

Mid-Week Bible Study – November 4, 2020

Topic: Challenges and Cost **Text:** John 16:1-4, 33; Matt 10:37-39; Mark 8:34-38

Introduction: As with everything in life, there are challenges and cost associated with our Christian faith in Jesus Christ. Jesus predicted and taught his disciples to be prepared. We should come to term, that there are challenges and cost to discipleship. The early church experience so much challenges, they paid the price even with their blood. For example, persecution and hardship impeded the growth of God's Kingdom, but did not kill it. Jesus taught his disciples that following him will often require carrying a cross. Taking up the cross involves forsaking all to follow Christ. Mark 10:37-39. Only those who carry the cross with both hand and one heart, will do well in expanding the Kingdom of God. No cross, No crown.

Discussion Questions:

1. Name the major challenges to the Christian faith?
2. What are contemporary challenges/persecution facing God's Kingdom?
John 16:33; Romans 8:35-39; 2 Corinthians 11:21-27.
3. How should Christians respond to persecution? Matt 5:10-12; 10:23; I Corinthians 15:58; Acts 4:23-24; 2 Corinthians 12:10; James 1:2-4, 12.
4. What is the cost of following Christ? Mathew 10:37, 39; 16:24; Mark 8:34; Acts 7:59-60; Acts 12:2-3.
5. What is the reward for taking up the cross for the Kingdom of God? 2 Timothy 4:6-8; Rev. 7:13-17; Rev. 21:7.
6. What is the reward for those who abandon the cross? Rev. 21:8; Luke 9:26

Summary: Challenges and cost primary purpose is aimed at discouraging the growth of God's Kingdom. They have instead produced a bumper harvest of souls. More people come to the knowledge and love God through persecution. The golden days of the church came from the blood of the disciples. Those who want to wear the glorious crown, then must be willing to wear the crown of thorns now. No cross, no crown.

Memory Verse: *"Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. Matt 5:11-12*