

CHRIST OVER ME

Matthew 16:21-28

This week's sermon is the first in a series of four weeks focusing on the Lordship of Christ. This week focuses on what it means for Christ to be Lord over us, and the next three weeks will focus on Christ's Lordship over the church, the marketplace and our relationships.

On Sunday we explored the question:

Are you living as a part time volunteer for the Gospel or as a disciple of Jesus Christ?

As a group discuss your answers to this question, and the link with sitting under the Lordship of Christ. Consider for you what it might look like to be a full fledged disciple of Jesus in 21st Century Australia.

Read Matthew 16:13-28. Spend some time reflecting on the passage as a group. Use the following questions to aid your reflections.

1. Consider Peter's understanding of Jesus. What might this passage and Peter's actions suggest about his knowledge of Jesus?
2. What does it mean to "not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns" (v23)? In what areas of our lives do we tend to fall into this same trap?
3. How would you explain to someone today what it means to be a disciple of Jesus? How would your definition differ from Jesus'? Where might you need to balance your description of discipleship?
4. Jesus definition involved three parts, marked by the three verbs in the sentence.
 - a. **Deny Self.** The word deny literally this means to completely disown or to utterly separate oneself from someone. The same word is used of Peter's denial of Jesus in Matthew 26:34. It is the practice of laying down yourself, your control, and effectively taking yourself out of the centre of your world.
 - i. How do we see Jesus demonstrate this in Phil 2:5-11?
 - ii. What wisdom does Colossians 3:3 and Galatians 2:20 bring to our understanding?
 - iii. In Matt 10:37-38 we see Jesus demand completed allegiance. Where might we struggle in similar ways?
 - b. **Pick Up your Cross.** Today the cross can be a symbol of life and hope, but in Jesus' time the cross was only a symbol of humiliation and death. Not only are we to lay down our selves but we are to pick up our cross.

- i. Have a discussion in your group about your experiences of suffering as a disciple of Jesus. Do you expect suffering? Should you expect suffering? What wisdom does John 16:33 add to your conversations?
 - ii. In Luke 9:57-62 we see Jesus call three people to follow him who all struggled with this call. Where might we struggle in similar ways?
 - iii. What would you be willing to lose for the sake of your faith? Family? Friends? Reputation? Financial security?
 - c. **Follow me.** It is clear that the expectation of discipleship is that we would follow behind Christ, engaging in the world as he would expect us to, seeking to follow wisdom and guidance in all the areas of our lives.
 - i. Peter clearly has a different plan than Jesus, evident when he seeks to pull Jesus aside to correct him. How do you discern where Jesus might be leading you so that you can follow? Share stories as a group of where you have (or maybe have not and realised later) followed Jesus leading.
 - ii. How might you encourage and keep each other accountable to following Jesus as a life group?
 - iii. How might we be able to recognise where we are following our own human plans, rather than God's plans? How might we be able to recognise that in one another?
5. Jesus encourages his disciples, that even though the call to sit under his lordship can be a tough call at times, that there is an incredible reward for those who seek to lose their lives for Christ's sake.
- a. Reflect on verses 25-27 together. What perspective does this bring on your life? Adding in Ephesians 2:4-10, how does this bring a full picture of what it means to understand Jesus as both saviour and Lord of our lives?
 - b. Verse 28 can cause some confusion. How might it link, not to a future reality (given Jesus explained that they would not know the time and place of his coming Matthew 24:36) but to the following chapter (17:1-13)?
 - c. Peter's story in the Gospel ends with an incredible picture of grace and forgiveness offered, despite his denial of Jesus. How might this encourage us today?

Spend some time in your life group sharing one area of your life you feel God is asking you to bring under his Lordship. Pray for one another, and perhaps reflect on how you might be able to encourage and follow up with one another on this area in coming weeks.

