
“Worth the Cost”

Children’s Sermon on Sacrifice and
Christian Discipleship from Matthew
16:21-28



Main Objective: This message aims to communicate to kids the importance of living our lives for God. Everyone chases after something, and many work hard to attain things that really don’t last. In this lesson, we will see that Jesus gave it all so that we could have it all: not worldly riches, but the blessings of eternal life with Him.

Law/Gospel Theme: Sometimes when we discuss the idea of sacrificing things for God, it makes it seem as though we are earning our way into Heaven, or somehow doing enough to attain favor with Christ. The truth is, though, that Jesus paid the sacrifice. We recognize that He has already done the hard work, and that living in light of that is better than chasing after temporary pleasures.

Optional Materials / Object Lesson Props: Pictures of famous athletes, particularly Olympians and/or medals/trophies.

Bible Passage: Matthew 16:21-28

Message Note: As with most messages, the details of how you choose to communicate this are adaptable and should cater to timing as well as to your audience and student needs. Use your judgment and ideas to best serve students.

More Teaching Ideas on this Scripture Passage

- Watch a demonstration of this [children’s sermon](#) and the [playlist on Matthew 16:21-28](#)
- Compare the [Rfour.org message on Matthew 16:21-28](#)



Matthew 16:21-28 Children's Sermon

"Worth the Cost" Object Lesson

Greet children, perhaps with some sort of trophy or athletic attire:

Hello, children of God! You may notice that I look ready for some athletic adventures today... do you like sports? To tell you the truth, I'm not terribly great at sports, but I enjoy getting into a good game, and I also enjoy watching people who are good at athletics. I really love watching the Olympics. In fact, this year was supposed to be a year for summer Olympics, and I was super disappointed when I found out they were actually cancelled. Do you have favorite sporting events to watch? Some that I really love are... *(Name a few sports, and hold up pictures of athletes in those events as you describe them).*

Now, do you know what it takes to compete in the Olympics? It takes a lot of hard work and discipline, and it involves some sacrifice, too. Athletes who want to compete at such top levels wind up giving up a lot. Sometimes they move to different places so they can train with the best coaches. Or they might have to leave regular school and get tutors to allow for more practice time. They work out for hours and hours each day, and when they aren't exercising, they have to be very careful about how they sleep, what they eat, and how they spend their time. Their lives are basically governed by training. And what is it all for? There's pride and national recognition, of course. It's something special to go to the Olympics and represent your country. But even going to the games isn't always the main end goal. People who compete really want to get a medal. They train for years, hungry for a podium spot and a shiny gold medal to hang around their necks. One slight misstep, one moment of hesitation, and all of that work might seem to be for nothing. It seems like a lot of pressure and effort for not a lot of reward, doesn't it?

When we speak of the Christian life, there is an element of sacrifice. Jesus spoke to His disciples of this fact, warning them not to be concerned with things of this world, but to focus on lasting things that would matter. He told Peter that it isn't worth it to "gain the whole world, but lose your soul." Well, what might that mean? See, people are always seeking after something. It might not be athletic glory, but people today work hard for one thing or another. Some might want money, or a prestigious job, or fancy clothes, or a nice house, or power, or fame, or the perfect family. It is not wrong to want things like that. But we can't let those pursuits outweigh



worship of God. He needs to take the number one spot in our hearts. All of those other things will fade away. They don't last, and they aren't worth it.

Being a Christian isn't always easy. In fact, we are promised that it can be tough. Sometimes we have to make sacrifices. We might not do the same things as some of our friends, and it may seem like we are missing out on certain activities or opportunities because we choose to follow God. But it's worth it. You know why? Because ultimately, it was Jesus who made the biggest sacrifice possible. He gave up a Godly throne to come to Earth and live as a human. He gave up His life so that we could be saved and have eternal life. Compared with that, the minor discomforts of life or sacrifice of missing out on an event or music artist here and there seem pretty insignificant. Jesus paid it all. Loving and serving Him brings us the promise of Heaven, and we don't really have to do anything but believe! That is something worth living for and celebrating, and it's even better than a gold medal!

Children's Prayer Moment

(Have kids repeat each line)

Dear God,

You are worth more than the whole world

Help us to be willing to live for you

Knowing that you sacrificed all for us

Thank you for your love

We love you, God!

In Jesus name, Amen!



Bible Verses/story to Reference:

Matthew 16:21-28

From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

22 Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. “Never, Lord!” he said. “This shall never happen to you!”

23 Jesus turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.”

24 Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. 25 For whoever wants to save their life [f] will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. 26 What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? 27 For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father’s glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done.

28 “Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.” -[Matthew 16:21-28](#)





This lesson was prepared by [Kristin Schmidt](#), who serves at the Epiphany Lutheran Church in Castle Rock, CO.

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Kristin has a professional background in elementary and pre-school education. A graduate of Biola University, she holds a Master of Education and will receive the Master of Theology degree from Concordia University, Irvine, California, in May 2020. Kristin grew up in southern California and lived the past 10 years in Georgia. She is a long-distance runner and voracious reader.

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