

Christ Church

“Who is Jesus?”

Passage: Matthew 16 & 17

Main Idea: What comes to our mind when we think about Jesus is the most important thing about us

Doctrine: Church/Glory of God

PRAYER

INTRODUCTION

Last week: Sensed an urgency in Jesus as He prepared His disciples for what was coming in next year = preparing them for His suffering & death, as well as their own suffering & death for following Him

- Prepared them by raising their view of Him as they witnessed His *Provision* in multiplying few loaves of bread & fish & fed thousands
- Experienced His *Protection & Power* as He walked on water, saved Peter from drowning, cast out demons & healed diseases

Jesus continues to raise disciples view of Him in Chapters 16 & 17

- First, by showing them they had limited vision; *Earthly Eyes*
- He followed that by giving them *Supernatural Sight*
- Finally, brought this *Supernatural Sight* into their *Daily Days*

Outline

- I. Earthly Eyes (Matthew 16:1-12)
- II. Supernatural Sight (Matthew 16:13-17:8)
- III. Daily Days (Matthew 17:9-27)

MAIN IDEA: What comes to our mind when we think about Jesus is the most important thing about us

Today: People say they believe in God, but don't think much of Jesus

- Maybe He was a good Man & a good Teacher, but that's all
- Bible doesn't allow for that: John 1: Jesus is God in the flesh
- John 14, Jesus, “If you've seen Me, you've seen God”; “God loves those who love Me”; “You can't come to God unless go through Me”

Why I said, “What comes to our mind when we think about Jesus, not just God, is the most important thing about us” = Who is Jesus?

Open your Scripture Journal to Matthew 16

I. EARTHLY EYES (Matthew 16:1-12)

16:1-4: Religious leaders saw Jesus' *works* & heard Jesus' *words*, but didn't connect the dots – like people today who read Bibles but don't see past the *words* of God or the *works* of God & see God

- We can be guilty of this = see beautiful sunset but don't see God
- Stare into Grand Canyon, marvel at creation but don't credit God
- When our mind is focused on earthly things, when we see only with *earthly eyes*, we miss spiritual things going on all around us
- “Look through the window & see God” – in everything

So, Jesus told religious leaders they'd seen & heard enough to know Who He was; only other sign they'd be given was “*sign of Jonah*”

- Just as Jonah spent 3 days good as dead in belly of fish before spit out; Jesus would spend 3 days dead in grave before raised to life

Verses 5-12, disciples guilty of same thing; had *earthly eyes*; mind on earthly things so when Jesus said, “*Beware of the leaven of Pharisees & Sadducees*”, they thought He was talking about bread

- “*Leaven*” in Bible refers to influence; something which starts small & grows; often refers to influence of sin; here means influence of *teaching*, traditions of the religious leaders
- Jesus saying: Don't be like religious leaders whose minds are on *earthly things*; don't forget what you've seen Me do & heard Me say

This problem is not unique to disciples; this is all of us = Gospel issue

- Not that we won't see; it's that we can't see (verse 3); we're all born spiritually blind; unless God open our eyes to see, transforms our minds & hearts to think & to love right, we will continue to walk through life blinded to the things of God
- Doesn't take more education or better laws or even listening to good preaching or studying our Bible every day
- God has to open eyes – what He does in Gospel = *Supernatural Sight*

II. SUPERNATURAL SIGHT (Matthew 16:13 – 17:8)

Two things must know about Jesus: *Who He is* & *What He came to do*

- These two things emerge explicitly in Matthew 16 & 17 for first time

Verse 13 Jesus asks disciples, “*Who do people say Son of Man is?*”

- “*Son of Man*” is one of Jesus’ favorite designations of Himself; doesn’t simply point to Jesus’ humanity
- Title taken from Daniel 7 where it refers to the One & Only God
- Title reminds us Who Jesus is = Jesus is *both* fully God & fully Man

So, because Jesus is God, He knows everything; He never asks questions for information; He wanted disciples to confess truth

- So, after hearing what people thought, Jesus asked the disciples: “*But who do you say that I am?*”
- Most important question we’ll ever answer; what comes to our mind when we think about Jesus is the most important thing about us

Verse 16: Peter: “*You are the Christ, Son of the living God*”, Man & God

- Peter identified Jesus as Promised Messiah; One sent to save
- Value of Jesus’ *work* depends on who He is, Fully Man & Fully God
- If He is *not* a Man, He couldn’t die because God can’t die
- If He is *not* God His death wouldn’t have any value; just like anyone
- But because He is Man, He could die; & because He is God, His death has infinite value; only the blood of a perfect sacrifice could satisfy God’s requirement of death for sin so we could be forgiven

In verse 17, Jesus makes it clear that Peter didn’t come to this conclusion on his own - “*Flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven*”

- Seeing Jesus, & knowing Who Jesus is, is a supernatural work; no amount of education or effort on our part will do it
- Only God can give us *Supernatural Sight* = what He does in Gospel
- Holy Spirit opens our eyes, renews our minds, transforms our hearts, connects the dots so we see & know & desire Jesus

It’s not on Peter, but on his confession of Who Jesus is & what He came to do that Jesus says He will build His church

- Matthew 16:18 is first mention of the church in New Testament
 - Church is the company of God’s redeemed people; those He has called out from the world throughout all time
 - Church is Family of God – it’s not a place we go, but a people we are
- And, since Jesus builds it, Jesus protects it – “*Gates of hell shall not prevail against it*”
- In spite of attacks from within the church & from without, it’s God’s Church, it’s alive & well; God protects His Church & His kids

- Despite anything going on in our lives or world, we are protected because we're built on Jesus' Person & Jesus' Work
- Good news; anchor for our soul; that's why what comes to our mind when we think about Jesus is the most important thing about us

Verse 19: Jesus says to Peter, *"I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall have been (not "shall be") bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven"*

- Key to Kingdom of heaven, what unlocks door into heaven is Gospel
- Every child of God has the "key"; we have God's Word & Gospel
- As we share Jesus & Gospel with others & Holy Spirit opens their eyes & creates faith to believe, they are "bound" in heaven - saved
- Those who fail to believe aren't
- God's work is to *bind & loose*; our work is to share Jesus & Gospel

Jesus has revealed Who He is; now He reveals why He came

- Verse 21: *"From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem & suffer many things from the elders & chief priests & scribes, & be killed, & on the third day be raised"*
- Notice "must" = there was no other way for God to rescue sinful men & reconcile them to Himself than for Jesus to go to the cross
- We don't need a good example or a good teacher - we need a Savior

Then Peter shows us how easy it is to be exactly right one minute & terribly wrong the next – Verse 22: *"That's not gonna happen, Jesus"*

- "We should take every opportunity to shut our mouths"
- This isn't what Peter & Jews expected or wanted their Messiah to do
- And, like in wilderness, Jesus recognized influence of Satan to try to get Him to accomplish God's plan without the cross
- Jesus rebukes Satan & rebukes Peter for trying to hinder His work
- Says, "Peter, you're wrong; I am going to die; I have to die; no other way; & by the way, you must die too if going to be My disciple"

Verse 24: Jesus gives 3 requirements for being disciple; progression:

1. *"Deny myself"* = denying my plans or desires for my life; giving up my comfort, calendar, control; denying my rights; denying myself an extra hour of sleep so I can get up & study Bible
 - Denying that I can save myself & that I can change myself & that I can live life by my own efforts

2. *“Take up my cross”* = our cross, like Jesus’ cross, is whatever God asks us to do to bring life to others
 - Witness to neighbor or co-worker; invite kids or ladies to your home to teach them Bible; pray with an anxious friend
3. *“Follow Jesus”* = not leading; going at same speed & same direction
 - Not going off on our own, but going where Jesus goes, regardless of *where* it takes me, or *who* it takes me to, or *how long* it takes
 - Embracing the journey without having to know the destination

Why would anyone do that? Only if they saw & knew Jesus, if they had high view of Jesus, which is the point of Matthew 17:

- *“And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. ² And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light.”*
- Jesus pulls veil of flesh back to show the disciples who He really is
- *“Transfigured”* - Inside of Jesus was coming out; glory of God was being made visible for disciples’ benefit

Glory of God is weightiness of God; sum of all His attributes

- Jesus was going public; displaying all the excellencies of God
- 2 Corinthians 3:18: *We are transformed as we behold glory of God*
- Why study Bible, to see Jesus; to know Jesus
- As we do, we become like Jesus

But poor Peter, sticks his foot in mouth again – “This is the best thing yet; I’ll make tents & we’ll just stay here”

- 17:5: Father God who spoke at Jesus’ baptism spoke again: *“This is My beloved Son with whom I am well pleased; listen to Him”*
- Great lesson for us when tempted to run ahead or to open our mouths when we shouldn’t: “Be quiet, be still, & listen to Jesus”

TRANSITION

What comes to our mind when we think about Jesus is the most important thing about us

- That’s why we need time on the mountain to see & hear from Jesus
- No matter how busy your life is, don’t neglect these times
- Schedule them as unbreakable appointment; embrace & enjoy them

But, like disciples, we can't stay on mountain; have to bring what we see & know & experience about God down mountain into *Daily Days*

- Call this *street-level living*; where what we've seen on the mountain, what we say we believe about Jesus & Gospel, is put into practice

III. DAILY DAYS (Matthew 17:9-27)

Peter, James & John come down mountain & see crowd around other disciples; man with demon-possessed son had come to them for help

- Disciples couldn't cast out demon, so Jesus rebuked demon & it came out of boy; rebuked disciples for their "*little faith*"
- Remember lessons of feeding 25,000 people & walking on the water
- It's not so much the size of your faith but the size of your God
- Why Jesus continues to reveal Himself & raise disciples view of Who He is & what He can & will do (US) = preparation for *daily days*
- Following Jesus is not a door you enter once & then you're good; it's a path you follow every day – crying out to Him; depending on Him

Disciples experienced disappointment in not being able to cast out demon & being rebuked by Jesus; disappointed again when Jesus reminded them of His upcoming death

- They were "*distressed*" because they heard the "*I'm going to die*" part, but not the "*I'll be raised the 3rd day*" part
- How often are we distressed in *daily days* when we have selective hearing? Tunnel vision? Earthly Eyes? Forget to remember Who God is & what He's done & promised to be & do?

Then Matthew addresses the nitty-gritty issue of paying taxes – how does our view of God change how we think about government & taxes?

- Jesus uses ordinary experiences of daily life to teach disciples (US)
 - Kings needed money to support their family & kingdom, so they collected taxes, not from their own family ("*sons*"), but from "*others*"
 - God's Kingdom, Jesus, as the Son of God, & disciples as "sons of God" through their relationship with Him, were exempt from taxes
- Verse 27: "*However, not to give offense to them, tells Peter go to sea and cast a hook & take the first fish that comes up, & when you open its mouth, you will find a shekel. Give it to them for me & for yourself.*"
- Lessons: Don't be contentious; don't demand your rights; don't cause others to stumble; don't be a pain; deny yourself
 - "Choose your witness over your wells" (Isaac) - world is watching

Another practical lesson: Christians ought to pay taxes; Matthew 22: "*Render to Caesar what is Caesar's & to God what is God's*"

- Although government does a lot we *don't* like, it also does a lot from which we profit, including freedom to preach Gospel & to meet together in Bible studies & churches

But don't miss the most important thing: What this miracle shows us about Jesus

- Jesus created the fish; Jesus controlled the fish; Jesus providentially had the fish swallow a shekel; Jesus told that very same fish to jump onto Peter's hook at just the right time
- That same Jesus is in charge of our *Daily Days* of disease & diapers & dishes & disappointments & demands from people all around us

CLOSING

Last week: Jesus prepares us for life, some remarkable times with Him on the mountaintops, but also lots & lots of *daily days* when we come down off the mountain

- Jesus prepares us for life every day by raising our view of Him
- That's why what comes to our mind when we think about Jesus is the most important thing about us

Let's be quick to ask God to give us "*Supernatural Sight*"; to remove the blinders & limited vision of our "*Earthly Eyes*"

- So that we see Him in His Word as we DIG into it each day; so that we see Him in His work in our lives & in our world
- So that we run to Him in all the circumstances of life

PRAYER