do you think I have lost because of my faith in Jesus Christ? What does it cost me? What have I lost as a result of it? And he looked at me and he said, not a damn thing.

He said, I wish I had the peace and all that you have. And I said, well, Bud, you can. And so, I invited him to get on his knees and together we prayed as he asked the Lord to come into his life.

He was having a lot of problems, psychological problems, because being a psychiatrist, people would come in and they would, you know, be suicidal and all. And he would give them advice. And then he couldn't sleep at night because he was worried about them committing suicide.

And, you know, what if they commit suicide? And then I failed and all. And so, he couldn't sleep at night. So, he started taking sleeping pills at night.

Well, in the morning, he couldn't wake up. And so, he started taking uppers in the morning. So, he got hooked on uppers and downers.

And so, at night, he would take the sleeping pills. In the morning, he'd take the amphetamine to keep him going during the day. And he got hooked on both.

And he realized he had a real problem, but he couldn't do anything about it. But as he accepted the Lord, the Lord really began to minister to him. Well, Edie came over the next morning.

She called up and said, Chuck, I've got to talk to you. And so, she came on over. And she came into my office.

And she said, Oh, Chuck, you're so wonderful. You know, my, you know, you know, oh, you're so, I knew you could do it, Chuck. You're so great.

You're so wonderful. I said, Hold on, Edie. Hold on.

Your husband is a psychiatrist, true? She said, Yes. I said, He's also a neurosurgeon. She said, Yes.

I said, What if he had operated on a patient that was having problems with their brain and they had an aneurysm? And so, he operated and he tied off the little veins and they were well. What if they came back to his office and they said, Do you have the instruments that you used in the operation? And he got out his case and showed him the instruments. And they picked up the little scaffold and said, Oh, you're the greatest scaffold in the world.

You're so sharp. You made such neat cuts and so forth. I said, Your husband would think they need psychiatric help and they would begin to minister to them, you know, in a different way.

And I said, You don't praise the instrument. You praise the one who used the instrument and his skills. And I said, So, don't praise me, Edie.

Praise the Lord for what he has done in Bud's heart and in Bud's life. And so, she got the message and it was great to see how that the Lord really worked in and through that particular experience. So, where were we before we got sidetracked here? So, Jesus, again, is feeding now 4,000 people or 4,000 men beside the women and children and they are taking up seven baskets full of fragments left over.

So, they were all eat and were blooded and as with the first case. And they that did eat were 4,000 men beside the women and children. And he sent away the multitude and took the ship and came to the coast of Magdala.

Now, Magdala is there at the Sea of Galilee and it is not that far from Capernaum. And it is where actually the main road comes from the upper Galilee on into the Sea of Galilee. And so, that is where Magdala was.

And it's across the sea from Gennesaret where Jesus had been. So, in chapter 16, first of all, in the first four verses, the Pharisees are seeking a sign. Verses 5 to 12, Jesus crosses the sea and warns the disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees.

And in verses 13 to 20, Jesus and his disciples on up in the upper Galilee region up at the base of Mount Hermon in Caesarea Philippi. So, the Pharisees also with the Sadducees, they came and tempting desired him that he would show them a sign from heaven. Now, we just read how that Jesus fed the multitude with, you know, the 4,000 with the seven loaves and the few fish.

We read of all of the people that he had been healing. That verse 31 of the previous chapter, the multitudes wondered when they saw the mute speaking, the maimed whole, the lame walking, the blind were able to see, and they were glorifying the God of Israel. And now the people come and say, show us a sign.

You know, where have you been? You know, haven't you seen what's been going on? And yet they're asking for some sign. And that's why he answered and said to them, when it is evening, you say it will be fair weather for the sky is red in the morning. When you, if the sky is red in the morning, you say it will be foul weather today for the sky is red in the morning.

Oh, you hypocrites, you can discern the face of the sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times. And, you know, I think that Jesus might be saying that today, where people are saying, where are the signs of his coming? Well, I'll tell you, all around us, there are signs that the coming of Jesus is very, very near. And of course, on Wednesday night, we'll be looking at these signs of the times and showing us that the Lord's coming is very, very near, even at the doors.

And so, you know, you can't discern, he said, the signs of the times, rebuking them, because they're so obvious, and yet, they just can't discern them. He said, a wicked and an adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonah. And he left them and departed.

What is the sign of the prophet Jonah? Well, earlier, he told them that as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so shall the son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. His resurrection from the dead would be the sign that he was indeed the Messiah, the son of God. And that is the only sign, he said, that they will actually receive is the sign of the prophet Jonah.

And so, when his disciples were come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread with them. And Jesus said unto them, take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. And they reasoned among themselves, and they said, it's because we've forgotten to bring bread.

And when Jesus perceived, he said to them, O ye of little faith, why reason in yourselves, because you have brought no bread? Do you not yet understand, and neither don't you remember the five loaves and the five thousand, how many baskets you took up, nor the seven loaves and the four thousand, and how many baskets you took up? How is it that you do not understand, that I speak it not to you concerning bread, that you should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees? And then they understood how that he bade them to beware of the leaven of the bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. Leaven was a sort of a yeast that they would put in the bread to cause it to rise. And they would put it into the dough to cause it to rise.

And they would just put in, well, they called it the starter dough, and they would put in that little bit of starter, but it would permeate through the whole dough and the whole batch. And it became a type of sin, how that just a little bit tolerated within will permeate your whole life. And thus the leaven of the Pharisees, beware of that.

So when Jesus came to the coast of Caesarea Philippi, now he has moved with his disciples all the way up through the upper Galilee, right to the base of Mount Hermon, where actually the Jordan River has its origin, as it just comes out of this giant spring, right there at the base of Mount Hermon. So when they were come to Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples saying, whom do men say that I, the Son of Man am? And they said, well, some said that you are John the Baptist, some say you're Elijah, and others say Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. But he said unto them, but whom do you say that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, you are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.

And Jesus answered and said unto him, blessed art thou Simon, son of Jonah, for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Now the question, is Peter the rock upon which the church has been built? The Catholic church declared that.

God said, I give to you the keys of the kingdom, and he was talking to Peter, and that he is the rock upon which the church has been built, and they use this scripture to prove it. But if you look at this scripture in the Greek, I say unto you that you are Peter, Petros. Petros is a little pebble, it isn't a rock, and upon this rock, Petra, I will build my church.

There at Caesarea Philippi, you have the base of Mount Hermon, and it is just this huge rock, and it's just the base of the mountain, and upon this rock, Petra, I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. So what is the foundation upon which the church is built? Peter? Or is it the confession of Peter? You are the Messiah, the son of the living God. And so we would have to assume, and rightly so, that the church is built upon the fact that Jesus is the Messiah, the son of the living God.

That is the foundation upon which the church is built, not Peter. And I will give unto you, he said, the keys to the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, whatsoever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. And then he charged his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus, the Messiah.

But from that time forth, Jesus began to show unto his disciples how that he must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders, and of the chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. So he's, now that they're recognizing, and he is acclaiming to them that their recognition is correct, he is the Messiah. Because they were anticipating the Messiah to set up the kingdom of God immediately.

And he, knowing that he was going to be crucified, was trying to prepare them for, to correct really their mistaken notion that he was going to be set up, and began to rule over the nation immediately. In fact, they'd been arguing on this thing. Among themselves, they were arguing who would be the greatest when he sets up the kingdom.

And you know, they would get in these big arguments on these things. And Jesus knew that they misunderstood his first coming, that he was going to be giving his life. And so now he's wanting to prepare them for the fact that he's not going to be setting up the kingdom immediately.

That's something down the road in the future. But he's going to be put to death there in Jerusalem. And he doesn't want this to just really shatter them.

So from that time forth, he began to show the disciples how that he must go to Jerusalem, suffer many things from the elders, and the chief priests, and the scribes. He would be killed, but he would rise again the third day. Then Peter took him and began to rebuke him, saying, be that far from thee, Lord.

This shall not be unto thee. So here's Peter now rebuking him when he's beginning to talk about his death. Because Peter was figuring he was going to be chief of state when the Lord set things up.

And the Lord saw him about his being put to death. And he just says, Lord, shame on you talking like that, you know. It's not going to be.

But notice Jesus turned to him and said, Peter, he turned to Peter and said, get thee behind me, Satan. You are an offense to me. For you don't tell the difference or savor the things that are of God, but only those that are of men.

Now, if Peter was the rock upon which the church was to be built, already you've got big problems. Because in the next sentence or so, Jesus is saying to Peter, get thee behind me, Satan. You offend me because you lack discernment.

You can't tell that which is from God and that which is from men. Then said Jesus to his disciples, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. Three requirements for discipleship.

Number one, deny himself. Now, it is interesting to me that Jesus didn't give a list of things that you can't do as a Christian. There are many churches that will give you those kinds of lists, but Jesus didn't give a list of things.

He just said, deny yourself. Deny yourself what? Whatever keeps you from following Jesus completely. Whatever keeps you from taking up the cross and following him, that's what you need to deny yourself.

What's ever standing in the way of your complete commitment of your life and all unto Jesus Christ, get rid of it. Deny yourself. Take up your cross.

With Jesus, taking up the cross was submitting himself fully to the will of the Father. There in the garden before he went to the cross, he was praying, Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, not what I will, but thy will be done.

So, with Jesus, taking up the cross was a total submission to the will of the Father. And with us, it is the same. It's submitting ourselves to the will of the Father.

It probably won't involve a cross, but yet there will be things that we need to, you know, take up the cross to follow him. And of course, the third thing, follow me. I don't know of any life that is more exciting, more thrilling than that life of following Jesus Christ, and I highly recommend it.

You know, I had, well, such glorious experiences in following Jesus Christ. It's led me all over the world and in so many places and in so many things. Just having surrendered and submitted myself to do his will has been a blessing, has been a thrill, and I just can't say enough for just what the joys and the glory of following Jesus Christ.

To give a rationale for this, he said, for whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited if he should gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and he shall reward every man according to his works. Verily I say unto you, there are some standing here which will not taste of death till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.

Now, this particular verse is a reference to the next verse, which after six days, Jesus took Peter, James, and John, and he took them up into the mountain, that would be Mount Hermon, and he was transfigured before them, and his face did shine as the sun, his raiment was as white as the light, and behold there appeared unto him Moses and Elijah talking with him. And then answered Peter and said unto Jesus, Lord, it's good for us to be here, and if thou wilt just make here, let us make here three tabernacles, one for you, one for Moses, one for Elijah. And while he yet spake, behold a bright cloud overshadowed them, and the voice out of the cloud which said, this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him.

Peter is saying, let's make three tabernacles, one for Moses, that is representing the law, one for Elijah, that would be representing the prophets, and one for Jesus, and let's just make these shrines right here. And the voice out of the cloud said, this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him. That is, listen to what Jesus said, we are not to be guided or directed by the law or by the prophets, we're to be directed by the words of Jesus in these days.

And so, I like this rationale that Jesus gives, as he says to take up the cross and follow him. For if you seek to save your life, you're going to lose it. But if you will lose your life for his sake, you'll find it.

Surrendering yourself and living fully for him, you'll discover what life is intended to be, what God means and wants your life to be, the rich, full life of following Jesus Christ. But then he gives the rationale. What is it to profit to you if you should gain the whole world, but lose your own soul? I don't know how rich you

want to be when you die.

Maybe you've got that all figured out. I don't, that doesn't matter to me. But what if you did gain the whole world? What if you were as rich as Gates? You know, you had so many billion, you couldn't spend it all.

What profit would that be if in the gaining of these riches, you lost your own soul? You would spend eternity in hell, separated from God. You think people are going to say, oh, that lucky guy, you know, he was so wealthy, and he was so rich when he died. And yeah, but he's in hell.

Oh, but he had all of those riches. Well, where are they now? Oh, I don't know. But he was rich, you know, he could get anything he wanted and all.

Well, what value is that if you're being tormented in hell? You know, and what is it profited if you would gain the whole world, but in so doing, lose your own soul? Or second, what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? I look at what people are giving in exchange for their soul today. And I realized, you know, you're selling out too cheap. There are people who are selling their soul for just sexual pleasures.

And they just are controlled and ruled by their sexual desires and all and selling out for that. Some are selling out for just a bottle of beer. And, you know, how ridiculous to give your eternal soul for these things that the world has to offer.

Let me tell you what, the world cannot offer you enough that would make it a good deal to exchange for your soul, no matter what they would offer, it would be far too little to exchange your soul for anything of this world. So if you gain the whole world, but lost your own soul, or what is it that you are willing to exchange your soul for? For the Son of Man will come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and he shall reward every man according to his works. Verily I say unto you, some are standing here which will not taste of death till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.

Well, we didn't get as far as we were wanting to get tonight, but we'll pick it up with chapter 17. But I went into 17 just to show you that I think that when they divided the Bible in chapters and verses, I think that they made a real mistake here in separating chapter 16 and 17 right at this point, because it goes right into chapter 17 where Jesus is transfigured, and that's what he's talking when they would see him coming in his kingdom. They would see him with Moses and Elijah talking about the kingdom of God, and so that's what Jesus was making reference to, and with the chapter which we did tonight, we stopped at the end of chapter 16, but I went into chapter 17 to show you the tie, and of course we'll pick it up in chapter 17 next week, and we'll see the tie between chapter 16 and 17 verses 28 of 16 and verse 1 of chapter 17 so that you don't get confused.

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