

## **Theme: 'Take up your cross'**

### **Title: "Love, Serve, and Follow Jesus"**

Today, we are going to talk about two important Bible verses from Romans 12:9-21 and Matthew 16:21-28.

These verses teach us how to love, serve, and follow Jesus in our lives.

### **Romans 12:9-21 (NIV) - Love and Serve**

**In Romans 12:9-21, the Bible tells us how we should love and serve others.**

**Verse 9:** It says, "Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good." This means that our love should be real, not fake. We should always choose to do what is right and good.

**Verse 10:** "Be devoted to one another in love. Honour one another above yourselves." We should care about our friends and put their needs before ours. That's how we can show love.

**Verse 11:** "Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord." We should be excited to serve God. Serving means helping others and doing what makes God happy.

**Verse 12:** "Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer." We should be happy and hopeful, even when things are tough. And we should talk to God, just like talking to a friend.

**Verse 13:** "Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality." We should help others when they need it and be friendly and welcoming.

**Verse 14:** "Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse." Even when people are mean to us, we should be kind and pray for them.

**Verse 15:** "Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn." We should be happy when our friends are happy and sad when they are sad. That's what friends do.

**Verse 16:** "Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited." We should get along with everyone, no matter who they are. We should never think we are better than others.

**Verse 17:** "Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone." We should not do bad things to others when they do bad things to us. We should always choose to do what is right.

**Verse 18:** "If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone." We should try our best to get along with others and make peace.

**Verse 19:** "Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: 'It is mine to avenge; I will repay,' says the Lord." We should let God handle it when someone does something wrong to us. He knows what's best.

**Verse 20:** "On the contrary: 'If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.'" Even when someone is mean, we should still be kind to them. Our kindness might change their heart.

**Verse 21:** "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." When we do good things, even when others do bad things, we show God's love and make the world a better place.

### **Matthew 16:21-28 (NIV) - Follow Jesus**

Now, let's look at Matthew 16:21-28, where Jesus teaches us about following Him.

**Verse 21:** "From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life." Jesus was telling His friends that He had to go through some tough times and even die, but He would come back to life. He did this because He loves us and wants to save us.

**Verse 24:** "Then Jesus said to his disciples, 'Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.'" Jesus wants us to follow Him and **do what He says**. It means that we should listen to Jesus, even if it's hard sometimes.

**Verse 25:** "For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it." When we choose to follow Jesus, we find the best life ever, filled with love, joy, and peace.

**Verse 28:** "Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom." Jesus promised that He would come back one day, and we should be ready to meet Him.

**Conclusion:** So, boys and girls, today we learned about love, service, and following Jesus. We should love others sincerely, serve them with joy, and always choose to do what's right. And most importantly, we should follow Jesus, even when it's tough, because He loves us so much and wants us to have the best life ever. Let's pray and ask God to help us love, serve, and follow Jesus every day.

**Amen!**