**WHO DO YOU SAY JESUS IS?**

Matthew 16:13-28

Key verses 15

“But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?”

**Introduction**



 Jesus’ public messianic ministry was almost over. Soon he was going to Jerusalem to die on the cross as the Lamb of God for the sins of the world. Before going to Jerusalem, Jesus took a retreat with his disciples and taught them a very important lesson. The focal point of Today’s passage is Peter’s confession of faith. When Jesus asked him “Who do you say I am?” Peter confessed, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” His confession is correct and is the confession of all Christians. After hearing Peter’s confession of faith, Jesus begins to teach his disciples about the work of the Messiah and about the way to follow Jesus. May the Holy Spirit help us to know who Jesus truly is and confess Him personally and honestly from our hearts. This is the purpose of our Easter retreat!

1. Read verses 13-17. What question did Jesus ask his disciples? (13) What were people’s views about Jesus? (14) What was Jesus’ second question to his disciples? (15) What was Peter’s answer? (16) How could he come to this conclusion about Jesus? (17)

1-1, Read verses 13-17.

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?”

**14** They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”

**15** “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?”

**16** Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”

**17** Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven.

1-2, What question did Jesus ask his disciples? (13)

***When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?”***



* Jesus and his disciples had traveled north to Caesarea Philippi. This was Gentile territory. King Herod’s son Philip named it Caesarea, the city of Caesar and added his own name, Philip.
* He also dedicated the great temple of white marble to Caesar, promoting emperor worship.
* Caesarea Philippi became a major center of pagan worship—primarily the worship of Baal the Syrian god, of Pan the god of nature, of Caesar the Roman emperor and many other pagan gods.
* It is there that Jesus wanted to have an intimate conversation with his disciples.
* Jesus asked them, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?” Jesus’ ministry had made a great impact on society. Almost everyone in Israel had an opinion about Jesus.

1-3, What were people’s views about Jesus? (14)

***14 They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”***

* In general, people saw Jesus as a great prophet like John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah or other prophets.
* Down through the generations, many people called Jesus a prophet. Muslims say that Jesus is a great prophet.
* But Jesus is more than just a prophet or great man. These days, who do people say Jesus is?
* According to Barna research, the historicity of Jesus may not be in question for most Americans, but people are much less confident in the divinity of Jesus.
* About one-third of young adults (35%) say instead that Jesus was merely a religious or spiritual leader, while 17 percent aren’t sure what he was.
* Americans are conflicted on whether Jesus committed sins during his earthly life.
* About half of Americans agree that while he lived on earth, Jesus Christ was human and committed sins like other people (52%).
* We are living in an increasingly unbelieving world. Many people no longer even believe in the existence of God.
* They have been taught from elementary school onward and via the modern media outlets that the universe is eternal and self-sustaining.
* Again, we are taught that man evolved from an animal ancestry. They say the Bible is not the Word of God, but is merely a collection of ancient fables.
* Jesus Christ, though he may have been a remarkable teacher, nonetheless, is not the unique Son of God and the Savior of the world.

1-4, What was Jesus’ second question to his disciples? (15)

***15 “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?”***

* It is a very personal question. The disciples had to answer to Jesus based on their personal conviction about Jesus. They had to speak for themselves.

1-5, What was Peter’s answer? (16)

***16 Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”***

* Peter’s view of Jesus was correct. It is the foundation of Christian faith. First of all, Jesus is the Messiah. The Hebrew word “Messiah” means “Anointed One.”
* In ancient Israel, prophets, priests and kings were anointed to their office. In particular, after Israel was defeated and the monarchy was ended by their enemies for centuries, the people of Israel longed for a new and strong king to come and save them and establish a strong kingdom as many prophets had prophesied.
* They called this anticipated Savior, the Anointed One, the Messiah. In short the Messiah means the Savior king.
* Peter believed that Jesus is the Anointed One who had been prophesied to come. He believed that Jesus was the one sent from God to save his people.
* Next, Jesus is the Son of the living God. Peter saw God in Jesus. This view is the major difference from the people’s view.
* Jesus was not merely a great man. Jesus was not an angel either. He was God. All of the apostles came to this same conclusion that Jesus is the Son of God.

1-6, How could he come to this conclusion about Jesus? (17)

 ***Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven.***

* How could he and the disciples know that Jesus is the Son of the living God? God revealed it to them. Of course, God didn’t show Peter supernatural signs to reveal that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the living God.
* God revealed it to him as he had seen Jesus’ miracles, heard Jesus’ teachings and observed his personal life for 3 years.
* Who could open the eyes of a born blind man except God? Who could raise the dead except the Creator God? Who could calm the storm through his command except God?
* Who could speak the secret of the kingdom of heaven so clearly and precisely except the one from heaven?
* The more Peter came to know Jesus, the more he was awed by the presence of God in Jesus.
* Usually, the better we know a person, the more clearly we see their faults. So Peter confessed, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”
* In the Old Testament, we can find the similar confession of faith to the coming messiah.

Isaiah 9:6 reads, “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”

* Truly Jesus is everything to everybody. Peter’s confession virtually meant, “Jesus, you are my Savior, my King, my Shepherd, my Lord and my God.” As a matter of fact, his confession was his life commitment to Jesus.
* Jesus asks each of us, “Who do you say I am?” To answer it, let us study the Bible sincerely and pray earnestly to God to reveal that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the living God.
* Those who make the confession of faith before Jesus are the children of God, true Christians.
* In the first century, making this confession of faith was equal to inviting fiery persecution or even death.
* But early Christians boldly made a confession of faith and lived as social outcasts or fugitives.
* Yet they were full of spirit and joy, because God revealed this heavenly secret to them so that they could live a pilgrim life marching to heaven.
* May God reveal this truth to everyone here so that we all confess, “Jesus, you are the Messiah, my Savior and my God. Now who do you say Jesus is?
1. Read verses 18-20. What did Jesus promise to Peter? (18) What authority from Jesus does his church have? (19; Mt 18:17-18) What did Jesus warn his disciples about? (20)

2-1, Read verses 18-20.

And I tell you that you are Peter,[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+16&version=NIV#fen-NIV-23691b)] and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+16&version=NIV#fen-NIV-23691c)] will not overcome it. **19** I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+16&version=NIV#fen-NIV-23692d)] bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be[[e](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+16&version=NIV#fen-NIV-23692e)] loosed in heaven.” **20** Then he ordered his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

2-2, What did Jesus promise to Peter? (18)

***18 And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.***

* Jesus was pleased with Peter’s confession. Then Jesus blessed Peter and blessed his confession and made it to be the foundation of Christian church.
* The church is the gathering of those who confess Jesus as their Savior Messiah, and worship him as God.
* The church is not a building, but people who gather together in the name of Jesus. Those who make a personal confession of faith can join Jesus’ church.

2-3, What authority from Jesus does his church have? (19; Mt 18:17-18)

***19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”***

* Jesus continued. Here, the word “key” is symbolic. It means that when we preach the gospel and the Holy Spirit works, the doors of the kingdom of heaven open and sinners can enter God’s presence for forgiveness and cleansing.
* In the past, I had never thought to be a Bible teacher, shepherd, or missionary. I wanted to be a lawyer or a doctor. I wanted to enjoy the recognition.
* But in reality, I deeply despaired because I didn’t know why I should study hard and more fundamentally why I should live.
* But through one to one Bible study with my Bible teacher, the Holy Spirit opened my spiritual eyes to see who Jesus is.
* So I confessed Jesus as my Savior and God. Since then on, my life of faith had many ups and downs. But I renewed my confession before God again and again.
* I have served Jesus for the last 35 years. Without Jesus, I am lost, unforgiven and hopeless.
* Today I again confess that Jesus is my Savior, my Good shepherd, my dear Friend, my Teacher, my King and my God.

2-4, What did Jesus warn his disciples about? (20)

***20 Then he ordered his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.***

* Jesus was on the way to Jerusalem to be crucified for the sins of the world. He came to the earth to save sinners instead of becoming a political king.
* If Jesus publicly proclaimed his Messiahship, he would have put himself at immediate risk before Rome.
* The Roman authorities decided who was king, and so the claim that Jesus was Messiah (or king) would have been a direct affront to their power.
* Jesus knew his primary mission was not to topple the earthly kingdom of Rome, but to bring spiritual salvation.
1. Read verses 21-28. What did Jesus begin to tell his disciples? (21) Why did Jesus rebuke Peter? (22-23) What is required of the person who wants to be a disciple of Jesus? (24) What warning and promise did Jesus give his disciples? (25-28)

3-1, Read verses 21-28.

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.

**22** Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. “Never, Lord!” he said. “This shall never happen to you!”

**23** Jesus turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.”

**24** Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. **25** For whoever wants to save their life[[f](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+16&version=NIV#fen-NIV-23698f)] will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. **26** What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? **27** For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father’s glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done.

**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.”

3-2, What did Jesus begin to tell his disciples? (21)

***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.***

* In Jesus’ time, many Israelites including his disciples believed that the Messiah would be a political king, liberating them from the rule of the Roman Empire and establishing the kingdom of Israel firmly.
* But after Peter’s confession, Jesus was able to begin to teach the disciples the work of the Messiah that was to suffer, die and rise again.
* In fact, it was already prophesied in Isaiah 53:10, saying “Yet it was the Lord’s will to crush him and to cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes his life an offering for sin, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand.” Through Jesus’ suffering on the cross, God forgives our sins.
* We can not rely on our own idea and expectation, but better to examine the Bible to see who Jesus is and what he is up to. We need Biblical understanding.

3-3, Why did Jesus rebuke Peter? (22-23)

***22 Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. “Never, Lord!” he said. “This shall never happen to you!”***

***23 Jesus turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.”***

* After hearing Jesus’ praise, Peter became proud. He thought he was the only disciple who really understood Jesus among them all.
* Upon hearing of work Jesus came to do, including His suffering as the Messiah, Peter thought he should rebuke Jesus, to be strong and not fall into weak thinking.
* He said, “Never, Lord! This shall never happen to you!” He thought Jesus must live a long and happy life as an earthly king and remain with his good friends forever.
* Jesus turned & said to Peter, ‘Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.’”
* Satan hates that the people are saved by the blood of Jesus. If they are cleansed by his blood, Satan will lose power to control sinners.
* Satan used Peter to hinder Jesus’ work to die as the sin offering for sinners. So Jesus rebuked Peter and helped him repent for his own human thinking and to think from God’s point of view.

3-4, What is required of the person who wants to be a disciple of Jesus? (24)

***24 Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.***

* Some will not come to Jesus because they are unwilling to pay the price he requires.
* If you would follow Christ, you must be willing to forsake all that is in conflict with Heaven’s requirements.
* Jesus taught his disciples God’s truth about the way to follow him that there is only one way to follow Jesus.
* It is to deny oneself, take up one’s cross, and to follow Jesus. Jesus suffered and died for our sins.
* To follow this Jesus, we must be willing to suffer through self-denial and by taking our own cross.
* Nowadays many nominal believers do not want to take up a cross. They want to hear something uplifting, positive, and humorous all the time.
* They want to follow Jesus in an easier, fun way. But this is not Jesus’ teaching. The only way to follow Jesus is to deny oneself, take one’s cross, and follow Jesus. To identify as a Christian is to take his cross.
* Nowadays we are studying the book of Joshua and one thing may come to our attention that God allowed Israel to divide the land by faith before occupying it.
* Israel will drive out those who worship idols little by little, instead of in a quick, one day job. It was most likely to help God’s people engage in one spiritual battle after another, in order to learn faith and grow in obedience.
* Caleb set a good example in serving the Lord wholeheartedly in occupying the most difficult land where the Anakites used to reside.
* The land of Canaan is known to be a fertile crescent, occupied by many giants. God led Israel to fight against them despite His good promises.
* This tells us that we do not automatically receive God’s promised land, but we receive it as we follow Jesus in His sufferings, deny our easy going way of life, and to take up our cross to the end!
* Jesus began to share the way of cross, that is the way of the Lord, with his disciples based on their confession of faith starting from Peter.
* He did not save himself, but suffered and died on the cross. He did this in absolute obedience to His Heavenly Father and sat down at the right hand of God in heaven! He is the Christ!

3-5, What warning and promise did Jesus give his disciples? (25-28)

 ***25 For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. 26 What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? 27 For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father’s glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done. 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.”***

* To help the disciples take up the cross, Jesus taught them to have an eternal value system and perspective in verses 25-26. No matter what the cost, and even at any cost, we must save our soul. We must also wait for the second coming of Jesus.
* According to verses 27-28, Jesus will come and reward those who live for Jesus, walking the way of His disciple with eternal life in the kingdom of heaven.

**Conclusion**

 Today we heard Jesus ask, “Who do you say I am?” Jesus wants each of us to confess our faith in him. May God bless us and help us to confess that Jesus is the Messiah, the Savior, and the Son of the living God. Amen.

 One Word: **You are the Messiah!**