

Personal/Small Group Sermon Study

Week of February 12, 2023 A.D.

My Ways are Higher than Your Ways Says the Lord

(Note: For every question which appears in this study, always give the reasoning and/or the explanation for each of your answers.)

Read Matthew 16:21

1. Is Jesus God? What was the (a) role, (b) responsibility, and (c) purpose for the authority positions of the "elders, chief priests, and teachers of the law"? Did each of those groups of Jewish leaders love and serve God? Why did they want Jesus to be killed?

Read Matthew 28:18-20

2. What is the (a) role, (b) responsibility, and (c) purpose which Christ has given to every Christian? Do the Christians in the "American church" love and serve God? Which of the following statements more accurately describes the attitude which the American church has for Jesus: (a) they want the blessings that Jesus offers but they do not want to love, serve, and obey Jesus or (b) they want to serve Jesus, love Jesus, and tell the world about Jesus by using the supernatural authority which Jesus has given to them?

Read Matthew 16:22-23

3. Are the majority of the American church more committed to (a) living to fulfill their personal goals and dreams or (b) living to know and to fulfill God's plans for their lives?
4. Are the daily operations and ministries of the local churches in America (including ALC) designed primarily to (a) fulfill the personal objectives and desires of the church leadership and the church members or (b) seek, discover, and fulfill the will of Christ for His church?

Read Matthew 16:24-27

5. Please refer to verse 24. What is the root word from which the title "disciple" is derived? According to Jesus, what is to be the motivation for the words which are spoken and deeds which are done in the life of a disciple?

6. Please refer to verse 24. What is the meaning of each of these commands which are given by Jesus to every person who intends to follow Jesus: (a) "come after me"; (b) "deny himself"; (c) "take up his cross"; and (d) "follow me"?
7. Are each of the four commands, which are given in verse 24, intended to be obeyed and to be the primary objectives for the daily life of each and every person who has received Jesus as his or her savior?
8. Please refer to verse 25. What does Jesus mean when Jesus makes each of these statements: (a) "For whoever wants to save his life will lose it" (b) "but whoever loses his life for me will find it"?
9. Have you applied the teaching of verse 25 to your own life? In what specific ways have you (a) lost your life for Christ Jesus and (b) in doing so, "found your life"? How often do you encourage and invite your family and friends to do the same?
10. Please refer to verse 26. Is it sinful in the eyes of almighty God for a follower of Christ to pursue anything in this life on earth without first seeking God's will about that pursuit? Is it possible for a Christian to be obedient to Christ and, at the same time, "to store up for yourself treasures on earth"?
11. Please refer to verse 27. Why does Jesus refer to himself as "the Son of Man"? Why is Jesus going to come again to earth? Please describe in your own words the scene of Jesus coming "in his Father's glory with his angels".
12. Do you believe all of verse 27 to be true? Would you love, obey, and serve Jesus even if Jesus had not promised to reward you "according to what you have done"? If you are not willing to "deny yourself" and to "follow Christ", is it because: (a) you are a pagan who is destined to torment in hell? (b) you are a fool? and/or (c) you are too lazy, too selfish, and/or too indifferent to saturate your mind with the teaching of the Word of God?

Consider: Isaiah 55:6-11 "You think about that!" Amen.