

THE THINGS OF GOD

SERIES: REACH | WEEK 7 | 3.7.2021

Oh church, God's moving! We're excited about that. If you have your Bibles, would you open up to Matthew Chapter 16? Matthew Chapter 16, I'm going to read this and I'm just going to say a few things as I read it. Here is the quick once over that I want you to hear. In all of the gospels what you're about ready to read is repeated over and over—so the gospel writers Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, they all say this—that not all things that happened in the life of Jesus are recorded in all four gospels so many times.

Oftentimes I wonder if we could talk to one of the disciples and say, "What is it that Jesus said or did that was most meaningful that, like, as long as you live you're going to keep on remembering this?" By the fact that they all brought this up and mentioned this so often, I'm convinced this is that thing and maybe all of those things. These verses actually lay the foundation for the mission that we're about here at Calvary, we'll talk about that here in a moment, this is really important stuff. If Jesus were to be standing in this room today, and we actually believe He is, He would, I believe, want to talk to us about what happened in this story here. So if you have your Bibles, Matthew Chapter 16, I'm going to start in verse 13, it says this:

¹³ Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi,

— By the way, every word of the Bible matters. Oftentimes when I read names and places I oftentimes blow by them quickly because it doesn't mean a lot to me. This actually matters a lot. Caesarea Philippi was a religious center at the time. Baal worship was a big deal in that time. On top of that, in this location it was considered the birthplace of Pan, the god of nature. And then on top of that there was this huge, big, white temple made for the worship of Caesar. Now you can picture Jesus standing talking with His disciples, this place Caesarea of Philippi is right behind Him and it's as if He's standing there with His disciples with that as His backdrop, and He looks at them and He says to them:

he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?"

— Who do they say that I am? And the guys begin to respond back, sort of this back and forth brainstorming thing, of things that they've heard. Some say that You're Elijah, and um, well, that might mean that, you know, You're one that does miracles. Others say You're John the Baptist, You preach repentance. Others say that you're Jeremiah, the prophet, one who brings the truth and the Word of God.

¹⁴ And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

— And Jesus looks back and:

¹⁵ He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"

— And that will be the question that matters the most: Who do you say that Jesus is? Who you say Jesus is *is* the very answer that determines your eternal destiny. It is probably *the* most important question that is going to be coming to you. Listen to these words, Peter replies:

¹⁶ Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ,

— the Messiah, the coming One, the One we've been looking for, but he doesn't stop there. You are:
the Son of the living God."

– MATTHEW 16:13-16 (ESV)

You gotta get Jesus right or you're lost. And what Jesus is going to respond next to Peter is you got that answer right. You are the Christ. You're the Messiah. You're the One that we've been waiting for, and

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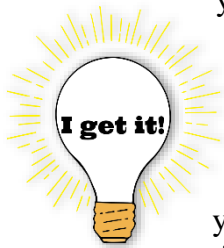
You are God. Who Jesus is matters. If you want to see what separates any other religion from Christianity is to get Jesus wrong. You have to get Jesus right. And Jesus answers and says this to Peter:

17 And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven."

– MATTHEW 16:17 (ESV)

What you're going to find is to get to the cross of Jesus, to come to Jesus, you have a lot of questions that need to be answered. These guys, these disciples have been with Him for two years; they were seeing, they were hearing, they were asking questions and some of those questions were hard, and some of those moments were very, very difficult to get to this moment. But when He finally gets to this moment, Jesus says this isn't just you're a smart guy and all this has all made sense and we've come to that moment where everything has just clicked. He says no, instead, God's doing something in your heart.

And that's why some of you, I mean, you're way out there in the balcony or online, you remember that moment when all of a sudden it was like the lights came on. Up until that point it was like this is weird,



you know, we're told in the Scriptures the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing.¹ They go I don't understand how someone 2,000 years ago can die on that cross and that means anything to me today. And yet through the preaching of the cross God uses that to save people from their sins, and all of a sudden it all comes together and makes sense. And Jesus says I want you to know that was God doing that. And when God's Spirit invades your life and begins to change and transform your heart, all of a sudden your eyes are open. It's an amazing moment. I pray that you've had that moment. And if you haven't had that moment and God begins to tug on

your heart, say, "I will. I'll come to You. I'll turn from my sins. I'll put my trust in You, and I'll make You the Lord of my life."

Let's keep on reading. When Jesus hears him say this, He says:

18 "And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. 19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" 20 Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ.

– MATTHEW 16:18-20 (ESV)

There's this picture that Jesus paints and He uses each one of us who have put our faith and trust in Jesus. Jesus says I am the cornerstone of this living organism called "the church." It's the first time He mentions it right here in this spot, it's all the people that put their trust in Jesus Christ. He said Peter, you're the first one to do that, and from there on the rest of us, we continue to build and we build into this living building called the church. And Jesus says you are part of that. Then Jesus says something that I hear Him say throughout Scripture and every time He says it I have to stop, I have to go, *Okay, what's going on here?* He says listen, don't say anything about this. What you've just heard He strictly charges His disciples to tell no one that He was the Christ, and you step and back you go, "Why is that?"

¹ 1 CORINTHIANS 1:18 (ESV): *For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.*

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We're in the middle of a series called REACH. Our goal is to tell everyone we can the Good News of Jesus Christ. Why would He tell his disciples hold back on mentioning that at this moment? Jesus knew that there were two things that had to happen—they had to know who He was and they had to know what He came to do. If they knew who He was, if they knew that He was the Christ, the Messiah, what they would do is immediately move quickly towards setting up a kingdom and having that kingdom make all the bad guys go away and make all good things happen. And Jesus knew there was something that had to happen first—He had to go to the cross and He had to die because there on the cross He would be the substitute to take on Himself the punishment for the sins that we had committed so that we could be made one with God. And it was an incredibly important thing, but everything would push back against that and try to keep Him from going to that cross.



Listen to what happens next, verse 21:

21 From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.

— that's the Gospel. And then it says this, Peter takes him aside and says no way:

22 And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you."

— Jesus turns to Peter and lights into him, it's strong language. He says:

23 But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man."

– MATTHEW 16:21-23 (ESV)

Satan will do everything he can to keep the cross of Jesus Christ from the center of our world. Satan will do anything he can to keep Jesus from going to that cross. Satan did not want Jesus to forgive us of our sins. He did not want the blood of Jesus to be shed for the forgiveness of our sins. And mankind pushes back—we don't want suffering, we don't want suffering for ourselves, we don't think that our sin is awful enough in God's eyes to even need a cross to die on— isn't there a better way? Isn't there another way? And Peter says, "Listen, I'm strong, I've got this. I just gave You the right answer, You gave me the thumbs up. You said you're the man and now You're telling me You're gonna suffer? We've got this. We'll all join together, we can jump into this and make sure you don't suffer." And Jesus says you're not setting your mind on the things of God. Because when God sent Jesus to this earth He sent Him here with one thing in His mind and that was the cross. His eyes set on the cross that was before Him, to endure the pain and the agony and the shame because He loves you and He wanted to purchase salvation for you.

These next words are important verse 24. They're the words that we constantly mention as part of our major mission, our marching orders from Jesus. Listen to these words:

24 Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself

— you want to come after Jesus, self is going to have to go away. We're going to describe that here in just a moment:

and take up his cross

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— I was listening to this, when they first heard this, the disciples when they first heard this, they knew exactly what the cross was. They knew exactly what crucifixion was. They knew that anyone who went onto a cross did not come back alive, they died. He says if you are going to come to Jesus, you're going to have to deny yourself, you're going to have to take up your cross, an instrument of death. And then it says:

and follow me.

— you're gonna have to follow in the way of the Savior.

– MATTHEW 16:24 (ESV)

The next verse is incredibly important and it's where we want to land today because I think it's going to drive all of this home. To share this verse in an incredibly practical way I've invited one of our elders to come up here and share with me this morning. His name is Dani O'Shaughnessey and Dani shares as one of the six elders here at Calvary and this week he and I were having a conversation. We were working on another project that we're doing together, and you know how when you're sharing on the things that matter most to you it's just like you connect, and we were having one of those conversations. We were talking about the Word of God, we were talking about the just the riches of Scripture, and I all of a sudden felt this strong feeling come over me and I said, "Dani, would you ever want to share from the front on a Sunday morning because I just feel like you need to do that." And he goes, "Welllll."



Dani O'Shaughnessey

So we got off the phone. I shot him a text and I just said, "Hey, I'm, like I'm serious about that. Is there any area, like, that when you think about these verses or about this concept, any of those areas, that if I was ever to come to that you'd like to share on that?" And he sent me back three things and the first one was from Matthew 16. He had no idea I was preaching from Matthew 16; I don't think he did [DANI SHAKES HIS HEAD]. He had no idea I was preaching from Matthew 16 this week and it was the very passage we're about ready to hit right now. He says if you talk to my wife, Cara [PHONETIC SPELLING]; he's got a wife, Cara.

Lee: How many years you've been married? She's in the service.

Dani: 13 years.

Lee: 13 years. You have three children.

Dani: Eight, five, two.

Lee: Eight, five, two. You founded your own technology company, you're the owner of that technology company. I got to visit it here recently, crazy what I saw in there, probably like some of your workplaces, like these stand-up desks. I want a stand up desk, those are cool, they go up and down, but no one was going down on them, they're all up, they're all standing there typing. He's introducing me to all the guys and gals in the office and walking by, "Hello, hello," but they were like typing away [QUICK LOOK UP], "Hi," and back to their work. This guy has them working, it's like crazy. So anyhow, cool stuff going on there. I say all that because this is a person just like all of you in this room, type of world you all live in, and I want you to meet him as that this morning.

But anyhow, as we were sharing he said, "Well, if you were to talk to my wife Cara, she would tell you that Matthew 16, verse 25, is—the verse that I, just like, like you pricked me, that's just

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coming out of me every day. I looked at it and I'm like, *That's where we're landing this message this morning*, so I called him up and I said I didn't think it was going to be this week, but this is where we're at today and this is like your verse. And I said talk to me about that, explain that to me. And he said, "Well, when I was in college," and I'm going to let him pick up the story there, but let me read the verse first. Alright? So the verse, Matthew 16:25:

25 "For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it."

– MATTHEW 16:25 (ESV)

Those were the words that you shared in your text with me, that when we started talking about, like, what is it with those verses, you said at age – what was it? 20-21? Somewhere in there,

Dani: 21.

Lee: this verse took on a personal meeting. Talk to us, have a seat [MOTIONS TO A STOOL],

Dani: Yeah.

Lee: let's talk about that for a moment.

Dani: Yeah, this verse means a lot to me. When I finished college I took a job in California, moved out to California, and I had the whole world ahead of me, the whole world to gain. I was single and you have your whole life in front of you—so you think. And then I received a phone call from my mom with a trembling voice and she said, "He's gone." And I knew, I knew right away that, um, my dad had passed away, he took his life.

And that changes your life instantly. That makes you think about—of course, we all have had family or friends we've lost—and it makes you instantly think about what really matters, and you immediately go to the brevity of life. You go to James 4:14 like a vapor, it appears for a little time and then it vanishes away. So this verse was, in Matthew 16:25, really was something that the Holy Spirit used in my life and still uses today. I don't know if you ever conquer any verse or any, you know, any challenge, but constantly using in my life to shape my thinking and my actions. And this verse—for whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. And if you don't mind, Pastor, I'm gonna go right into the question,

Lee: Please.

Dani: which is: What does saving your life look like? That's the question for us, I think, is what does saving your life look like? First, we should clarify when He talks the first part of this verse He's referring to saving your life, saving your temporal physical life, you know, saving your brand.

Now Lee Wiggins, he's got a brand; [TO AUDIENCE] you've got a reputation, a brand, um, what does saving your reputation look like? Well, it looks like spending energy on your reputation, your brand, that's what it looks like it. It looks like spending your thoughts, spending your energy on those things. That could be, it could be spending your energy on social – Facebook,

JOHN 3:30 (ESV):

"He must increase, but I must decrease."

Twitter, LinkedIn, TikTok, and lifting up your brand to make sure you look good. And John 3:30 tells us He must increase, I must decrease—that's the opposite of what I think a lot. A lot of times I'm thinking, *How can I look good?*

JAMES 4:13-14 (AMP):

Yet you do not know [the least thing] about what may happen in your life tomorrow.

[What is secure in your life?] You are *merely* a vapor [like a puff of smoke or a wisp of steam from a cooking pot] that is visible for a little while and then vanishes [into thin air].

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Dani: Saving your life also looks like meditating on things that are temporal, and this could be meditating on things like finances, it could be meditating upon retirement. For me, maybe guys, it's meditating upon sports, meditating meaning, you know, you think about those things, you watch a lot of games like I do, you spend a lot of your hours investing in things that really are temporal. It could be TV shows, movies, sports for me, it could be spending things that don't . . . Are those things intrinsically wrong? Nope. They can be a blessing from God. However, priorities and where your heart is, that's what God's looking and asking for.

Third, what does it look like investing in comfort? It's really easy for me to do, you know, why do I work hard sometimes? So that I can have more money in the bank so that someday I don't have to worry, I don't have to be anxious, that's my thought that I think sometimes. What a dangerous temporal thought that is. He owns all the cattle and all the . . . He knows how many hairs are on my head. He feeds the birds, how much more will He care for me? We know this but I don't, my heart doesn't act on this very often.

Fourth, worshipping the creation more than the Creator. Now this could be intelligence, beauty, education, these are things that we can put, we can elevate above what we really should and that's eternal things.

Lastly, regarding what does saving your temporal physical life look like, it also looks like where do you put your money? So it looks like placing money in places; maybe it's buying your house. Is a mortgage wrong? No. Mortgage is not wrong. Is buying a car wrong? Is investing, putting your money into those things, is that wrong? No, intrinsically it's not, but it's dangerous. It's dangerous because when you get that house and you pay off the mortgage, you want another house, a vacation house in Florida, then you want Montana, and then you want California. You want, you always . . . talk to people who have these, it never ends, you always want, you always crave more.

Matthew 6, verses 19-21, tells us about our heart and where our treasure is and this is where it talks about do not lay up for yourselves treasure on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves can break through and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven, where moth does not rust nor thieves can break through and steal. The last verse there for where your treasure is there will your heart be also. For where your treasure is there will your heart be also—literally, where you put your money that's where your heart follows.

So where . . . if you put your money into a mortgage, into a car, if you put your money into the stock market, you may think about the stock market a lot more if you have \$20,000 in there than if you have \$20 in there. You get my point? You . . . where you put your money, that's where your brain begins to go. That's where your heart goes. So place your treasure in eternal things. That's what God tells us to do. Place it into things that matter, place it into places . . . does Calvary Fellowship, does Pastor Lee need your 10% of your money, your tithe? No, he doesn't. Does God need it? Nope. He really doesn't. God does not need your 10%, God wants your heart so that He can move in other hearts. God wants your hearts to generously give out of the abundance of what He's given you, and then He can begin to multiply what He what you've given Him.

MATTHEW 6:19-21 (ESV):

"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

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Dani: God owns all of the cattle on all the hills, Psalms 50:10 tell us that. He owns all of the cows on all the hills—the point, cows were worth a lot 2,000 years ago. He can . . . He's going to move it around as He wishes. If you have a net worth of negative \$20,000 dollars, if you're 19 years old or 24 years old or got a loan from education,

PSALMS 50:10 (ESV):

For every beast of the forest is mine, the cattle on a thousand hills.

Lee: Be careful, we've got a lot of guys [MOTIONS TO YOUNG ADULTS IN THE AUDIENCE. HE LAUGHS.]

Dani: if you're in college between the ages of 18 and 25 you're probably negative net worth, and so that's a fair place to be but be careful, be dangerous, that's, uh, can be a big problem. No matter what your net worth is . . . or if you are 30 and you have a net worth of \$50,000 or \$200 grand or \$1.5 million and you're very, very . . . it doesn't matter because God owns it. We're simply stewards of that, we're stewards of what God's given us, that means we just watch over. We're literally like shepherds watching over the cattle. We don't own anything. We're just pilgrims, we're passing through. Don't get too comfortable. As a pilgrim you're moving, you're moving every couple nights, why would you go buy a couch if you're a pilgrim? Why get too comfortable? You can't . . . you're gonna enjoy the couch for one night and then you're moving on. This isn't our home, we're passing through.

I think maybe the second question for us, Pastor, is this isn't a conversation here, this is, it sounds like it's just me talking here. Of course, the . . . [INAUDIBLE/CROSSTALK].

Lee: Well, I'd turn it into a conversation but you're killing it, I mean, you're convicting us, and I just want you to keep on bringing it.

Dani: what does

Lee: Before you say that, I just, I think what you just talked about, one of the reasons why I'm so thankful that you want to share this today is because, you know, it's one thing to hear me say it, that's what I'm supposed to say as a preacher, but, like, we're all in this same boat together and you're living it.

Dani: We're all

Lee: The introduction to you when we started out, you own a business and you . . . so, this isn't someone who said, "Hey, you can't do these things, you can't" . . . but hearing this there's a conviction and something about that conviction really caused you to set a pin when you were real young, a young adult [MOTIONS TOWARD THE YOUNG ADULTS], that you're now continuing as each thing comes your way to try to figure out.

Dani: That's right. If you're a young adult, either here or online, and you're between 16 and 25, I challenge you, whether you're a biologist or a baker or a bus driver it doesn't matter what your occupation is, you are called. You're dead, you're alive to Christ; you're called, you're called as a steward to take whatever talents, both money and your skills, the talent, the gifts He's given you, find your gifts and use them for the Lord. That's what we're called to do.

And that's why when I was early twenties and . . . I don't want . . . that can sound like I've got it figured out and I'm on the right path . . . it's a constant daily battle that we face. We just talked, we just sung about, we just sang about fighting your battles. God's around us, He's surrounding us. The next question.

Lee: Yeah, let's go to that . . . about . . . so, what's it look to lose your life?



. . . and you're living it.

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Dani: It looks like, again, we're talking about losing your life, what does it look to lose your physical temporal life, to gain your spiritual eternal life, what does that look like? Well, it tells us throughout Scripture. One of the things it says is set aside your desires, set aside your ambitions. You know, when I was 15-16, 20-25, I have the world ahead of me. I was in California, what can my career do? I'm not married yet, I have so many . . . I could have . . . I . . . I . . . there's . . . your life is ahead of you but the Bible tells us to set aside your desires, your aspirations of fulfillment, bury your pride, and this is not a one time 22-year-old decision. This is constantly; every single day you get up you get in the Word, you talk to God, "God, today, help me, help me, Lord, today to not think about myself, not think about what I have to do today, but look ahead."

It also talks about loving God and loving others. What does it look like to give up your life? It looks like Matthew 22, verses 37-39. The first part 37 is thou shalt love the Lord thy God; the last part you shall love your neighbor as yourself. Pretty straight forward—love God and love others. That's what giving up your life looks like. It looks like not thinking about your life. Really? That's the irony, when you stop thinking about your life that's when you begin to find true eternal, spiritual life.

It practically, it looks like when you and I are in the line at Target and we've got our text and our emails and our phone in front of us and we're heads down, it looks like consciously looking up, looking at the person ahead of you, the person behind you, and remembering these people have a soul and these people are either spiritually alive or they're spiritually dead. This is a reminder to us to care more about relationships than about your bank account, care more about things that really matter – people. Look into their eyes and listen to them, understand their pain, understand their thoughts, that's what it looks like.

It looks like . . . it looks like for maybe, uh, for myself as an occupation, husband, father, it looks like coming home from work at 5:30-6 in the afternoon, parking in the driveway, and my quick reaction—which is my battling my old self—is to hurry into the house and move forward, or hurry into the house and go right to my office, open up my laptop, and go right to emails or right to work or whatever I want to do. Instead, I'm challenged and called to walk into the house and look into my wife's eyes and ask her, "Honey, how was your day?" Listen to her. Listen to your kids. If another phone call comes in 10 minutes later, it's now, you know, 5:51 and a phone call comes in, it's, you know what, I'm gonna play with my kid for 15 minutes and we're gonna put the puzzle together. Spend time with your kids. Your time with your kids goes real fast, really fast. That's what losing yourself, losing . . . because my ambition would be take the phone call, set up the meeting, get the test, the deal, and we made more money. It doesn't matter. It doesn't matter.

It also looks like orbiting your life around the local church. This is critical. We need to make decisions that orbit your life around the local body of believers. It means orbiting life around the people next to you, your left and your right. Orbiting meaning literally revolving what you do in life should not be dictated upon sports or upon money or your career or upon what weather I like, it's orbiting around the people, the local church, this body of believers.

Almost done with these illustrations, I assure you, almost done with these. It's lastly, before we'll move on, it's a faithful mother, it's a faith . . . and I don't know this demographic too well,

MATTHEW 22:37-39 (ESV):

And he said to him,
"You shall love the Lord
your God with all your
heart and with all your
soul and with all your
mind. This is the great
and first commandment.
And a second is like it:
You shall love your
neighbor as yourself."

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but it's a faithful woman and we have a lot of talented ladies in our church, but when they were the age of probably 15, 20, somewhere in there, 25, they probably thought, and it could be men certainly as well, but it could be, you know what, God has called me to invest into my six year old. What that means is nobody watches you at Tuesday afternoon when it's 2:30-2:35 in the afternoon and you're doing three loads of laundry, nobody's watching you except for God. No one cares about that, but you're investing. You then take time to constantly point your children to the Word of God, you constantly point them to Christ, that's what you're doing. Those are those two points.

Lee: That's well done, well done. I know you have more.

Dani: Yeah.

Lee: I just . . . I think trying to move from the temporal, this thing that you can see feel and touch that everyone's telling us to see, feel, and touch a lot to something . . . explain that one more time, that we die to, that we lose our life in.

Dani: Yeah. You literally, you choose to "kill" yourself, you become a dead man. As a believer you no longer have a life, your brand, your reputation is gone, you're alive to Christ. Galatians 2:20, for I am crucified with Christ, it's not I to live but it's Christ who lives within me. That means Pastor Lee is gone, his brand, it doesn't matter. Whenever we interact with Pastor Lee, I'm talking about each of us, remember that each one of us . . . the brand of your name, your first and last name, say it in your head. That brand, that reputation is gone if you're a believer. If not, you're keeping . . . you're living toward that brand.

GALATIANS 2:20 (ESV):

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

And Romans 6:6 knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin was done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin. As a believer you're a new creature,

ROMANS 6:6 (ESV):

We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.

you're literally a new person; you're alive, your physical man is dead, you're now an alive person. Second Corinthians 5:17, therefore if anyone is in Christ He is a new creation, old things have passed away; behold, all things become new. I would call to those that are online, those that are here, you are . . . and the Gospel can be offensive. The offense is you're a sinner, you need Christ, and I need Christ, that's my need . . . but I would call you, today is the day of salvation. Today's the day to be a new creature and your old

2 CORINTHIANS 5:17 (ESV):

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

self is then gone. You can then look forward to living in Christ.

My father I mentioned who passed away, he wrote me a letter a day or two before he passed away. This is the letter [HE HOLDS IT UP]. He had bipolar disease and was challenged with that, but he was certainly spiritually alive, and he wrote me a letter and in the letter he says: "My son Dani, take comfort in the Word, drink deeply in His Word."

Now, how do we know what to do, how do we know what God's will is? God's will is very clear in Scripture. You don't have to search very far to know what God's plan is for you, He'll be very clear with you in the Scripture. Get in the Word of God to know what that is. The conflict that we have is battling the flesh, battling the flesh and the spirit. Ephesians 6 is putting on the whole armor of God. Upstairs right now in our children's ministry they're being taught about the

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breastplate of righteousness, they're being taught about the armor of God in Ephesians 6. That's what we have to do every single day. We get up in the morning, we need to die to ourselves as Paul does. And Paul tells us, he tells us also in Romans 7:15:

¹⁵ For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.

– ROMANS 7:15 (ESV)

Dani: Paul tells us this is a battle. Paul didn't get it. Paul knew – right? – this is a battle. He kept doing the things he didn't want to do. Maybe you find yourself doing things you don't want to do. Maybe you find yourself not doing the things you want . . . it's a battle. It's every single day getting up, dying to yourself and living for Christ.

Lee: Dani, um, coming to Jesus we mentioned a little bit ago is hard, there's a lot of questions that have to be answered and finally God does this work in your heart and it [SNAPS HIS FINGERS] makes sense. But then He says take up your cross and follow Me, and that's what we've been talking about here today. You talked about when you were in college and you read this—save your life, lose your life—and you decide I'm gonna lose my life for Jesus. The challenges didn't go away probably when you were a young man, when you had the opportunities of California, and probably didn't go away when you had a marriage. Just wrap us up here with just like this is hard, it's hard to come to Christ, now it's hard to take up our cross. And it feels like we're constantly laying it back down, picking it back up. Can you just share with me just a little bit?

Dani: Yeah, and it's gonna sound as if I know it, I don't know this all but I know what God's Word tells us. God's Word tells us that this is going to be a battle. It's an I die daily thing. And how do you know what God's will is? I'm going to go right there for a second because this is the battle. It's you get up, you live each day, and you think about what really, really matters and it's not temporal things, it's spiritual things.

You know, this could be for some of you, God could call you to leave Chester Springs and go to Burundi, Africa, and be a missionary, it could be your call. You better listen carefully, you better go. God could call you, that's a poor nation, you could go to a wealthy nation like Dubai or Singapore, it doesn't . . . we live in a pretty wealthy zip code in the world, in America, that's a really dangerous thing to be living around wealth, really dangerous because just like a camel² can't go through the eye of a needle, it's very hard for a rich man to be able to find eternal life. It's very, very difficult so be careful what we pursue.

I would call you, you know, like Francis Chan, he was radical maybe and he went to China. Or others, that may be your call, but your call may be from Christ to stay where you are, and in 1st Timothy 2:2, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all goodness and honesty. For some of us that will be the case, to live a quiet and peaceable life; to get in the Word, to shine to those around you could be the calling that we have.

1 TIMOTHY 2:1-2 (ESV):

¹ First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, ² or kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.

Lee: I sure appreciate those words. I want to say a prayer for you, for us, as we consider this next song we're going to go into. I was just . . . feel like it's just such the right words to just focus our

² Matthew 19:24, Mark 10:25, Luke 18:25 (ESV): [Jesus speaking] *"it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God."*

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attention and say, "God, I'm going to give it over to You." And it's not the natural thing to do, but at the end of the day it's the *only* thing because this world momentarily [SNAPS HIS FINGERS] it's just gonna be gone, it's gonna be over, and the things that we're chasing after today, those burdens that we prayed about that we came in here, they're gonna be so long gone when eternity is on our doorstep. And so one of the beautiful things to come into this moment is just to change our mindset from the dead man stuff to being alive, and so I just want to pray for us.

Jesus,

I bring each person that's watching online, in this room, for those of us sitting up here trying to figure this out, even as we continue this conversation in our groups this week, as we continue on the way home, as we, you know, grab Dani on the way out and try to figure this out together, Lord God, I pray that You would help us as we die to self, as we take up our cross and we follow You.

We love You. We want to be about something that's bigger than us. We want to be about something that's really important. We want to be about eternal things, and we want to be alive in You and we want to celebrate those things today. So Lord, I pray that even as we give ourselves to You in this final song, we just ask You to take our lives and have all of them. In Jesus' Name. Amen.



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