

it's a must

Whenever someone declares “Jesus is Lord!”, that person has forfeited the right to decide which of Jesus’ commands they will obey and which they will ignore. To be a disciple of Jesus is to live a “must” life in a “maybe” world, and this series will examine what that looks like.

Week 1: Death Is A Must!

1. Rick began by pointing out that “It’s important to be able to discern the difference between an instruction and a suggestion... between a ‘maybe’ and a “must”” Why is that distinction critical for someone who has decided to follow Jesus?
2. **“MUST DENY THEMSELVES”** *Jesus lived his life out of a divine sense of necessity. Read Luke 2:49; 4:43; 9:22 and John 10:16.* What stands out to you the most in those verses about how Jesus was guided by a sense of “must” and not “might”? How does that convict you? Follow up: How do we sometimes water down the requirements of following Jesus?
3. **True discipleship embraces the “mustness” of life in Jesus. Read Luke 9:23.** In what ways are *self-denial, taking up your cross daily, and following Jesus* crucial components of an intentional relationship with Him? How do each of these actions affect the decisions we make and priorities we have? Follow up: **Life in Jesus starts with death.** Why is death a must? Why is it significant to remember that it should happen *daily*?
4. **“TAKE UP THEIR CROSS DAILY”** **Taking up a cross means *he is greater than me.*** Why is it important to note that Jesus didn’t say his followers must deny themselves *things* but that they must deny *themselves*? What does it look like on a practical level to deny ourselves? In what ways can it be liberating to be delivered from “me-ville”? (**John 3:30**)?
5. **“TAKE UP THEIR CROSS DAILY”** **Taking up a cross means *under is better than over.*** **Read Matthew 20:25-27.** What does Jesus say about true greatness? How is that different from what we normally do? Follow up: If we are going to serve others like Jesus, why must we think of others as better than ourselves? When do you find that most difficult to do?
6. **“TAKE UP THEIR CROSS DAILY”** **Taking up a cross means *lose is stronger than win.*** **Read Matthew 26:47-54.** In what ways are the events in this scene different from what the first followers of Jesus thought they were signing up for? How did the way Jesus respond go on to shape the radical ways they would live? How does knowing this impact you today?
7. **“FOLLOW ME”** **A follower must trust *that there is life after death.*** How has knowing that truth changed the way you’ve lived your life so far (see **John 12:25-26**)? Follow up: What is one thing you plan to do differently as a result of what you learned in this message?

