

**Group Study Guide**

July 16-17, 2022

*Reflections*

Dr. Kurt Bjorklund

**MESSAGE NOTES:**

Matthew 16:21-26

**Jesus Predicts His Death**

<sup>21</sup> 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.

<sup>22</sup> Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!"

<sup>23</sup> 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."

<sup>24</sup> Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. <sup>25</sup> For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. <sup>26</sup> 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?"

## STUDY GUIDE:

**STEP ONE:** Read Matthew 16:21-26 and pray to open your time together in God's word.

**STEP TWO: (Optional) Icebreaker:** You are a Superhero and are invited to make a grand entrance on live TV to be introduced to the whole world at the Super Bowl. What does your entrance look like and what is your theme song?

### STEP THREE: Discuss Questions

1. What stood out to you the most in this weekend's teaching? What was challenging, encouraging, or confusing to you?
2. Some of us may have been taught from childhood that the *elders, chief priests, and scribes* are Jesus' arch-enemies, so we are not shocked that Jesus will suffer at their hands. But let's consider the surprise that the disciples must have felt at hearing these words. Why would the guardians of God's law and God's promises be looking to kill the one who has come to fulfill all those promises?
3. Peter has just been the first person to openly affirm the deity of Christ and then honored by Jesus as having heard this directly from God the Father Himself (Matthew 16:17)... and now Jesus is so soon openly confronting Peter to take his satanic temptation and 'get behind him' (Matthew 16:22). Why does Jesus speak so harshly to Peter, who seems to be guilty only of having respectfully taken Jesus aside (alone), when he attempts to protect his master from imminent harm?
4. Jesus then turns his attention to the rest of his disciples in v. 24, (this includes you and me if we call ourselves disciples) and charges them and us, "*Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.*" What does it mean to deny oneself for the sake of Christ? Why does Jesus take it a step further by saying we must take up our cross? What does it mean to take up your cross?
5. Are there any areas of your life that Jesus may be directly confronting where you are potentially 'gaining the whole world' but 'losing your soul'? Is there any area in your heart that burns with desire or ambition for something that if you gained it would pull you away from God?
6. What value do you place on your life in response to Jesus asking, "*Or what will anyone give in exchange for his life?*" in Matthew 16:26?

### STEP FOUR: Close in Prayer