

The background is an abstract composition of warm, earthy tones including beige, cream, and light brown. A prominent halftone dot pattern is overlaid on the right side, transitioning into darker, more saturated colors like deep blue and black towards the right edge. The overall texture is grainy and painterly.

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CONNECT
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“...let him deny himself, take up his cross and **follow me.**” Matthew 16:25

I am not much of an outdoorsman. You might think I could tell by looking at me, but unfortunately I didn't know this until I was several miles into a rigorous 3 day hike in the foothills of North Carolina. I had eagerly jumped at the chance to hike with some friends without any real understanding of the physical and mental preparations necessary for such an endeavor. I remember thinking to myself, while collapsing into my tent the night of our first day hiking:

“THIS IS NOT AT ALL WHAT I EXPECTED.”

I thought that I knew what I was getting into, but it soon became clear that I was overpacked, under prepared, out of shape, and in over my head. Thankfully, the guys with me were experienced hikers. I remember one of them coming over to me at a particularly grueling part of the trail and saying, “You can do this. Just keep walking and follow me.” It was what I needed to hear to keep going.

At the end of Matthew 16, something similar happens to the disciples. Peter has just confessed Jesus as the Christ, the long awaited Messiah, who had come to

redeem Israel. Jesus affirms Peter's confession, much to the delight of the disciples, who at this point must've thought they were all set to be the new princes of Israel. However, something very strange happens next. Jesus begins to tell his disciples that he must suffer and die at the hand of the chief priest and the scribes. This was not at all what the disciples expected. They thought Jesus had come to overthrow the Roman oppressors and rule Israel as her rightful King. Dying was not supposed to be a part of the equation.

Then Jesus says something even more shocking. He turns to his disciples and says *“If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me”* (Matt 16:24, ESV). Jesus tells his followers that not only is he going to die, but if they are truly going to follow him, they must be ready to die as well.

Jesus goes on: *“For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit a man to gain the whole world but forfeit his soul?”* (Matt 16:25-26)

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Connect is a quarterly newsletter of the Student Ministry of Lake Murray Baptist Church. **Lake Murray Student Ministries exists to equip students to love, serve, and lead in light of the gospel of Jesus Christ.**

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The command of Jesus is simple. **Follow me.**

Jesus knew, and wanted his followers to know, that suffering always comes before glory. His call to his disciples was that, in order to follow him, they would first die to themselves. This meant submitting their desires, wills, and hearts totally to the will of God. No longer were they to live to please themselves but to please the one who had come to redeem them from their sin. Second, Jesus calls them to take up their cross. This would have been an incredibly shocking statement to a first century Jew. The cross was not a simple of life or religion as it is today, but an instrument of torture and death. Jesus wanted the disciples to know what the stakes were for following him. It could very well (and in fact did in most of their cases) lead to death. But in losing their very lives for the sake of Jesus, they would find true, real, eternal life. This was the cost to follow Jesus. Give up everything you cannot keep, to gain something you will never lose. The call is the same for us today. Are we willing to give up everything to follow Jesus?

THE CALL TO FOLLOW JESUS SEEMS SIMPLE BUT IT IS THE HARDEST AND GREATEST THING YOU WILL EVER DO.

I did indeed survive my first hike. Finishing that hike might have been one of the most satisfying experiences of my life. Why? Because of how difficult, unexpected, and exhausting it had been.

But I'd made it. Thankfully, I had someone with me who had hiked the trail before and knew how to help me reach the end. This is why the promise of Jesus in Matthew 28 is so sweet to those who have committed to follow him, even to the very end. "And behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Matt 28:20) Jesus has walked the trail before us and promises, that if we follow him, he will lead us all the way home.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

Here is a list of resources I think you will find particularly helpful in learning to follow Jesus and teaching others to do the same. All of these books are available for purchase at Amazon.com.

- 'The Pursuit of Holiness' - Jerry Bridges
- 'Just Do Something' - Kevin DeYoung
- 'Ordinary' - Tony Merida
- 'Radical' - David Platt
- 'Don't Waste Your Life' - John Piper
- 'Spiritual Leadership' - J.Oswald Sanders
- 'Living as a Christian' - A.W. Tozer

David Sons is the Next Generation Pastor at Lake Murray Baptist Church.



EVERY STORY CASTS HIS SHADOW.



SUNDAYS



Journey through the storyline of Scripture.

LifeWay

Every Sunday morning at 9:00AM our High School and Middle School students gather in age/gender specific small groups to grow their faith through the study of God's word. The Gospel Project helps the students to connect their story to the larger story of the Scriptures. This Winter & Spring we are concluding our OT study and beginning to read the Gospels. **Listed below** you will find the passages our small groups will be teaching each week. We strongly encourage parents to familiarize themselves with the text and use Sunday afternoons as opportunities for gospel conversations with your students.

For more information about the Gospel Project go to www.gospelproject.com.

01/22 - Esther 4
01/29 - Esther 6, 7, & 9
02/05 - Nehemiah 1 & 2
02/12 - Nehemiah 4, 5, & 6

02/19 - Nehemiah 8
02/26 - Malachi 1, 3, & 4
03/05 - Matthew 1:1-17
03/12 - Luke 1:26-55

03/19 - Luke 2:1-20
03/26 - Luke 2:40-52
04/02 - Matthew 3:1-17
04/09 - Matthew 4:1-11

04/16 - Matthew 16:13-28
04/23 - Matthew 4:17-22, 9:9-13
04/30 - John 3:1-21



MIDWEEK

ON **WEDNESDAY NIGHTS** ALL STUDENTS (GRADES 6-12) MEET TOGETHER IN THE STUDENT BUILDING FROM **6:30-7:30** FOR WORSHIP & LARGE GROUP BIBLE STUDY.

THIS SPRING WE FINISH OUR STUDY IN MARK & BEGIN A NEW SERIES ON THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

A spiral-bound calendar is shown at an angle, with the word "EVENTS" overlaid in the center. The calendar displays several months, including March, July, and November. The days of the week are abbreviated, and the dates are printed in a standard font. The word "EVENTS" is in a large, bold, black, sans-serif font, centered horizontally and vertically. The background is a soft-focus image of the calendar and some papers on a desk.

EVENTS

THE RUNDOWN

FRANKIE'S

Frankie's Fun Park offers an assortment of activities and events like Laser-Tag, Mini-Golf, and Go-Carts. Your student will have a blast exploring all they have to offer!



HI-WIRE

Hi-Wire trampoline park is an incredible experience for students of all ages. Just imagine an entire warehouse full of trampolines and you'll kind of get the picture.



COLOR WAR

The Color War is one of our best events of the year. Come ready to get dusted with bright colors. We'll have music, food, and all sorts of different color games to enjoy. Then it's all out war.



WE HAVE MONTHLY ACTIVITIES PLANNED FOR STUDENTS ALL SPRING! ON THE 26TH OF EVERY MONTH WE'LL HAVE A DIFFERENT OPPORTUNITY FOR STUDENTS TO GET TOGETHER FOR A DIFFERENT EVENT AIMED AT BUILDING COMMUNITY AND STRENGTHENING FRIENDSHIPS. THESE EVENTS ARE DESIGNED FOR OUR STUDENTS TO COME AND TO BRING A FRIEND. HERE'S WHAT WE'RE UP TO IN FEBRUARY, MARCH, & APRIL!

February Event

- WHEN:** SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 26 (2:00-5:00PM)
- WHAT:** FRANKIE'S FUN PARK
- WHERE:** 140 PARKRIDGE DRIVE, COLUMBIA
- COST:** \$20.00 (COVERS ADMISSION & ATTRACTION PASS)

March Event

- WHEN:** SUNDAY, MARCH 26 (2:00-5:00 PM)
- WHAT:** HI-WIRE TRAMPOLINE PARK
- WHERE:** 1019 STATE RD, IRMO
- COST:** \$20.00 (COVERS ADMISSION, SOCKS, & A SNACK)

April Event

- WHEN:** WEDNESDAY, APRIL 26 (6:00-7:30PM)
- WHAT:** COLOR WAR
- WHERE:** LAKE MURRAY BAPTIST CHURCH
- COST:** FREE!

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SUMMER '17
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SummerSalt 2017

SUMMERSALT IS OUR ANNUAL SUMMER CAMP HOSTED BY THE SOUTH CAROLINA BAPTIST CONVENTION. SUMMERSALT IS A FULL WEEK OF PREACHING, WORSHIP, DISCIPLESHIP AND AWESOME CAMP ACTIVITIES. WE GUARANTEE YOUR STUDENT WILL NEVER FORGET THEIR EXPERIENCE AT SUMMERSALT'17. DON'T MISS IT!

SIGN UPS BEGIN MARCH 1ST!

It will be the best
week you have all
summer.

THE IMPORTANT STUFF

WHEN: JUNE 26-30, 2017

WHERE: WHITE OAK CONFERENCE CENTER, WINNSBORO SC

COST: \$200.00*

SIGN UPS: BEGIN MARCH 1ST, 2017. DEADLINE TO SIGN UP IS JUNE 21ST, 2017.

INFORMATIONAL MEETING: SUNDAY JUNE 25TH @ 4:00 PM

Sign up online at www.lakemurraybc.org.

Click the 'Events' tab. Find SummerSalt 17. Follow the instructions.

* Multi-Kid discounts and scholarships are available. Please email dsons@lakemurraybaptist.org for more info.



For more information check out summersault.org



LAKE MURRAY
STUDENT MINISTRIES