

# BIBLE TEACHING AND WORSHIP GUIDE



## FOR THE HOME-BASED CHURCH

Produced Weekly

***What Faith Costs***  
**Matthew 16:13-26**

Copy this sheet for the Gathering Time, Bible Study, and Worship Experience leaders for the next meeting of the church.

## Leaders' Responsibilities:

**Important:** Each person who will be leading one of the three parts of a session during a Unit of sessions needs to have access to the "Basic Information for Leading the Unit of Study". That information is often provided at the beginning of that Unit of sessions. The weekly session "Background" located in the Teacher Preparation is much more specific to that day's study.

1. **The Gathering Time Leader** will gather all of the people together and help them prepare their minds and hearts for a wonderful worship experience before God. His/her responsibility is to introduce the congregation to the theme (content) and the Scripture that will be central to their worship experience for the day.

2. **The Bible Study Leader** will then help the people understand what the Scriptures have to say and teach us about the content of the study for the day. He/she will guide the people to make a general application of the study (ie: How does this Bible study apply to people today?)

3. **The Worship Time Leader** has the responsibility to use the theme and Scriptures to guide the congregation to make personal commitments to God's will for each one in regard to the study for the day. He/she will use others to lead in the music, taking the offering, ministry moment comments, and other activities and parts of the **Worship Time** that can aid in participatory worship.

## Prior to this Coming Session:

### **Gathering Time Leader:**

### **Bible Study Leader:**

The youth will need to make copies of the dramatization if that is to be used. Scarves may be used to give characters a more realistic appearance.

### **Worship Time Leader:**

A dramatic reading forms the introduction to the closing message (Sharing Time) for this worship experience. Plans for the dramatization need to be made. Talk with the youth during this week about doing the dramatic interpretation. Or prepare adequate copies for it to be done in the worship time by the congregation if your group is small and/or you do not have teens in the church.

### **Music Sources:**

**When We See Christ**, CCLI # 12004

**Amazing Grace**, *The Worship Hymnal* #104; CCLI #104 Public Domain

**Once Again**, *The Worship Hymnal* #241; CCLI # 1564362

**Must Jesus Bear the Cross Alone**, *The Worship Hymnal* 243; CCLI #121627 Public Domain

# 1

Copy this section for the Gathering Time leader.

**Gathering Time:** (Suggested time: 15 minutes)

## ***What Faith Costs***

### **Focal Text**

Matthew 16:13-26

### **Background Text**

Matthew 13:53-16:28

### **Main Idea**

Jesus calls people who confess faith in Him to follow Him no matter the cost.

### **Question to Explore**

What actions of yours indicate real faith in Christ—and what actions do not?

### **Teaching Aim**

To help the class evaluate whether they have confessed their faith in Christ so that they are committed to following Him no matter the cost

## **Gathering together**

Sing **Amazing Grace**

### **First thoughts:**

## **Who do you say that I am?**

Jesus continues to ask to each of us today: “But what about you? Who do you say that I am?” We must each answer this question for ourselves. Today’s study and sharing time will challenge us to answer this questions as Peter did, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Even though we may have answered that affirmatively many years ago, daily life challenges us to make decisions which indicate how deeply we believe that to be true. May we encourage one another as we affirm this mighty truth “Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God!”

## **Closing the Gathering Time:**

Take time at this point to mention items of prayer concern for the church, announcements of ministry or activities, and anything else that needs to be shared with or by the congregation. Pray for these needs. Remember to praise God in prayer.

Break time! Take five minutes between sessions. Encourage children to use the washroom so that they won't need to leave during the Bible Study time.

Distribute youth/adult Bible study outlines or paper for note-taking, if available.

Also hand out the activity sheets for preschool and younger children to use during Bible Study and/or worship.

# 2

Copy this section for the Bible Study leader.

**Note to the Bible Study Leader:** Suggested teaching time for the Bible study should be about 35 minutes. Use the “Teacher Preparation” for your personal study during the week before the session. Use the “Bible Study Plan” for the actual session.

## Teacher Preparation

### *What Faith Costs*

#### **Focal Text**

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#### **Background Text**

Matthew 13:53-16:28

#### **Main Idea**

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#### **Questions to Explore**

What actions of yours indicate real faith in Christ—and what actions do not?

#### **Teaching Aim**

To help the class evaluate whether they have confessed their faith in Christ so that they are committed to following Him no matter the cost

### **Introduction to your personal study:**

As I write this thousands of troops from free nations around the world are fighting to gain and ensure the freedom of millions of people in repressive countries. We often take freedom for granted until we are threatened with its loss. The commitment to Christ is offered freely to us, yet it cost Jesus His life. Our commitment to Him will cost us. It will cost us time, energy, relationships, and possibly our lives. However, our faith journey with Him promises to be the most incredible, life transforming experience we can imagine, in fact it is what we were created to do.

Today's study explores the response of the disciples to Jesus' increasing revelation of His identity and His mission. Jesus has expanded His public ministry, and is encountering increasing opposition to His teaching. Read Matthew 15:1-9; 16:1-14. This passage falls between the third and fourth major discourses in the Book of

Matthew. It serves to bring the truth of Jesus' mission into clearer focus. More information on the Book of Matthew as a whole may be found in the background study in the Bible Teaching Guide from Session 5 "Commanded to Go."

## **Background:**

Please ask for and read the information contained in the "**Basic Information for Leading the Unit of Study**", found at the beginning of this Unit. Whoever downloaded this session for you should have that material for you, as well.

### **Contextual Passage (13:53-16:28)**

**13:53-58.** The narrative begins with the rejection of Jesus in his own home town of Nazareth. Matthew 13:54-58. Confronted with questions and doubts, Jesus does not attempt to justify His authority. Rather than welcome Jesus home, the people of Nazareth took offence at Him and hardened their hearts. Further because of their lack of faith He doesn't do many miracles there. Yet news of His ministry continued to spread, even to the palace of Herod. Matthew 14:1-13.

**14:14-33.** In spite of His rejection at Nazareth, word had spread about Jesus and crowds flocked to hear Him. Matthew 14:13. When Jesus saw the crowds His overriding response was that of compassion. Matthew 14:14. This was the occasion, recorded in all four gospels on which He fed the enormous crowd of 5000 men plus women and children. Matthew 14:15-21; Mark 6:23-44; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-13.

**14:25-33.** Matthew 14:25-33 records a turning point in the disciples' view of Jesus. Although they had witnessed many miracles including the most recent feeding of the 5000, it was not until Jesus came to them on the water and calmed the storm that they worshipped Him as the "Son of God." Matthew 14:33.

**15:1-20.** With the increased understanding of Jesus' identity comes increasing opposition. Jesus makes a fundamental distinction between the authority of the command of God and the Pharisees' traditions. Because their external religious practices violated the principle of God's commands, Jesus called them "hypocrites" Matthew 15:7.

**15:21-39.** Matthew then records Jesus' activities in the Gentile territory of Tyre and Sidon. Matthew 15:21. There He encounters a Canaanite woman who begs Him to heal her daughter. Although Jesus answers that He was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel, because of her faith He grants her request and heals her daughter. Matthew 15:28. Jesus continues to have compassion on the enormous crowds that swarm to Him and heals many of their ill. Matthew 15:30. Following these healings, these Gentiles praised the God of Israel. Matthew 15:31. Jesus then miraculously feeds another large crowd of over 4000 men, plus women and children. Matthew 15:35-38

**16:1-12.** When Jesus returns to Jewish territory, He is accosted by the Pharisees and Sadducees who demand proof of His messiahship. Jesus answered that the only sign given will be that of Jonah. “The only visible sign any generation needs for repentance and faith is the one God revealed through Jonah, the resurrection hope. The new sign they needed but did not see was the incarnation of truth, Jesus Christ” (*The Disciple’s Study Bible*, Nashville, Tennessee: Holman Bible Publishers, 1988, page 1198). See Luke 11:29-32 for further comment by Jesus about Jonah.

Jonah was a prophet in the days of Jeroboam II (2 Kings 14:25). He was called to preach to the wicked people of Ninevah, but fled to Tarshish (Jonah 1:1-3).

He was the cause of a storm on the sea and was thrown into the sea (Jonah 1:4-16) where he was swallowed by a fish (Jonah 1:17). He prayed for help in Jonah 2 and God answered his prayer. He preached in Ninevah and people repented. Jonah showed that God’s love is not confined to one nation. Even though God had chosen a people for a special mission, He would never allow Himself to be possessed exclusively by any one group. Jonah learned the hard way that God’s love must never be limited to any one nation. The story of Jonah sets forth clearly the character of God, His love for all mankind, and His willingness to forgive the most sinful of people. (See *The Disciple’s Study Bible*, Nashville, Tennessee: Holman Bible Publishers, 1988, pages 1102-1103).

Jesus then warns His disciples to beware of the “yeast” of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Unfortunately the disciples are thinking of their stomachs and failure to bring bread with them. Jesus reminds them of the great miracles He has recently performed in feeding the multitudes and again warns them against the yeast of the Jewish leaders. Finally the disciples understand that His warning is against the teachings of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Matthew 16:12.

## **Focusing on the Meaning:**

### **Who Do People Say the Son of Man Is? (16:13-14)**

**16:13-14.** Jesus and His disciples have now traveled to the region of Caesarea Philippi, about 40 kilometres north of Galilee. Here He poses a significant question to His disciples about His identity. Matthew 16:13. Apparently there were various opinions among the people who were claiming Jesus was everything from the risen John the Baptist, to Elijah, Jeremiah, or another of the prophets. Matthew 16:14.

John the Baptist like Jesus had a vital part to play in ushering in the Kingdom. Isaiah 40:3-5. He was identified as the one prophesied to prepare the way for Jesus. Matthew 3:3. Herod Antipas, who had him beheaded, thought Jesus must be John raised from the dead when he heard of the miraculous power Jesus displayed. Matthew 14:1-2.

Elijah, a man of prayer like Jesus, fought against false religion. He was a forerunner for the Messiah to prepare the way and announce the Messiah’s coming. Malachi 3:1.



Jeremiah was a prophet during the reigns of King Josiah of Judah, and his sons Jehoiakim and Zedekiah just prior to the exile of Jerusalem to Babylon. Jeremiah 1:1-3. Jeremiah is known as the ‘weeping prophet’ who prophesied of the Messiah as a Righteous Branch from the house of David who will reign as king. Jeremiah 23:5-6. He was the prophet to the nations, Jeremiah 1:5. 25:15-26, who foretold of a new covenant with the house of Israel, one written on their hearts. Jeremiah 31:31-34. Of the options suggested by the disciples, Jeremiah relates most closely to Jesus. Like Jesus, he patiently endured undeserved suffering.

The final suggestion was that the Son of Man was one of the prophets, or messengers of God. While Jesus possesses some characteristics of each of the suggested options, He transcended them all.

### **Who Do You Say That I Am? (16:15-17)**

**16:15-17.** Jesus then asks the question He continues to ask to each of us today: “But what about you? Who do you say that I am?” Matthew 16:15. The disciples lived and worked intimately with Jesus, yet their understanding came by degrees, little by little, with more comprehension each time. Simon Peter answered for the Twelve with the deepest comprehension yet, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” “Christ” is the approximate Greek equivalent of “Messiah.” Jesus immediately recognized that Peter had not come to this earth shaking conclusion by himself. God the Father had revealed His son’s identity to Peter, the son of Jonah; he is indeed blessed. Matthew 16:17. The title “Son of the Living God” is Matthew’s unique description of Jesus. Matthew 3:17; 14:33, 16:16. The living God is a common Old Testament title for Jehovah. Deuteronomy 5:26. It is contrasted with the human constructed, lifeless idols of the non-believers. Jeremiah 10:8; 1 Corinthians 12:2.

### **You are Peter and On This Rock I Will Build My Church (16:18a)**

**16:18a.** The truth of Peter’s confession had been revealed to him by God. Jesus made a play on the Greek words saying, “You are Peter (petros: an individual rock or stone) and on this rock (petra: bedrock or foundation stone) I will build My church.” Jesus gave the impulsive Simon a new name representing the stability of his faith. Throughout the ages scholars have attached various meanings to Jesus’ statement. He could have meant:

- 1) Jesus would build His church on Himself. Acts 4:11
- 2) Jesus would build His church on Peter and other apostles as the foundation stones. Ephesians 2:20; Revelation 21:14
- 3) Jesus would build His church on Peter’s testimony or confession of Jesus as the Christ. 1 Peter 2:5

Each of these explanations has an element of truth, yet the statement is best understood by applying each of these verses. Jesus blessed Peter for being open to

God's revelation that Jesus is the Christ. That testimony is essential to building His church. The apostles in general and Peter in particular, did in fact play a vital role in the early critical days of church history. However, Jesus is both the foundation and the head of the church and He will build His church on Himself. 1 Corinthians 3:11. In his first letter, Peter tells us that Jesus invites us to come to Him as to a living stone. 1 Peter 2:1-10. Further as believers we are living stones being built up into a spiritual house for a holy priesthood. Jesus spoke in the future tense, I will build My church. Matthew 16:18. Even His physical death will not prevent His work of building the church.

### **The Gates of Hades Will Not Overcome It (16:18b)**

**16:18b.** Hades was known as a place of punishment for spirits of dead unbelievers. Jesus is announcing His victory over death; death has no power to stop Christ's church. Hebrews 2:14-15.

### **Keys of the Kingdom (16:19)**

**16:19.** Here Jesus uses the image of keys entrusted by an owner to his chief steward. The keys represented the unique authority that was first entrusted to Peter then to all the disciples and ultimately to His church as a whole. Matthew 18:18. Jesus further links the idea of binding and loosing found in Isaiah 22:21-22. Peter had the privilege to proclaim the good news of Christ's death burial and resurrection on the day of Pentecost. Acts 2. Through his preaching Peter opened the kingdom to many and shut it against many. Peter is authoritative in binding and loosing only because the Holy Spirit has acted first in the hearts of his hearers. The ministry of the keys also must follow Jesus specific instructions regarding the issue of sin in the church. Matthew 18:15-18.

### **Tell No One (16:20-21)**

**16:20.** Jesus then warned the disciples to tell no one that He is the Christ. Throughout His ministry, Jesus was cautious to avoid publicity that could divert attention from His central message. Matthew 8:4. Many were expecting a military messiah who would overthrow Rome and liberate Israel in a political sense. Jesus' spiritual liberation made no sense to these.

### **The Necessity of Jesus' Death and Resurrection (16:21)**

**16:21.** The disciples' recognition of Jesus' messiahship evidenced a significant stage in their understanding of the Person and role of Christ. Jesus refocuses His ministry on the private instruction of His disciples.

### **Peter's Rejection of the Truth (16:22-23)**

**16:22-23.** From the heights of his confession of Jesus as the Christ, Peter now falls to the place of a stumbling block to Jesus. Matthew 16:23. Although he most clearly

grasped Jesus identity, Peter still had a long way to go in his understanding of Jesus passion. The thought of Jesus dying strikes horror in Peter's heart. Just as Satan tried to deter the crucifixion through his temptation of Jesus, Peter's lack of faith has become an obstacle. Matthew 4:8-10. Peter, the Rock of faith, had allowed his lack of understanding to become a stone of stumbling and offence to Jesus' most important mission. Mark 8:33.

### **Cost of Discipleship (16:24-28)**

**16:24-28.** Christian conversion and discipleship calls us to deny ourselves and to follow Jesus even to the cross. Matthew 16:24. Discipleship means saying No to imperious sinful ego, to safety first. When we open ourselves to the opportunity to suffer with Christ we become God-centered rather than self-centered. God's call to crucifixion gives us the power to die to ourselves and to rise up a new creature in Christ.

### **Your Goal as the Leader of this Bible Study:**

As we grow up in Christ we must answer Jesus' question "Who do you say that I am?" When we choose to open our hearts to God's revelation of Jesus' identity we begin the journey of becoming God-centered. As our understanding grows we can begin to grasp deeper and deeper truths of God's Word and the journey continues.

### **For Personal Reflection:**

**What have I learned from this study?**

**What personal experience does this lesson bring to mind?**

**What is one action I will take this week to apply this Scripture passage to my life?**

## **Bible Study Plan** (Suggested time: 35 minutes)

### ***What Faith Costs***

Regroup the church after the Gathering Time and break by singing a chorus that young children can relate to—or another praise chorus if your congregation does not have children. Children who go to their own Bible teaching session should stay with the group until after this song. Have the preschoolers and children accompany the hymn with rhythm sticks, maracas, bells, etc.

**Begin by helping the group locate the Focal Text in their Bibles. Also, share with them the Main Idea to be learned from the Scriptures, and the Questions to be Explored by the group.**

#### **Focal Text**

Matthew 16:13-26

#### **Background Text**

Matthew 13:53-16:28

#### **Main Idea**

Jesus calls people who confess faith in Him to follow Him no matter the cost.

#### **Questions to Explore**

What actions of yours indicate real faith in Christ—and what actions do not?

#### **Teaching Aim**

To help the class evaluate whether they have confessed their faith in Christ so that they are committed to following Him no matter the cost

#### **Connect with Life:**

Share the following: We are abundantly blessed in our society with material possessions. While we value many of them, their value is nothing compared with the love we have for our families. Similarly, our commitment to Christ must far exceed our earthly commitments. The life transforming journey we take with Christ begins when we understand that “life is not about me.”

The truth is life is about God and how He seeks to grow each of us into the likeness of His Son. Once we grasp this liberating truth, we can begin to understand that the cost of following Him is worth everything we can possibly give.

## Guide the Study:

Set this lesson in context of Matthew using the material found in the “Teacher Preparation” guide. Note that it is a narrative passage which falls between the third and fourth major teaching sessions of Matthew.

Say: This lesson explores the response of Jesus’ disciples to His increasing revelation of His identity and His mission.

Summarize Matthew 13:53-16:12 using the material from the Bible Teaching Guide.

Note that this narrative describes Jesus’ ministry following His rejection in Nazareth. Matthew 13:53-58.

Say: As the disciples witnessed Jesus’ many miracles they grew in their understanding of just Who He really was. After He walked to them across the water and calmed the storm, they worshiped Him as the “Son of God.” Note that while Jesus came primarily to minister to the children of Israel, His compassion extends to both individuals such as the Canaanite women and to the Gentile crowds that flocked to Him around Tyre and Sidon. Contrast the response of these Gentiles with the opposition of the Pharisees and Sadducees who demand proof of His identity.

Ask someone to read Matthew 16:13-14.

Discuss each of the opinions held by the people as to Jesus’ identity using the material from the Bible Teaching Guide.

Have a volunteer read Matthew 16:15-17.

Seek an answer to how Peter came to his understanding.

Explain to the congregation: Jesus’ identity can be grasped only by those to whom God gives understanding.

Say: Some knowledge is just too difficult for us to understand on our own.

Look for someone to read Psalm 139:6 and James 1:5.

Note that the title “Son of the Living God” is Matthew’s unique description of Jesus.

Tell the group: Jesus continues to ask each of us today: “But what about you? Who do you say that I am?” We must each answer this question for ourselves.

Ask someone to read Matthew 16:18.

Share this: Jesus used a play on the Greek words for petros meaning individual rock or stone and petra meaning bedrock or foundation stone.

Explore the various meanings for Jesus' statement from material given in the "Teacher Preparation" guide. Note Jesus' victory over death. Not even His physical death can stop Christ's church.

Read Matthew 16:2-21.

Urge the group to discuss Jesus' warning to tell no one that He is the Christ.

Contribute this: The disciples' recognition of Jesus' messiahship evidenced a significantly growing stage in their understanding of the Person and role of Jesus.

Ask someone to read Matthew 16:22-23.

Discuss Peter's reaction to Jesus' announcement of His impending death.

Have a volunteer read Matthew 16:24-28.

Now ask: Are we willing to submit to the often painful process which results in a God-centered life? Is the price too high?

Have the participants share ways to help shift our thinking from being self-centered to becoming God-centered.

Comment: Going from being focused on ourselves to becoming focused on God is an every day, in every way process. No one ever accomplishes this without talking with God about it every day and spending time regularly in God's Word seeking God's guidance.

## **Encourage Application:**

If you have two or more youth, this is the time to give them the **Youth!!! Take Ten** page and allow them to move away from the adults and apply the lesson by and for themselves.

Share the following: As we grow up in Christ we must consider the following steps: (list them on a marker board or poster)

- 1) Answer Jesus' question "Who do you say that I am?"
- 2) Choose to open our hearts to God's revelation of Jesus' identity.
- 3) Allow Jesus to rename us according to who we will be in Him.

- 4) Recognize that on faith and confession Jesus will build His church.
- 5) Understand that faith is a journey.

Confirm with the learners: This is a daily choice. Confession is the beginning point of our understanding; we must grow into the solid food of the Gospel and long for that kind of nourishment (Hebrews 5:12-14).

Pray, asking God to help each participant to grow in his or her understanding of Christ's identity and become more God-centered daily.

**Take a five minute break to separate the Bible Study and Worship Time.** Children may need to use the washroom again before worship.

# Youth!!! Take Ten

## Bible Study Application for Youth

You may wish to move away from the adults for the final five to ten minutes of the Bible study and help each other as youth to apply the lesson to your own needs.

### ***What Faith Costs*** **Matthew 16:13-26**

**A youth will lead the following activity and comments.** No adults need to be present. If possible, teens should take turns in leading the application time.

#### **Appropriate Sharing of the Gospel**

It is not easy as a young person to affirm that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. The writer recently answered the ringing of the telephone and heard a very poor recording which admonished the listener to believe in Christ. The “**Or else!**” message at the end of the recording seemed to overpower the message itself.

What ineffective, unloving, or other inappropriate ways of sharing the gospel have you seen? How can we share the gospel in a winsome way to people we know? Will it sometimes cost us something?

#### **Possible participation for youth in the “Worship Time”**

The discussion of John 7: 40-53 will be used to introduce the Sharing Time. It would be very effective to have a dramatization of this passage which indicates the confusion which people were people over who Jesus was. The script might look like this:

**You can find this dramatization in copyable format on the final page of this session.**

**Jesus:** (In John 7: 37-38) “If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me, and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.’”

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***What Faith Costs* – 06-18-08-en**

16

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**Narrator:** Some of the multitude therefore, when they heard these words, were saying

**Speaker 1:** “This certainly is the Prophet.”

**Narrator:** Others were saying

**Speaker 2:** “This is the Christ”

**Narrator:** Still others were saying

**Speaker 3:** “Surely the Christ is not going to come from Galilee, is He? Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the offspring of David, and from Bethlehem, the village where David was?”

**Narrator:** So there arose a division in the multitude because of Him. And some of them wanted to seize Him, but no one laid hands on him.

The officers therefore came to the chief priests and Pharisees, and they said to them

**Chief priests and Pharisees:** “Why did you not bring Him?”

**Officers:** “Never did a man speak the way this man speaks.”

**Chief priests and Pharisees:** “You have not also been led astray, have you? No one of the rulers or Pharisees has believed in him, has he? But this multitude which does not know the Law is accursed.”

**Nicodemus (a Pharisee):** “Our Law does not judge a man, unless it first hears from him and knows what he is doing, does it?”

**Chief priests and Pharisees:** “You are not also from Galilee, are you? Search, and see that no prophet arises out of Galilee.”

**Narrator:** And everyone went to his home.

**Worship Time** (Suggested time: 30 minutes)***What Faith Costs***  
**Matthew 16:13-26****Beginning the Service:**

If you have youth, they may have prepared the following dramatization. If there are not youth, use those assembled for worship to interpret this Bible passage. Some people may need to have more than one part. The narrator should have the material ahead of time and should guide the interpretation. A copy of the passage is given at the end of the Sharing Guide so that adequate copies may be made.

**Jesus:** (In John 7: 37-38) "If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me, and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.'"

**Narrator:** Some of the multitude therefore, when they heard these words, were saying:

**Speaker 1:** "This certainly is the Prophet."

**Narrator:** Others were saying:

**Speaker 2:** "This is the Christ"

**Narrator:** Still others were saying:

**Speaker 3:** "Surely the Christ is not going to come from Galilee, is He? Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the offspring of David, and from Bethlehem, the village where David was?"

**Narrator:** So there arose a division in the multitude because of Him. And some of them wanted to seize Him, but no one laid hands on him.

The officers therefore came to the chief priests and Pharisees, and they said to them:

**Chief priests and Pharisees:** "Why did you not bring Him?"

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**Nicodemus (a Pharisee):** “Our Law does not judge a man, unless it first hears from him and knows what he is doing, does it?”

**Chief priests and Pharisees:** “You are not also from Galilee, are you? Search, and see that no prophet arises out of Galilee.”

**Narrator:** And everyone went to his home.

Our lesson and worship today focuses on the clear affirmation which Peter made of Jesus as Lord and Son of God. Our dramatic interpretation indicates some of the discussion and confusion experienced by others involved in these amazing happenings.

**Offering:**

## **Praying for the World:**

In Kashmir in India and Pakistan, women and some men pray at the shrines of dead men who have contributed either to Kashmir or to Islam. The men are referred to as “pirs” or saints, and the people believe that they act as intercessors with Allah. Often the women come to the shrine weeping and wailing. They bow down and pray to these saints. Some wipe their hands on the floor and then rub the blessing of that place on themselves or a sick child. Religious leaders often sell “holy water” or other “holy” items to the pilgrims. Pray for these religious people to understand that they can pray to God the Father through Jesus’ name with confidence and assurance that He will hear them.

## **Sharing Guide:**

**This sharing guide is written to assist the person who directs the worship time to reemphasize the teaching for the day and help guide the congregation to respond to God’s call and will for their lives in regard to the scripture studied. The leader may choose to follow the guide closely. Or, he or she may wish to only use it to give direction and a concept for preparing an original message. The leader is free to choose other ways to communicate and share the concepts presented here.**

## How Much will You Pay for your Faith?

**Preparation for the person who will lead the congregation in this “Sharing Time” to conclude the worship experience.**

The background for this brief message extends from chapter 13:53 to 16:28.

This larger passage is centered around the theme of what faith is worth and what faith costs. Faith either costs too much for many to enter into fellowship with Jesus as the Messiah, or what faith brought to some who were willing to walk with Jesus.

In the background passage, (13:33; 16:13-26), faith's failure and faith's value are interwoven in the entire passage. Faith costs the people of Jesus' hometown his presence and power (13:53ff.). The failure of faith costs Herod the saving power that would have prevented the death of John the Baptizer (14:1-12). The failure of faith costs the disciples of Jesus his protecting power (14:22-33). The refusal to have faith in Jesus costs the Pharisees insight into the true meaning of tradition (15:1-9). The failure of faith prevented the religious leaders from understanding the inner meaning of the Law of Moses (15:10-20).

The flip-side of these terrible costs of failure of faith in Jesus are the benefits of taking Jesus at his word. Faith cost a non-Jewish woman the embarrassment of asking a Jewish Rabbi for his power to bring healing to her daughter. Jesus said that she had great faith (15:21-28). It was the implicit faith of a crowd, pressing Jesus to heal their sick people (15:29-31) that brought about many miracles of cleansing and healing. On another occasion Jesus fed a crowd of four thousand men, plus women and children, and faith was the operative element in this great miracle (15:32-39),

At this point in the text (16:1) Jesus is again confronted by the Pharisees pressuring him for a faith-generating miracle, but he refused, then warned his disciples to beware of the teachings of the Pharisees (16:5-12). Such non-belief as exemplified by the religious leaders could be learned from the teachings of this group, so true believers should beware of them. Now let's look at the focal passage.

Three paragraphs in this section of scripture emphasize the tremendous cost of faith in Jesus as the Christ: faith cost disciples a willingness to refuse the opinion of the crowd if they were to see in Jesus something greater than John the Baptist, or one of the great prophets of Israel. Faith cost disciples the courage to stand with him even as he turned toward Jerusalem where he would be rejected, beaten and put to death. Eventually, faith will cost the disciple of Jesus a cross as it did Jesus.

## I. What does faith do?

It is courage to say “NO” to the religious leaders that have drilled certain beliefs into the mind and heart of those seeking to know who Jesus is (16:13-20).

1. Faith opens the eyes of the faith-full to the recognition that Jesus was more than another prophet, or even John, the Baptist (14). There came the time when his disciples had to confess their personal belief about just who this man they had followed all over Galilee, watching him heal the sick, drive out demons, enabling the lame to walk. So Jesus pressed those closest to him to take a stand as to who he was. Jesus tested them to find out if they had been paying attention; he tested their faith in things unseen.

2. The opinion of others, regardless of how praise-worthy their opinions may be, is never enough for true faith in Jesus: true faith in Jesus must always press on to an insight that only God can give. Peter, speaking now for all the apostles, puts into words what this group had come to believe about Jesus. “You are the messiah (Christ), the son of the Living God.” (v.16). It seems to be the truth, that only because of their faith they could make such an acknowledgement.

3. This faith must see beyond the miracles and the preaching of Jesus: it must see into reality of the divine nature of the man Jesus. And this was no minor vision: it was a primary belief in Judaism of the day that no man could see God and live, but here Peter is claiming that Jesus of Nazareth was the “Son” of God, meaning that Jesus and God were one.

## II. What does faith cost?

It costs close attention, the attention of the student to the teacher where there are no textbooks or videos to study for the time you missed with the teacher. You can’t miss a day away from class, off fishing, playing golf, visiting with friends, if you want to really follow Jesus.

1. Jesus then began to take the disciples into deeper understanding of who he was and what it would cost him (21-23). And Peter didn’t get the lesson the teacher was teaching. Faith had enabled Peter to know the answer to the question of Jesus regarding his identity. But the failure of faith cost him the assurance that Jesus would lead them to victory.

2. The failure of faith earned for Peter a strong disapproval from Jesus.

***“Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; for you are setting your mind not upon divine things but on human things”*** (v.23). Popular theology said the messiah would come as a victor in battle, not as a lowly peasant being driven to a cross. And Peter was plagued by this option, so he would have side-tracked Jesus if he could.

### **III. What does faith cost?**

It cost a cross: By faith the disciple enlisted in God's struggle with sinful humanity (16:24-28)/

1. Faith costs the denial of self, the denial of all aspirations to be the greatest, to be number one (v. 24).
2. Faith costs the loss of life as the world knows life (v. 25). There is a prize held out to those who seek Jesus: it is the prize of real life, it is the prize that is offered to faith. You can't have both. Faith costs the rejection of what is offered by the world, and the glad taking up a cross to follow Jesus.

#### **Call to Commitment:**

During this session we have looked at many of the costs of a life of faith. But, we also rejoice in the other question that is asked. What do we receive from a life of faith? Here on earth many benefits from serving Jesus exist. We looked at some of those last week. The most important thing that we receive comes after death. Jesus promised us that, because of our faith in Him, we will live for all eternity with Him in Heaven. Such a promise means that we will receive so much more than we pay for our loyalty to Jesus and our faith in Him. Let's rejoice in what we receive even as we think this week on the cost of faith.

#### **Concluding the Service:**

Sing again **When We See Christ** (sung last week) and/or other songs suggested.

Or close with a prayer thanking God that the cost of faith cannot even begin to compare with the benefits we receive now and in Heaven for our faith.

Copy and use during the “Worship Time” experience.

**Scripture interpretation to be done by youth or by the group as a whole.**

**Jesus:** (In John 7: 37-38) “If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me, and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.’”

**Narrator:** Some of the multitude therefore, when they heard these words, were saying:

**Speaker 1:** “This certainly is the Prophet.”

**Narrator:** Others were saying:

**Speaker 2:** “This is the Christ”

**Narrator:** Still others were saying:

**Speaker 3:** “Surely the Christ is not going to come from Galilee, is He? Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the offspring of David, and from Bethlehem, the village where David was?”

**Narrator:** So there arose a division in the multitude because of Him. And some of them wanted to seize Him, but no one laid hands on him.

The officers therefore came to the chief priests and Pharisees, and they said to them:

**Chief priests and Pharisees:** “Why did you not bring Him?”

**Officers:** “Never did a man speak the way this man speaks.”

**Chief priests and Pharisees:** “You have not also been led astray, have you? No one of the rulers or Pharisees has believed in him, has he? But this multitude which does not know the Law is accursed.”

**Nicodemus (a Pharisee):** “Our Law does not judge a man, unless it first hears from him and knows what he is doing, does it?”

**Chief priests and Pharisees:** “You are not also from Galilee, are you? Search, and see that no prophet arises out of Galilee.”

**Narrator:** And everyone went to his home.