

Lesson 26: Review of Matthew 16:13-28: "Christ Pointers and Cross Bearers"

Christ-pointers: (Matthew 16:13-20)

Peter saw Jesus for who He is: The Christ, the Son of the Living God! Peter became a "Christ-pointer", a witness to Christ! This was momentous occasion for Peter and the apostles.

Jesus had led the apostles to the northern regions of Israel. Ceasarea Philippi was one of the gateways to the Gentile world. Ceasarea Philippi was very metropolitan because of its worldliness. This area provided an interesting back drop for Jesus to pop the question of questions: "Who do men say that I am?" The apostles answered Jesus according to the prevailing opinion of the Jewish people. "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets." Who would find any of these suggestions to be offensive? Each person mentioned was admired by men and used by God, but they were not the Christ! But how were they to know? Evidently miracles were not truly effective to reveal who Jesus is exactly. So how would they know? It was, as we will learn, only through revelation that the Truth about Jesus could be known!

But Jesus asked the most important question, a question that you and I have to answer: "What about you? Who do you say that I am?" So, what about you? Who do you say Jesus is?

Peter's answer comes by way of revelation from God the Father. And lest we think he was *robotic* or like a *puppet* Peter's answer was projected out of his heart as a joyous confession: "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God!" That is how our confession is to be; not rote repetition but joyous! Is your confession joyous? If not, why not?

The origin of Peter's confession is of utmost importance for our understanding. Jesus was emphatic in His explanation of the source of Peter's words: "Blessed (happy, full) are you Peter...for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven." Notice, Jesus did not ascribe Peter's confession to his character, religious sensitivity, sincerity, or openness to Jesus but to revelation. The point is that people cannot ascertain the deity of Christ without the direct revelation of God. Without divine revelation concerning Jesus He will never be received as the Christ, the Son of God. He may be received as a great man, a prophet, a transcendent power, or even divine but He will not be received as the Christ, the unique Son of God.

The glory of the confession is found not in Peter's faith but in the Christ of the confession. Jesus proves this in His words found in 16:18, "...and on this Rock I will build My Church..." Several things to notice: Peter was the first to receive the revelation by faith. Therefore, it is Peter who is appointed as the apostolic spokesman (see Acts chap. 1-12 to see this clearly). It is also to be noted that Christ founded His Church *on* this confession and He is building His Church to this day on this same confession: Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God. Any other confession in the Church and the Church falls flat and fails to deliver the message of Christ within the Church as well as through the Church into the world.

It is by this confession (the Truth: and Truth is a Person, the person of Jesus Christ) transmitted into the world that the Church storms the gates of Hell, ripping the hinges off the gates and setting captives free. And to this day as faithful men and women and children proclaim Christ all over the earth the gates are being torn down and the captives are being set free!!

And, what are the "keys" the Lord Jesus gave to Peter in 16:19. The "keys to the Kingdom" is the message of Christ. As Christ would be, and continues to be preached and proclaimed through sustained effort, where Christ is lifted up by faithful *Christ-pointers* the doors of the Kingdom are opened to all who believe! As *Christ-pointers*, we need only *one focus*: Christ and His exaltation; *one message*: Christ crucified; *one ambition*: Christ's glory in the Church! And, we are *Christ-pointers* who faithfully proclaim the message that Jesus is the Christ.

Cross-Bearers (Matthew 16:21-28)

In these verses we hear several words from Jesus that are disturbing to the disciples and probably also to us who claim Him as our Lord and Savior. First, Jesus promises His brutal death on the cross. Through His death we shall be justified through faith; and we shall be raised through His resurrection! Second, Peter is addressed as Satan as the wicked one tempts Jesus through Peter. And third, Jesus invites all who would follow Him to come and die. He commands us to take up our cross daily by dying to our sinful self and choosing instead to take hold of the power of His resurrection and live for Him (see Rom. 6:11-14; Gal. 2:20)

Our Lord Jesus is building His Church through people who have chosen to take up His cross and die.

Questions for Matthew 17:1-13: "The Transfiguration of Jesus Christ"

1. From the notes on page 1, **A)** what impressed and/or helped you? **B)** Explain "A".

Introduction to Matthew 17:1-13: Matthew 17 three venues are described. The first is up on the mountain where Peter, John and James witness the transfiguration of Jesus. The second, on the way back down the mountain they learn that the way of the Christ and His Church is marked by suffering. And Third, at the foot of the mountain of transfiguration, Jesus' disciples begin to learn how to put His power to work in the world (Lesson 27). I hope you will see Jesus more clearly as you study this week!

2. Read Matthew 17:1-13. "The Transfiguration: An Overview": **A)** Read 2 Peter 1:18. How did Peter describe this mountain of Matthew 17? **B)** Compare Matthew 17:2 with Exodus 34:29-35 and 2 Corinthians 3:13. What is the difference between the two "glories"? **C)** What did the transfiguration reveal, or make visible about Christ? **D)** According to Luke 9:30-31 what did Jesus and Elijah and Moses talk about? **E)** What did Peter want to do and why? And, what the "voice from heaven" have to say? **F)** After hearing "the voice" why would Jesus tell the disciples to not be afraid? Why is this helpful or meaningful to you?

3. Read Matthew 17:2, 5: "Christ: The Glory and Pleasure of God" **A)** Try your best to define what is meant by "transfiguration". Look up Hebrews 1:3 and Col. 2:9 to aid. **B)** Read Exodus 40:34-38 and Acts 1:9. What about these references help you understand what the "cloud" of 17:5 is? What is it? **C)** 17:5: What does the Father confess about Jesus? Be specific/ detailed. **D)** How does 17:5 help you explain the Father's "feelings" for His Son? **E)** Jesus prays concerning the Love of the Father for the Son in John 17. Find as many verses and/or phrases that highlight the Love of the Father for the Son. **F)** How "well pleased" are you with Christ? Why? What makes Him well pleasing to you?

4. Read Matthew 17:8: "None But Jesus: Our Gospel" **A)** Let's touch on the command of "the voice" in 17:5 for a moment. What is significant of the words, "Listen to Him"? Does that mean "listen to Him in addition to other voices", or "listen to Him alone"? **B)** Who "alone" was with the disciples in 17:8? **C)** What message does that convey to us? **D)** Moses was a preacher of the Law, which condemns us. Elijah was a preacher of judgment and sent to prepare Israel to receive the Christ when He came. Jesus came to fulfill the Law and to save us from certain judgment. Why, then must we confess "Christ alone" as our Gospel message?