

Sermon-Based Questions
January 6, 2019
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Paradox
Losing is Gaining
Matthew 16:21-27

Introduction (choose 1):

1. Share some of your goals or hopes for this coming year
2. A paradox is a statement that appears contradictory or absurd. For example: *A crowd is the loneliest place, or less is more.*
 - Can you think of any other paradoxical statements?
 - Can you think of any paradoxes in your life?
3. Pastor Dave said, “If we are following Jesus...People won’t be able to figure us out. We won’t just blend in.” What are some ways in which you stand out at work, school, or in your neighborhood?

Reading (Scripture Reference):

Read Matthew 16:21-27

Understanding (choose 4-6):

3. Give examples of some injustices that you see in the world today.
 - How does that make you feel?
 - As Christians, how should we respond to injustice?
4. Share a time when you personally experienced injustice.
 - How did you react?
 - How does Jesus want us to react?
5. In Matthew 16:21, Jesus says that He must be killed. Did Jesus *have* to die? Why?
6. Read Matthew 16:22-23. Here we see Peter rebuking Jesus, and Jesus responds by saying “Get behind me, Satan!”
 - Why did Peter rebuke Jesus?
 - Was Peter wrong for not wanting Jesus to die?
 - Why did Jesus respond so strongly and call Peter “Satan”?
7. Discuss a time when you wanted God to act one way and He didn’t meet your expectations.
 - What did you learn from this experience?
 - Was there a bigger picture that you didn’t see at the time, but you do now?
8. Read Matthew 16:24. What does it mean to “take up your cross”?

9. Jesus calls you to “deny yourself” and “lose your life” for Him. Pastor Dave mentions that one way to “lose your life” is to die to your old identity.
- What do you tend to place your identity in?
 - Why is it so easy to place your identity in earthly things that won’t last, and so hard to place your identity in eternal things?
 - How can you fight against your desire to place your identity in earthly things?
10. Pastor Dave mentions a second way to “lose your life” is to die to your old agenda. He goes on to say, “If you come to Jesus clutching on to your agenda, you’re actually intending to use Him.”
- What parts of your agenda do you have trouble giving up for Jesus’ agenda?
 - Why is it so hard to give up your agenda and follow God’s agenda?
 - What are some steps that you can take to begin to trust God and His agenda?
11. Pastor Dave ends with a list of changes that can take place in your life if you were to stop holding on to your life, and choose to lose your life for Christ:
- You will go from **self-focused** to **Christ-focused**.*
- You’ll go from **self-conscious** to **self-forgetful**.*
- From **insecure** to **secure**.*
- From **cautious** to **bold**.*
- From **fearful** to **fearless**.*
- From **self-indulgent** to **self-denying**.*
- From **building your kingdom** to **building God’s kingdom**.*
- From **holding your possessions tightly** to **holding them loosely**.*
- And from **controlling** to **submitting**.*
- Take a moment to reflect on this list.
 - Which of these attributes do you struggle with the most?
 - Which ones do you most desire to gain?
 - What is holding you back from losing your life for Jesus?

Application:

12. In Matthew 16:25, Jesus says, “For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it.” Give some specific examples as to how you can “lose your life” in your day-to-day life in order to “find it.”
13. How can this small group help each other deny ourselves and take up our crosses to follow Jesus?
14. Take some time to pray. Ask Jesus to help you focus on His agenda. Ask Him to give you the courage to lose your life, take up your cross, and follow Him; even if that means suffering, and persecution.

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Lectio Divina

1. **Opening Prayer:** Ask God for insight into His Word, for open hearts and minds, for hunger to know Him better, and for an attitude of learning from one another.
2. **Reading:** Have someone from your group read the passage aloud. It is best to print out a copy for each group member so they can read along, make notes, or go back as needed.
3. **Meditation:** Spend an *entire minute in complete silence*, contemplating what was just read. Feel free to re-read the passage quietly to yourself or jot down thoughts/highlight what stuck out to you.
4. **Sharing:** At the leader's signal, invite group members to share their insights for about 5 minutes.
5. **Repeat:** After the 5 minutes are over, repeat the process 2 more times using the same passage. Listen/read like you haven't heard this passage before. If there are longer moments of silence, the leader can prompt discussion with the following questions:
 1. What did you hear and what seems important?
 2. What is the Holy Spirit impressing on you?
 3. What does it make you think of from your life?

²¹ *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.*

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

²³ *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."*

²⁴ *Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ²⁵ For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. ²⁶ 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? ²⁷ 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.*

-Matthew 16:21-27

³ *Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, ⁴ not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.*

⁵ *In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:*

⁶ *Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;*

⁷ rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.
⁸ And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross!
⁹ Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,
¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
¹¹ and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

-Philippians 2:3-11

¹⁷ As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. “Good teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”
¹⁸ “Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered. “No one is good—except God alone. ¹⁹ You know the commandments: ‘You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, you shall not defraud, honor your father and mother.’”
²⁰ “Teacher,” he declared, “all these I have kept since I was a boy.”
²¹ Jesus looked at him and loved him. “One thing you lack,” he said. “Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”
²² At this the man’s face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth.
²³ Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!”

-Mark 10:17-23