

Jesus On Purpose: The Path Of A Resurrected Heart

PART 21 — “BUT WHO DO YOU SAY I AM?”

When Revelation Demands Surrender

Matthew 16:13–27 | Mark 8:27–38 | Luke 9:18–26

For almost three years, the disciples have watched Jesus heal, deliver, teach, multiply, calm storms, and reveal the Kingdom.

They know what He can do.

Now Jesus turns the conversation toward something deeper:

“But who do YOU say that I am?”

— Matthew 16:15

Because faith cannot stop at being impressed by Jesus.

You have to decide **who He is**.

And once you know who He is, the next question becomes unavoidable:

Will you follow Him where He is going?

Peter is ready to confess the Christ.

He is not yet ready for the Cross.

And Jesus is about to show them that **resurrection life always passes through surrender**.

I. REVELATION — “WHO DO YOU SAY I AM?”

Matthew 16:13–20

Jesus takes His disciples to the region of Caesarea Philippi and asks:

“Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” (Matthew 16:13)

They answer:

“Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.”

(Matthew 16:14)

Everybody had an opinion about Jesus. But Jesus makes the question personal:

“But who do YOU say that I am?” (Matthew 16:15)

Peter answers:

“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” (Matthew 16:16)

This is the revelation everything else rests upon.

Jesus isn't merely:

- A teacher.
- A prophet.
- A miracle worker.
- A moral example.

HE IS THE CHRIST. THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD.

And Jesus tells Peter:

“Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.” (Matthew 16:17)

Peter didn't figure Jesus out.

The Father revealed Jesus to Peter.

(This is important. Christianity begins with revelation—not simply information. The disciples had more information about Jesus than almost anyone alive, yet Jesus identifies Peter's confession as something revealed by the Father. We can know facts about Jesus without truly seeing who Jesus is.)

Then Jesus says:

“Upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven...” (Matthew 16:18,19)

Look at the language:

Church. Kingdom. Authority. Victory.

Peter has just received perhaps the greatest revelation of his life.
But then Jesus does something Peter never expected.

II. THE CROSS — PETER WANTS THE CHRIST WITHOUT THE CROSS

Matthew 16:21-23

Matthew marks the transition:

“From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem...” (Matthew 16:21)

FROM THAT TIME. - Something changes.

Now that they know **WHO He is...** Jesus begins teaching them **WHY He came.**

“...He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things... and be killed, and be raised up on the third day.” (Matthew 16:21)

This is the entire Gospel in one verse: **SUFFER → DIE → RISE**

But Peter seems to hear only: **SUFFER → DIE.**

He misses: **RISE.**

He misses the Rise because this is not a natural aspect of life.... Satan wants us to be in “control” of the things we can “handle”. Outside of that, the defiant heart he has that sin instilled in us becomes skeptical to the things God can do and who He is.

So in all his earthly glory Peter takes Jesus aside:

“God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to You.” (Matthew 16:22)

Peter loves Jesus. Peter believes Jesus is Messiah. Peter is trying to protect Jesus. And Peter is completely wrong.

That's frightening. Because you can love Jesus and still resist what Jesus is trying to do.

Peter accepts Jesus' identity... but rejects Jesus' path.

Whether he realizes it or not He wants:

Messiah without suffering. Kingdom without sacrifice. Glory without death. CROWN WITHOUT CROSS.

And Jesus responds:

“Get behind Me, Satan!” (Matthew 16:23)

Those are incredibly strong words. Why?

Because Peter is unknowingly echoing the same temptation Jesus has already rejected.

Take the Kingdom without the Cross.

(In the wilderness Satan offered Jesus kingdoms without Calvary—Matthew 4:8–10. Peter's motive is very different, but the temptation underneath it is similar: avoid the Father's path of suffering. Jesus recognizes immediately where that road leads.)

Then Jesus identifies the real problem:

“You are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's.” (Matthew 16:23)

THERE IT IS.

God's way of thinking. Versus. **man's way of thinking.**

Our natural inclination says:

Avoid suffering- Protect yourself- Preserve your life- Hold onto control- Choose comfort.

But Jesus is revealing the pattern of the Resurrected Heart:

SURRENDER → DEATH → RESURRECTION → GLORY

Peter inherited generations of Jewish suffering and longed for a Messiah who would **triumph over Israel's enemies**, making it difficult for him to accept that God's Messiah would first fulfill the prophecies of the **suffering Servant before reigning as the victorious King**.

III. JESUS TURNS THE CROSS TOWARD US

Matthew 16:24

Peter probably thought Jesus was talking about what would happen to **Jesus**.

Then Jesus turns toward everyone:

"If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me."
(Matthew 16:24)

I want to make an important point about the dialogue so far:

The cross is certainly applicable metaphorically to many forms of costly discipleship, but **in this immediate context Jesus is talking about death**.

Jesus: "I must suffer... be killed... and be raised." — Matthew 16:21

Peter: "This shall never happen to You!" — Matthew 16:22

Jesus: "You are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's." — Matthew 16:23

Jesus to everyone: "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, take up his cross and follow Me." — Matthew 16:24

Jesus: "Whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; whoever loses his life for My sake will find it." — Matthew 16:25

This is one continuous thought. Jesus is answering Peter.

Peter's struggle is essentially: **"Jesus, You cannot die."**

Jesus' answer becomes: **"Peter, not only am I going to die—you must learn to die too."**

That is much heavier than the way "carry your cross" is sometimes used.

We often reduce it to:

- "My difficult marriage is my cross."
- "My illness is my cross."
- "My difficult circumstances are my cross."

And those can certainly involve costly faithfulness, but to Peter and the Twelve, **a cross was an instrument of execution**.

Jesus isn't primarily saying: **"Learn to tolerate difficult things."**

He's saying: **"The instinct in you that is trying to save Me from death is the same instinct that will eventually try to save YOU from surrender."**

And that is the connection we must see here: Jesus is not just trying to instill the Heart that will defeat Sin and Death to the apostles....He is setting the foundation for all humanity. Here is the blueprint

Peter is thinking: **Messiah → victory → Kingdom → glory**.

And Jesus is like: **Messiah → suffering → death → resurrection → glory**.

And Jesus' message is very clear.... Peter this patter is not only mines.... **"follow Me."**

IV. THE GREAT PARADOX — THE LIFE YOU SAVE IS THE LIFE YOU LOSE

Matthew 16:25-26

And verse 25 proves how literal the stakes are; Jesus immediately explains the cross statement:

"For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it."
(Matthew 16:25)

The Greek word (Life) *psychē* can carry the sense of life/self/soul depending on context, but here the surrounding language makes **preserving one's life** central.

Is Jesus asking us not to be a coward?

“Don’t be a coward” captures part of the force of Jesus’ words, especially given the persecution and death He has already warned them about. But I would frame it as **courageous allegiance**, not mere toughness.

See Peter's instinct is: **“Preserve life. Avoid the cross.”** Jesus' response is essentially: **“If following Me costs you your life, do not abandon Me to save yourself.”**

That becomes even clearer in Mark's parallel:

“Whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him...” (Mark 8:38)

So yes, there is a blunt edge to this:

Don't become a coward when following Jesus becomes costly.

Not just because Christians are supposed to be reckless or seek suffering, but because **self-preservation cannot become greater than allegiance to Christ.**

The Resurrected Heart must say, **“Even if obedience costs me my life, I know death does not get the final word.”**

*****And there is something even deeper happening with Peter*****

Peter's reaction is understandable.

He loves Jesus.

He has expectations about Messiah.

He comes from a people whose Scriptures and history contain conquest, exile, foreign domination, oppression, and hopes for God's deliverance. Many Jews in the period longed for God's decisive restoration, though Jewish messianic expectations were diverse—not everyone expected exactly the same political or military Messiah.

So Peter hears: **“You are the Messiah.”**

Then immediately hears: **“I am going to Jerusalem to suffer and die.”**

Something doesn't compute. **“No! Messiah means God wins!”**

Jesus' response is essentially: **“Peter, you still don't understand how God wins.”**

That's the revelation.

Peter imagines victory as **avoiding defeat.**

Jesus reveals victory **through what looks like defeat.** (Using death to defeat death by resurrection)

Peter imagines overcoming by **destroying the enemy.**

Jesus is going to overcome through **obedience, suffering, sacrifice, death—and resurrection.**

Peter wants Jesus to skip the grave and get to the Kingdom. **But Jesus refuses to remove the middle.**

And then He tells Peter and us: **“Neither can you.”**

Peter wants resurrection without death.

Jesus says there is no resurrection without the grave.

And that is the Resurrected Heart:

I surrender even my life to Jesus because I believe that whatever I place into His hands—even unto death—is not beyond His power to raise again.

Let's be real—this is a **hard pill to swallow.**

“Deny yourself. Take up your cross. Lose your life.”

That sounds almost impossible **until Jesus becomes real and personal to you.**

But as you surrender your way and turn your eyes toward Him, you begin to see His fingerprints—the answered prayer, the unexpected provision, the door that opened, the moment that made you wonder:

“Is Someone actually looking out for me?”

And little by little, Jesus becomes more than Someone you believe in. **He becomes Someone you trust.**

The pill doesn't get smaller. **Jesus becomes bigger in your eyes.**

And eventually your heart begins to say:

"If I can trust Him with all of this, maybe I really can trust Him with my life."

That's the Resurrected Heart.

****So, to borrow Morpheus' question to Neo: Are you willing to take the red pill?**

Are you willing to discover how real Jesus actually is?

Because once you truly begin to see Him, the question changes from:

"How could I possibly give Jesus my life?"

to:

"Who else would I trust with it?"

V. RESURRECTION CHANGES THE VALUE OF EVERYTHING

Matthew 16:21, 25-27

Go back to something Peter missed.

Jesus didn't say only: **"I will be killed."**

He said:

"...and be raised up on the third day." (Matthew 16:21)

Peter heard death. Jesus promised resurrection.

That's the difference between the human heart and the Resurrected Heart.

The human heart evaluates everything according to: **WHAT AM I LOSING NOW?**

The Resurrected Heart evaluates everything according to: **WHAT HAS JESUS PROMISED LATER?**

That's why Jesus can say:

"Whoever loses his life for My sake will find it." (Matthew 16:25)

Because with Jesus: **LOSS IS NOT THE END.**

Then Jesus pulls the curtain back even further:

"For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels..." (Matthew 16:27)

There it is. **GLORY IS COMING.** Jesus is dropping the hint to them that today we can/should clearly see.

The title Son of Man is the title Daniel gives to the Messiah at the end of Jacobs trouble (tribulation). Jesus is conditioning their hearts and ours from the very beginning....He is coming back

And:

"...and then he will reward each person according to what they have done.." (Matthew 16:27)

There is the Harvest again. There is accountability again. There is reward again. There is eternity again.

Jesus is telling them: **Don't evaluate your life before the Harvest.**

Something that looks like loss now may be eternal gain.

Something that looks like gain now may be eternal loss.

The human heart asks:

"What does this cost me today?"

The Resurrected Heart asks:

"What will this mean in eternity?"

(This connects directly to our earlier Harvest teaching. The growing season can make surrender look foolish because the final outcome has not yet been revealed. But when the Son of Man comes in His Father's glory, the true value of every life will be exposed. The Harvest reveals what our choices were actually worth.)

VI. Conclusion

A. THE SHOCKING THING ABOUT PETER

I think this may be where we need to land.

Peter gets the biggest question right: **"Who do you say that I am?"**

Peter: **"YOU ARE THE CHRIST."**

Correct answer. And only a few verses later Jesus says: **"Get behind Me, Satan!"**

How can both happen?

Because: **RIGHT REVELATION DOES NOT AUTOMATICALLY PRODUCE A SURRENDERED HEART.**

Peter knows **who Jesus is...** but he still wants Jesus to fit **Peter's expectations.**

And that is a **danger** for every Christian.

I can confess: **Jesus is Lord.**

And still tell Him: **"Not that."**

"Lord, I'll follow You...**but not there.**

I'll obey You...**but don't touch that.**

I'll surrender...**but not this relationship.**

I'll follow...**but not if it costs that much.**

I'll believe...**but I need You to do it my way."**

And Jesus lovingly keeps bringing us back to the same place:

"If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me."

B. THE QUESTION HAS CHANGED

For much of Jesus' ministry the disciples have been asking: **"WHO IS THIS?"**

"Who is this that even the wind and the sea obey Him?"

Now Peter knows. **"YOU ARE THE CHRIST."**

So Jesus changes the question.

It is no longer simply: **"DO YOU KNOW WHO I AM?"**

Now it becomes: **"WILL YOU FOLLOW ME?"**

Not just when I multiply bread. Not just when I heal. Not just when I calm storms. Not just when I cast out demons. Not just when I give you authority.

But: **Will you follow Me toward the cross?**

****The Church at large for 2,000 years has made every excuse to formulate theology into not having to walk in the same shows Jesus walked despite He Himself telling us clearly that is what He needs us to do. Because the heart Jesus is forming isn't merely a heart capable of experiencing His power.**

It is a heart willing to follow Him through death... because it believes resurrection is on the other side.

C. WHO DO YOU SAY I AM?

Jesus' question still stands: **"But who do YOU say that I am?"**

If He is merely a teacher... take His advice.

If He is merely a miracle worker... ask Him for miracles.

If He is merely a provider... ask Him for provision.

But if Peter is right— **"YOU ARE THE CHRIST, THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD"**

—then He deserves more than admiration.

He deserves everything.

And Jesus tells us exactly what following Him looks like:

"Deny yourself."

SURRENDER.

"Take up your cross."

DIE TO SELF.

"Follow Me."

OBEY.

"Whoever loses his life for My sake..."

LET GO.

"...will find it."

RESURRECTION.

That is the pattern.

REVELATION → SURRENDER → CROSS → RESURRECTION → GLORY

And next week...

Jesus is going to take Peter, James and John up a mountain.

The disciples have just been told:

Suffer.

Lose.

Die.

Carry a cross.

But before the road to Jerusalem gets darker...

Jesus is going to let them see what is waiting on the other side.

"He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun..." (Matthew 17:2)

The Cross is real.

But the Cross is not the end.

GLORY IS COMING.