

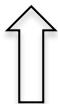
The Gospel of Matthew

WHO DO YOU SAY I AM?

LESSON NINETEEN

MATTHEW 16

Day 1



Heavenly Father, open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your word. Incline my heart to you and satisfy me with your unfailing love.

- Read chapter 16
- Chapter 16 is a turning point in the book of Matthew. The whole book has been building up to this point and from here on out Jesus sets his face for Jerusalem and the cross.
- What is one truth in today's passage that moves your heart to praise, thanksgiving, confession, action or love for God?

Day 2- Matthew 16:1-4

1. What was the motive of the Pharisees and Sadducees in asking Jesus for a sign according to verse 1?

-Look back to 12:14. What was their true intent?

Digging Deeper: When Jesus was tempted in the wilderness by Satan he quoted part of Deuteronomy 6:16 that says, *You shall not put the Lord your God to the test, as you tested him at Massah.* From the following verses, what does it mean to test God?

Exodus 17:2,6-7 Therefore the people quarreled with Moses and said, "Give us water to drink." And Moses said to them, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the LORD? ...[God speaking to Moses] "Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb, and you shall strike the rock, and water shall come out of it, and the people will drink," And Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. And he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah because of the quarreling of the people of Israel, and because they tested the LORD by saying, "Is the LORD among us or not?"

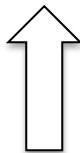
Psalm 78:18 They tested God in their heart by demanding the food they craved.

Psalm 95:7b-9 Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah, as on the day at Massah in the wilderness, when your fathers put me to the test and put me to the proof, though they had seen my work.

For Discussion: Is it ever ok to ask God for a sign if we are not testing him? What sign has God already given us?

Picture and Ponder: We pray for wisdom
Your voice to hear
We cry in anger when we cannot feel You near
We doubt your goodness, we doubt your love
As if every promise from Your Word is not enough
All the while, You hear each desperate plea
And long that we'd have faith to believe. -Laura Story¹

2. What are all the things Jesus has done so far in Matthew that show who he is?



God you are so patient and good to us and you give us many signs of your faithfulness. Thank you for always working in this world and in my life. Please give me eyes of faith to see the many ways you are at work.

3. The religious leaders could look at the sky and forecast the weather, but what were the *signs of the times* that they could not read?

Picture and Ponder: "Seeing is not believing... The truth is that one does not see until one believes."²

♡ The religious leaders demanded that Jesus do things their way or they would not believe him. In reality they were looking for reasons and excuses not to believe. Their hearts were hardened and even the sign of Jonah (Matt. 12:40), the greatest sign of all—Jesus rising from the dead—would not be enough for them. They were dead set against believing and their unbelief would be the death of them.

- ❖ What danger is there in insisting that God do something your way? What attitudes and thinking are exposed in this insistence?
- ❖ What can you say to someone who is looking for excuses not to believe in Jesus?

Day 3- Matthew 16:5-12

4. In verses 5-6, what is Jesus concerned about and what is he not concerned about?
5. What are the disciples fixated on according to verse 7?
6. How does Jesus characterize their fretting in verse 8?

-How does Jesus address their worry in verses 9-10?

Scholar's Note: "Remember (μνημονεύετε, present tense to stress the need for sustained activity) is a strong verb that means much more than just thinking about a past activity. It means to pay close attention to what you recall, gain insight, and "renew and strengthen faith."³



The disciples keep forgetting that when you're with Jesus you never have to worry. He will provide for all your needs. It's not too hard for him, he doesn't forget, and he isn't apathetic. But their greatest need was spiritual, and while Jesus was trying to fill them with spiritual food all they could think about was filling their stomachs.

- ❖ How does fixating on material problems and worries rob us of spiritual insights and growth?

- ❖ It's easy to relate with the disciples. We forget so easily how Jesus has never failed us. When worry and troubles come, renew and strengthen your faith by "remembering" what God has done for you— pay close attention to what you recall and pray for insight.



Father, forgive me for worrying about some things as if you have never provided for me in the past. Help me to remember truths you have taught me in difficult times and so grow in faith.

7. In verse 11, Jesus brings the disciples back to his original point. What do the disciples finally understand according to verse 12?

-Why do you think they needed to beware of it?

Day 4- Matthew 16:13-20

8. In these verses we have come to the climax of the book of Matthew and the important question for which our study is named. Who were people saying Jesus was according to verse 14?

For Discussion: Many people today believe that Jesus was merely a good, moral teacher. What response or action comes from thinking that Jesus is only a good teacher?

9. In verse 16, how did Peter answer Jesus' question, "*Who do you say I am?*"

Scholar's Note: Remember that *Christ* is Greek for the Hebrew word *Messiah* and literally means *anointed one*. "It refers to the fact that God promised that One would come who would be specially chosen and anointed as a great King and Priest for his people (1 Sam. 24:6, Ps.2)"⁴

10. How was Peter able to know this truth about Jesus according to verse 17?

-What does this truth teach us?

Digging Deeper: Read the following verses and answer the questions:

- *Peter* means rock. How did Simon come to be called Peter?

T

John 1:40-42 One of the two who heard John [the Baptist] speak and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which means Christ). He brought him to Jesus.

Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon the son of John. You shall be called Cephas" (which means Peter).

-In verse 18, Jesus says, *You are Peter (rock), and on this rock I will build my church...* From the following verses how would you explain how Peter and his confession were the rock that Jesus would build his church on?

Acts 2:38,41,47 [On the day of Pentecost] And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit...So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls...And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

Ephesians 2:19-20 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone...

Scholar's Note: "Catholicism claims that Peter was given a special authority that is now passed down to a succession of church leaders, specifically bishops, under the primacy of the Pope. While this text absolutely acknowledges Peter's instrumental role in his initial confession and foundation of the church, we must disagree here with the Catholic church's teaching. This text is not about a supreme pope; it's about a sovereign Savior. Jesus alone is pre-eminent in this text, and His Word alone is supreme."⁵

11. Verse 18 is the first time *church* is mentioned. What can you learn about the church from verses 15-18?

Scholar's Note: "The forces of Hades, also translated as *the gates of hell* (ESV), is a Jewish idiom for the powers of death."⁶

Digging Deeper: Verse 19 is very difficult and has many interpretations. Read the following verses to see what Jesus said to the scribes and teachers of the law. How do these verses help explain how Peter, and the body of believers have the keys to the kingdom?

Luke 11:6, 52 And he said, "Woe to you lawyers also! For you load people with burdens hard to bear, and you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers...Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge. You did not enter yourselves, and you hindered those who were entering."

For Discussion: The *keys to the kingdom* and *binding* and *loosing* all have to do with authority. Under Jesus' authority, and as his ambassadors, what authority do we carry as we share the gospel with unbelievers?

Picture and Ponder: "The keys of the kingdom do not belong to popes, bishops, or pastors alone, but to all who testify that Jesus is the Son of God and sole Savior. "⁷



Spend some time meditating on Jesus, the Messiah, the Son of the living God and all that these names mean, and responding in prayer.

- ❖ How would you describe Jesus to someone who doesn't know him?

Day 5- Matthew 16:21-28

12. Now that Peter and the disciples have a better understanding of who Jesus is, Jesus begins to show them his mission in more detail. What exactly did he reveal to them according to verse 21?

-
-
-
-

13. In verse 22, how does Peter demonstrate that his understanding of who Jesus is and why he came is not complete?

14. Why did Jesus equate Peter's rebuke with Satan?

 Peter was probably bewildered. Basking in his shining moment, he had forged ahead into a humiliating rebuke. How did he get off track so quickly? Jesus exposes Peter's wrong perspective; he was setting his mind on the things of men, not on the things of God. Peter had a human perspective, not a heavenly one.

- ❖ It's so natural for us to build our own kingdoms, spending time, energy and money on our own desires. Ask yourself Jesus' question inserting your name. Do I have in mind the things of _____ or the things of God?
- ❖ Jesus was single focused in his mission to do God's will—to obey. What does it look like in everyday life to have in mind the things of God?
- ❖ Ask for God's help to have in mind the things of God, to use every opportunity to do God's will and build his kingdom—in everyday normal living as well as every delay, disappointment, disability, inconvenience, frustration, trial or sorrow.

15. What is required to be a follower of Jesus according to verse 24?

For Discussion: What are the implications of carrying a literal cross the way Jesus did? How do these implications apply to our daily life of following Jesus?

16. Verses 25-27 each begin with the word *For*, and each gives a reason or incentive for becoming a true follower of Jesus. What are the three reasons?

-
-
-

Digging Deeper: Read the following verse and answer the questions:

-We might not be called to physically give up our life for Jesus, but how does this verse explain the kind of dying we are certainly called to?

-What kinds of things did our old selves live for that we now must die to?

-What is the only possible way to be able to do this according to this verse?

-Why do we have to trust Jesus in order to die to ourselves?

-What compels us to this dying and living?

Galatians 2:20 My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.(NLT)

Picture and Ponder: "Nothing displays the worth of Jesus more than our willingness to give away our lives (in small and large ways) for his sake."⁸



Jesus tells his disciples that he must suffer and die (v. 21) and they refuse to believe it. Then Jesus goes further and says if you want to follow me, *you* must be willing to suffer and die (v.24). But Jesus doesn't leave it there. He graciously explains that losing your life for him is actually the only way to save your life. It's the upside down kingdom again. In dying to yourself and living for Jesus you gain eternal abundant life.

- ❖ What does it look like to deny yourself? What are you saying yes to when you deny yourself?

- ❖ In the gospel of Luke, Jesus says, "take up your cross *daily*". What does it look like to take up your cross daily?

- ❖ What does it look like to follow Jesus?

- ❖ Spend some time in prayer asking God where you need to say no to yourself for the sake of Jesus and the gospel.

Scholar's Note: Verse 28 is another difficult verse and has many interpretations, but in keeping with the context of chapter 16, it seems best to interpret it as referring "to the manifestation of Christ's kingly reign exhibited after the Resurrection in a host of ways, not the least of them being the rapid multiplication of disciples and the mission to the Gentiles. Some of those standing there would live to see Jesus' Gospel proclaimed throughout the Roman Empire and a rich "harvest" (cf. 9:37-38) of converts reaped for Jesus Messiah."⁹

One Thing: Look back over this week's study. Pick one thing that God impressed on you, convicted you about, or something new that you learned and write it here. How will this truth impact the way you think and act?

¹ *Blessings* by Laura Story

² Osborne, Grant R.. Matthew (Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on The New Testament series Book 1) (Kindle Locations 16436-16437). Zondervan Academic. Kindle Edition.

³ Osborne, Grant R.. Matthew (Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on The New Testament series Book 1) (Kindle Locations 16555-16557). Zondervan Academic. Kindle Edition.

⁴ Tverberg, Lois. Reading the Bible with Rabbi Jesus: How a Jewish Perspective Can Transform Your Understanding. p. 34

⁵ Platt, David Platt, David. Exalting Jesus in Matthew. (Christ-Centered Exposition) p. 219. B & H Publishing Group.

⁶ Platt, David Platt, David. Exalting Jesus in Matthew. (Christ-Centered Exposition) p. 217. B & H Publishing Group.

⁷ Doriani, Daniel M.. Matthew (Reformed Expository Commentaries) (p. 590). P&R Publishing. Kindle Edition.

⁸ Bloom, John Things Not Seen. P.195. Crossway, 2019

⁹ Expositor's Commentary Copyright © 1998-2018 Olive Tree Bible Software

Copyright © 2021 Holli Worthington. This document may be reproduced for learning purposes but not for profit.