MATTHEW 16:24

Intro: To get the full understanding of this verse we must put it in its proper context. In verse 13 Christ ask, “Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?” In verse 21, He begins teaching them that he must die. Peter rebukes him showing more interest in worldly things than in spiritual. This is the context that this statement is made; Matthew 16:24 “Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.”

I. **IF ANY MAN WILL**

A. Following the Lord is a matter of choice.

1. Jos. 24:15 “And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”

2. Acts 2:40 “And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.”

3. The ability to obey and do right necessitates the ability to disobey and do wrong.

4. The elements obey without choice.
   a. Mat. 8:27 “But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!”
   b. 2 Pet. 3:7 “But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.”

5. But, man created in the image of God has power of choice.

B. God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit plead for us to make the right choice.

1. 1 Tim. 2:3-4 “For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.”

2. 2 Pet. 3:9 “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

3. Rev. 22:17 “And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”

C. If man is lost it is because he willed it that way.

1. Mat. 23:37 “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her children under her wings, and ye would not!”

2. Acts 13:46 “Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.”

II. **COME AFTER ME.**

A. Many are following the wrong one (man) and the wrong thing (man’s doctrine).

1. 1 Cor. 1:12-13 “Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. 13Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?”

2. Mat. 15:9 “But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.”

B. Should follow Christ and His doctrine.

1. 1 Pet. 2:21 “For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps.”

2. John 14:6 “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”
3. John 12:48 “He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.”

III. LET HIM DENY HIMSELF
   A. It means surrender ourselves to God; our will, affections, body, and soul.
   B. Deny self
      1. Mat. 18:8-9 “Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire.”
      2. Mat. 10:16-39
   C. Love God more than pleasure; 1 Tim. 5:6 “But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.”
   D. Different from the world; Rom. 12:2 “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”
   E. Phi. 3:7-8 “But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,”

IV. AND TAKE UP HIS CROSS
   A. This is a figurative statement meaning that we must endure whatever is burdensome in following Christ.
   B. Some do not wish to do this.
      1. Many want the benefits of the cross but are ashamed of it.
      2. Some think the cross is burdensome so they try to make the cross fit them.
   C. True cross bearing is like Paul, taking all the burdens and going on.
      1. 2 Cor. 11:24-27 “Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Truth was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeystings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.”
      2. Phi. 3:13-14 “Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

V. AND FOLLOW ME.
   A. Following Christ leads to baptism.
      1. Mat. 3:13-17 “Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”
      2. Acts 2:38 “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”
   B. Resistance to temptation; Mat. 4:1-11
   C. Worship; Luke 4:16 “And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.”
D. Sacrifice
1. John 10:18 “No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.”
2. Rom. 12:1 “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”

E. Prayer; Luke 6:12 “And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.”

F. Goodness toward others
1. Mat. 7:12 “Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.”
2. Acts 10:38 “How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.”

G. Heaven; John 14:1-4 “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. 2In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. 4And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.”

Conclusion: Have you decided to deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Jesus?