

Following Jesus into Suffering—Leadership Lessons

S.R. Matthew 16:24 – 25

9 – 14 – 2025

Introduction

Jesus calls every leader in His kingdom not to comfort, but to the cross:

- “Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. 25 For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.” Matthew 16:24 - 25
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1. A Life Transformed (Romans 12:1 – 2)

2. Bold Leadership Anchored in Truth

- Scripture: “Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful” (Hebrews 10:23).
- “Now, Lord, consider their threats ... enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness” (Acts 4:29).
- “Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; act like men, be strong” (1 Corinthians 16:13).
- I fear we direct our children to give first rate effort to second rate goals.
- Wise parents prepare their children for college battles:
 - Mind Your Faith – Doy Moyer - Apologetics Press
 - Surviving Religion 101 - Michael Kruger UNC – Bart Ehrman
 - Man of Galilee – Atticus G. Haygood – I Believe Because - Baxter
 - Josh McDowell: Evidence that Demands a Verdict.
 - The Case for Christ – Strobel
 - Cold Case Christianity – J. Warner Wallace
 - The Reason for God – Timothy Keller

– Charlie’s Story

- Declared, “I want to be remembered for courage and for my faith...the most important thing in my life is my faith”.

Professional Careers:

3. The Cost of Discipleship: Suffering for Christ

– Scripture: (1 Peter 4:12 – 13)

- “Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering... but rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ” (1 Peter 4:12–13).
- Our scars prove we have a past. Christ scars prove we have a future... if
- “If we share in his sufferings, we will also share in his glory” (Romans 8:17).

4. Servant-Hearted Legacy

– Scripture: “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another” (John 13:35). Luke 19:10 “For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

Next Slide: Success: For those who know me best to love and respect me most.”

Also “The chief cause of failure and unhappiness is trading what we want most for what we want at the moment.”

- Despite fame, Charlie built personal relationships—listening long before speaking, demonstrating respect even to opponents. **It is never right to be rude.**
- Invested in training and mentoring peers, believing every believer must both lead and equip others in Christ’s name.

Application for Our Congregation

1. What risks—social, professional, emotional—might you face by standing for Jesus?
2. Step Out in Faith: Like Charlie, move from comfortable discourse into the places of influence God calls you—campuses, workplaces, city center.
3. Embrace Suffering: When opposition comes, remember Jesus sacrificed all for you. Rejoice that you “participate in the sufferings of Christ” (1 Peter 4:13).
4. Invest in Others: Mentor someone younger in faith; equip them for bold witness.

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- **Conclusion :** Brave men and women lived and died declaring the supremacy of Christ—let their life and martyrdom ignite in us a willingness to pick up our cross daily, speak truth with love, and lay down our lives for the sake of the Gospel