

# Talk About It

## Small Group Discussion Guide

### Paradox: Life & Death

April 27 & 30

**Start Talking** This weekend we celebrated baptisms across all of our campuses. Do you remember the day you got baptized and what you experienced? What excites you about possibly being baptized someday?

**Main Idea** This weekend Pastor Ken spoke on the paradox of life and death. He began by talking about the passage where Peter calls Jesus the Messiah. This was a big deal because it took place in the region of Caesarea Philippi, which was a place where many different people were constantly coming and going to worship false gods. Pastor Ken compared it to an area like Times Square.

After Peter said that Jesus was the Messiah, Jesus then explained how He must suffer and die to fulfill His mission here on earth. Peter did not like or agree with what Jesus said so he rebuked Jesus. Jesus explained to Peter that he was not aware of the concerns of God, just his limited human circumstances. Jesus then turns to His disciples and says, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it." (Matthew 16:24-25).

A lot of people want to follow Jesus... but on their terms. Sometimes we want to be the ones who write the script for how God works in our lives, as opposed to surrendering to His ultimate plan. Pastor Ken explained that one of the most challenging aspects of following Jesus is letting go of something. Surrendering our lives to Christ ultimately means surrendering our plans, agendas, comfort, self-protection, and control.

Pastor Ken encouraged us to take a personal inventory of different areas of our lives and consider where those areas align with the spectrum below.

Curious Observer

Casual Follower

Committed Disciple

We are all somewhere on the spectrum, and we will all have a next step to take in our walk with Christ until the day we come face to face with Him.

#### Personalize It

1. What stuck out most to you in this teaching?
2. Was there a time in your life when you had your plans and expectations of how God should move in your life? If so, did His plan align or go differently than what you had planned?
3. Matthew 16:24-25 teaches us that to be a committed disciple, you: 1. Deny self 2. Take up your cross 3. Follow Him. How is our commitment to being a disciple going?
4. What do your finances, relationships, Friday and Saturday nights or search history on computer say about your commitment to surrender to Jesus and follow Him? Curious observer? Casual follower? Committed disciple?

## LET'S DO IT!

1. Identify areas where you want to go from curious observer or casual follower to a committed disciple.
2. Where is God asking you to die to your plan, agenda, control, and even self and to pick up your cross and follow Him?
3. We all have a next step in our walk with Christ, identify and take your next step.

Need help to identify and understand your next step? Getting Started is the place to help you identify and take those next steps. Step 3 of Getting Started is Sunday May 21st. Here is the link with more information: <https://gettingstarted.cypresschurch.tv/>

## PRAY

Lord, thanks for Who You are. Thank You for all the ways you have provided for us and ultimately died to Self and picked up Your Cross to save us. God help us to die to self, pick up our cross, and surrender daily. God, we surrender our plans, control, and agendas to you. Lord, help us identify our next steps in our walk with You. We submit ourselves to You, in Jesus name. AMEN.

## Key Scriptures

For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it.  
**NIV Matthew 16:25**

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets." "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.

**NIV Matthew 16:13-18**

From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life. Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!" Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns." Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done.

**NIV Matthew 16:21-27**

Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins. You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil—the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature. By our very nature we were subject to God's anger, just like everyone else. But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God's grace that you have been saved!)

**NLT Ephesians 2:1-5**

My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

**NLT Galatians 2:20**