



ENTER God's presence

Psalm 25:4-7,20-21

- ⁴Show me your ways, Lord,
teach me your paths.
- ⁵Guide me in your truth and teach me,
for you are God my Savior,
and my hope is in you all day long.
- ⁶Remember, Lord, your great mercy and love,
for they are from of old.
- ⁷Do not remember the sins of my youth
and my rebellious ways;
according to your love remember me,
for you, Lord, are good...
- ²⁰Guard my life and rescue me;
do not let me be put to shame,
for I take refuge in you.
- ²¹May integrity and uprightness protect me,
because my hope, Lord, is in you..

Pray: Gracious Father, as we gather to reflect on your Word, we echo the prayer of the psalmist: *“Show us your ways, Lord; teach us your paths.”* Quiet our hearts and humble our spirits so that we may listen for your voice. Where we are proud, soften us. Where we are uncertain, guide us. Lead us in your truth as we seek to follow Jesus. As we read and discuss your Word now, shape our hearts, strengthen our faith, and teach us what it means to follow you more faithfully. Amen.



SHARE life together

1. **What are your highs and lows since you last met?**
2. **When you think about the phrase “following Jesus” what would you say that has looked like in your life this week?**
3. **Has there been a moment since we last met where you had to choose between the ‘easy’ and the ‘right’ option? What happened?**

Week beginning:
Monday 16th March 2026

Worship series:
CLOSER TO JESUS
#6 From Self To Self-Sacrifice



VERSE for the week

“For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it.”

Matthew 16:25



REMEMBER this week

Jesus invites us to endure the pain of self-sacrifice to receive the joy of seeing his life made real in us, and others.

You may have noticed that words like *mindset* and *mindfulness* have become popular in recent years. From business seminars to self-help books to social media posts, people talk a lot about developing the right mindset for success, happiness, or personal growth. The basic idea is simple: the way we think shapes the way we live. Change your thinking, and you can change your life. While that idea isn't entirely wrong, it usually centres on improving ourselves — becoming more confident, more productive, or more successful.

Throughout this series we've been exploring what it means to be apprentices of Jesus. Apprentices don't just learn information from their master; they learn a way of living and working. Over time, a good apprentice begins to think like the master. Instead of asking, "What should I do here?" they begin to ask, "What would my master do?" Today, we'll explore how following Jesus means learning his mindset — a mindset of humility, surrender, and trust in God.

Read **Philippians 2:1-11** and **Matthew 16:21-28** [HERE](#) or in your own Bible.

4. **Try to summarise the main idea of these passages.**
5. **What verse/concept/teaching in these readings caught your attention and what was challenging/confronting/comforting about them for you?**
6. **In Philippians 2:1-11 how do you hear Paul describing the attitude or mindset that Christians should have towards one another?**
7. **What does Paul describe about the mindset and actions of Jesus himself in this passage?**
8. **When you read Jesus' words in Mathew 16:24, "whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves, take up their cross and follow me." What do you understand what Jesus means by this? What clues do you find in the rest of this gospel reading?**



So far we've simply noticed what these passages say. But as apprentices of Jesus, the goal isn't just to understand his teaching — it's to allow it to shape the way we think and live. Paul calls believers to have the same mindset as Christ, and Jesus calls his followers to deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow him. These are powerful and challenging words. As 'followers' of Jesus, do we actually expect to take up a cross as we follow him? Or do we simply expect to be blessed at every turn. Paul reminds us that the mindset of our master — Jesus — is one of humility and self-giving love. These are not mindsets that usually come naturally to us and are usually not encouraged or shared by the world we live in either.

9. **Paul encourages believers to "have the same mindset as Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5). From this passage, how would you describe the mindset of Jesus? What stands out to you most about the way he chose to live?**
10. **Jesus tells his disciples that anyone who wants to follow him must "deny themselves and take up their cross." Why do you think this idea was so difficult for Peter and the other disciples to hear? Why might it still be difficult for Christians today?**
11. **In what ways might our culture — or even church culture — lead us to expect the blessings of following Jesus without the cost of following him?**



MAKE IT REAL:

Throughout this series we've been exploring what it means to be apprentices of Jesus — people who don't just admire him from a distance but learn to live as he lived.

Week by week we've reflected on his teaching, his priorities, and his way of life. But apprenticeship is never just about learning ideas. At some point, the apprentice has to step out and begin practising what they have learned.

In these passages Jesus calls his followers to deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow him. That call may sound confronting, but it is also an invitation — an invitation to trust him enough to place our lives in his hands and walk more closely in his way. As we finish this series together, take some time to reflect honestly on what it might look like for you to live as an apprentice of Jesus in the days ahead.

12. **A mindset is something that operates in the background but influences our actions and decision making, often without us even being consciously aware of it. Take some time to honestly reflect on the actions and decisions you made this week. What kind of influences informed the mindset that led to those decisions? How could you actively work at aligning your mindset more closely to that of Jesus this week?**
13. **In what ways do you feel Jesus asking you to 'take up your cross' and follow him a the moment?**
14. **Throughout this series we've been thinking about what it means to be apprentices of Jesus. If an apprentice's goal is to become more like the master, what is one area of your life where you sense Jesus inviting you to follow him more closely?**

Plan your weekly devotions or **download the Church Central app** for the daily **LifeWay Devotions**



PRAY intentionally

You might like to pray together the following prayer, or spend time sharing together your prayer needs and praying for one another.

Lord Jesus, thank you for calling us to follow you. Thank you that you have not only shown us the way to live, but have given your life so that we may know forgiveness, grace, and new life in you.

As apprentices learning from our master, help us to grow in your mindset — a mindset of humility, trust, and self-giving love. Give us courage to deny ourselves, to take up the cross you place before us, and to follow you faithfully in the ordinary moments of our lives.

By your Spirit, shape our hearts and guide our steps, so that our lives may reflect your love to the world around us. Amen.



BLESS one another

You might like to address one person in your group and make the sign of the cross on their forehead or on the palm of their hand as you say...

[Name], May the life of Christ fill your heart as you place all of your life in his hands. Amen.