

The Cost of Following Jesus
Matthew 16: 24-27

Russell Cook
West End Church of Christ
Knoxville, TN

1. This is a familiar text. This passage sets forth the heart of Christian discipleship and strikes a blow to a self-centered, consumer lifestyle that you see in the world today. The whole perspective of life for some is, "What's in it for me?"
 2. This is not the first time Jesus spoke of the high cost of discipleship. (**Matthew 10; Luke 14:25-27; Mark 10:21**).
 3. Like most Jews, the apostles were raised with an earthly concept of Messiahship. They believed that a political Messiah would rise up.
 4. In our text, Jesus told Peter, "Get behind me, Satan!" Why? Because "you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men." We also, like Peter, "do not have the things of God, but the things of men." So we have to examine our own lives in the light of this passage.
- I. Jesus Requires Three Actions In Following Him. (Matt. 16: 24)
- A "He must deny himself,..."
 1. This is the same word Jesus used to describe Peter's denial of him in Matthew 26.
 2. Self-denial is the way you come to Christ, and that is the way we live for Him.
 - B "Take up his cross..."
 1. Some think the cross is their wife, their husband, or their job.
 2. The cross is willing to pay any price for Christ's sake.
 - C "And Follow Me."
 1. Literally, it means, "let him be following me day by day by day." It is a continual following after Jesus. It's a way of life.
- II. **There Is A Paradox In All Of This. (Matt. 16: 25)**
- A Whoever is willing to give up his earthly physical life, willing to deny himself, bear his cross, follow Jesus in obedience, under the Lordship of Christ, will save his spiritual, eternal soul.
 - B "Life" here refers to self.
- III. **What Is The Value Of Your Soul? (Matt. 16: 26)**
- A "Can we do a little bartering here, Lord? I mean, a billion dollars for a soul?"
 1. What are you willing to exchange for your soul?
 - B Our greatest possession is our soul, and the greatest tragedy is to lose it. (**Matt. 10: 28**)
 - C What values does God place on your soul?
 1. Rom 5: 8 "Christ died for us."
 2. Jesus is saying you don't have to spend eternity in Hell.
- IV. CONCLUSION: Jesus here asks the most profound question God could ask, "What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul?"