Consequences of Confession

Matthew 16:13-26 (preached on June 21, 2009)

Note to Discussion Leaders: *Please remember to start by reading the Bible passage as a group. While this is a "sermon discussion" guide, it's vital that our reflections and applications are grounded in scripture. In a similar vein, do your best to help group members to link their discussion points to the scripture text. Don't skip over all the questions that invite the group to observe and interpret specific verses in the passage.*

READ Matthew 16:13-26 (OT reading: Isaiah 53)

REFLECT

1. **Warm-up.** Have you ever promised something or entered a relationship, situation, or role without understanding in advance what you were getting yourself into? Looking back, what helped you to understand later on the fuller implications or consequences of your decision?

2. Who does Peter confess Jesus to be (vv. 15-16)? According to Jesus, how did Peter know the right answer (v. 17)?

3. If you're a Christian, think back to when you first confessed Jesus as your Savior and Lord. At the time, how much did you understand the "consequences" of your confession—i.e., how it might change your life? (If you're not a Christian, do you feel like you have a growing grasp of the implications of embracing Jesus and the Christian faith?)

4. In v. 21, what does Jesus say *must* happen to him as the "Christ" (i.e., Messiah; see also Isaiah 53:4-6, 10-12)? Why do you think Jesus rebukes Peter so harshly when Peter protests against Jesus' prediction (vv. 22-23)?

5. What do you think of the idea that the death of Jesus Christ on the cross (and his subsequent resurrection) was the most significant event in human history? Is this hyperbole? How does it compare to other great events in history?

6. Have you recently experienced God's rebuke or correction which, even if painful, you can see was spiritually life-giving or life-preserving? (Read Psalm 50:17-22; Proverbs 13:1; 27:5-6; Hebrews 12:5-13.)

7. When Jesus explains that whoever follows him must "take up his cross" (vv. 24-25) what does he mean? What does it mean to "die to self on a daily basis"? Give some examples of what this might look like for you in the coming week.