

Guest Teacher:

# Costly Discipleship: Surrendering to God's Will

BY PASTOR RAY JARAMILLO



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

Matthew 16:21-24

In the final years and months of Jesus' life on earth, His teachings were increasingly striking a nerve in the religious leaders—and they wanted Him out of the public eye. Jesus preached a message that would change Judaism. The Jews were awaiting a Messiah; they were longing for an earthly political king. They thought the Messiah would overthrow the currently ruling Roman government and replace it with a Jewish government. When Jesus entered the scene, He didn't fulfill their idea of what the Messiah would look like.

They were aware of the Old Testament Scriptures that spoke of a coming King, and yet they failed to recognize the Scriptures that confirmed and foretold of a Messiah who would suffer and die, taking upon Himself the sins of mankind.

It was at this time that Jesus sat His disciples down and shared with them the true reason He came. First, He asked them this question: ***"Who do men say that I am?"*** They responded, ***"Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, others say Jeremiah, and others say You are one of the prophets*** (Matthew 16:13b-17)." He turned to them and personalized the question: ***"Who do you say that I am?"*** Peter said, ***"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."*** Jesus told Peter, ***"Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven."*** That statement was above Peter's pay grade; only the Father could have revealed this to him.

We know from our text that the disciple's view of the Messiah was distorted. In verse

21, Jesus began to tell them that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders, chief priests, and scribes, die, and be raised on the third day. I can just picture their response: They weren't looking for a dying Messiah; they too were looking for a reigning Messiah. It must have taken the wind out of them. I don't think they even heard that He said He would rise on the third day; they didn't understand until He appeared to them. It didn't compute.

When Peter responded to Jesus in verse 22, I think his intentions were sincere, but terribly wrong. His reaction reminds us of man's resistance to trials and suffering. He took Jesus aside and rebuked Him, essentially saying, "We need to talk. Far be it from you, Lord. This shall not happen to you." Let's be clear, any time you rebuke Jesus, YOU ARE WRONG. What Peter was saying to Jesus was, "You don't have to go to the cross; there is another way."\*

Remember when the soldiers came for Jesus? Peter took a sword and struck Malchus. In this incident, Peter's actions implied that it's all right to ignore God's will if it means suffering. You don't have to be obedient in a trial if there is too much pain and suffering involved. Go a different way.

Going back to verse 23, Jesus said, ***"Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."*** Jesus was conveying this to Peter: your philosophy is tainted; it's Satan's philosophy. What you are trying to tell Me is that My will should be elevated above the will of My Father.

I don't think Jesus responded harshly. I do believe He wanted Peter to understand that

Satan has the same mindset. Satan wants you to elevate your will above the will of the Father. Satan deceived Adam and Eve the same way in the Garden of Eden: *You don't have to surrender to God's will and commands. Do what you want; go and eat of the forbidden fruit. God's will isn't as important as your will.* Satan convinced Eve and he wants to convince you and me that our will is more important than God's.\*

Satan attempted to do the same thing to Jesus in the wilderness when he said, "Turn that stone into bread. You don't have to hunger; God is asking too much of You."

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He also said to Jesus, "Just worship me and I will give You all the kingdoms of the world. Avoid the cross and the suffering; take the easy road."\*

Then Jesus turned to the twelve and said, ***"If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me."*** The Christian must live his life heeding the philosophy of heaven rather than the philosophy of hell: ***"Not my will be done, but Your will,"*** even if it means the harder road; even if it includes suffering. ☞

*Ray Jaramillo is the senior pastor of CC Rio Grande Valley in Belen, NM. He has a daily radio program and a weekly TV program called "In the Word."  
(\*author's paraphrase)*