Sunday, November 18, 2018 Mark Moser

One Commitment

Matthew 16:13–28
(black Bibles page 822; Children's Bibles page 1183)

This is the end of the capital campaign, Commitment Sunday. But it's much more than a financial commitment to a building!

What do Americans think of commitments?

- Are they avoidable and unnecessary? Sometime this is correct and helpful.

- Often they are quite necessary, and especially for the most important things in life.

Back to Matthew 16, where we started this sermon series and capital campaign. Review:

- "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God." Correct—and Jesus announces he will gather his church, now that his identity is truly known. (Matt 16:16,18)
- Jesus then proceeds to describe his upcoming horrible death. Christ rebukes Peter's objection to this (16:21–23)
- What's next? *Jesus calls his followers, even us, to commitment.*

Verses 24–25: "Let him deny himself…" Self-denial.

- Jesus is frequently misunderstood here as advocating self-flagellation, self-loathing, anti-pleasure, or merely self-discipline.
    - Consider how self-discipline may have nothing to do with self-denial: it may be simply choosing the surpassing importance of the *future* self versus the *current* self.

- So what does self-denial mean according to Jesus? Consider "for my sake" in verse 25.
    - Self-denial is a deep renunciation of me as the king and ultimate purpose in life!

- Is this the key to prosperity? To a divine tailwind? Not quite: "Take up your *cross*."
    - A *fatal* commitment? Yes.

Verses 26–27: Consider the best case scenario—what if you gain the whole world?

[Verse 28: In my opinion, referring to the Transfiguration, which follows.]

Jesus' Call to Commitment is for us, for all disciples/Christians.

- We can't say Jesus' words only pertain to 'elite' believers! Consider the use of "disciples" in Matt 28:16–20.