

Sunday School Lesson for March 8, 2026  
Matthew 16

Welcome to Sunday School on the go from the First Baptist Church in Tallassee. I'm Jim Glass, one of the teachers in the Pairs and Spares Class, and, on this second Sunday of March, we're moving chapter-by-chapter through the gospel according to Matthew, with Pastor Trey preaching from the odd-numbered chapters and our Bible Fellowship lessons drawn from the even-numbered chapters. Following Trey's message from Matthew, chapter fifteen, where we hear about another challenge by the Pharisees and Jesus' answer; more healing miracles, including the healing of the daughter of a Gentile, Syrian woman; and the feeding of the four thousand, our lesson today comes from chapter sixteen where we learn of yet another challenge by the Jewish leaders and our Lord's warning about leaven, and Jesus' question about who the people said He was, Peter's answer, and our Lord's declaration about His coming in judgment.

As chapter fifteen closed, we read that Jesus "got into the boat and went to the region of Magadan." **You can see its location here on this map.** This is the only time we read about this location in our New Testaments, and Mark places Jesus in Dalmanutha, indicating that these two areas were very close to each other. You'll also see on this map that it's just north of Magdala, the home of Mary of Magdala, better known as Mary Magdalene.

No sooner had He arrived there than--verse one: "the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and to test him they asked him to show them a sign from heaven." Members of these two, competing sects within Judaism asked for a sign; after all, they might have thought, some of the Old Testament prophets had given a sign. Samuel had caused it to thunder--First Samuel, chapter twelve, verse seventeen: "'I will call upon the LORD, that he may send thunder and rain. And you shall know and see that your wickedness is great, which you have done in the sight of the LORD, in asking for yourselves a king.' So Samuel called upon the LORD, and the LORD sent thunder and

rain that day, and all the people greatly feared the LORD and Samuel.” Isaiah had caused the shadow to go back ten degrees to validate his message about the healing of Hezekiah--chapter 38, verse eight. And Moses, so the people thought, sent manna from heaven--John, chapter six, verse 31. The Pharisees and Sadducees want Jesus to do the same thing.

A couple of weeks ago, in chapter twelve, we read that the Pharisees had asked for a sign, but, this time, Jesus offers them an illustration from life that should have been simple to understand: “When it is evening, you say, ‘It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.’ And in the morning, ‘It will be stormy today, for the sky is red and threatening.’ You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times.” The fishermen of that day would have recognized it as “Red sky at morning, sailor take warning; red sky at night, sailor’s delight.” Everybody knew what to look for and what it means.

In other words, nature signals what’s about to happen, and they all knew how to interpret those signals. Of all the people in that day, the Pharisees and Sadducees, who knew their Old Testaments and used it to support their various positions, should have known how the prophecies were all signaling to them that Jesus is the Messiah.

His answer was put in words that are stern and strong, but He speaks more in sorrow than in anger. Mark tells us in chapter eight, verse twelve, “he sighed deeply in his spirit” before giving His answer. When John the Baptist’s disciples had come to him for some words of assurance, Jesus told them--Matthew, chapter eleven, verse three: “Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them.”

There had been so many signs, and they were so plain and clear--signs that spoke for themselves, signs that so plainly spelled out the words, “The

kingdom of heaven is among you, and the Messiah has come” that it was tragically sad to think that they would be blind to them all and find it in their heart to ask for something else for them to doubt and question.

One commentator writes, “He would work no miracle for the mere purpose of exciting astonishment or even of producing conviction, when there was quite enough for all who were ... willing to receive it, in the regular, natural, and necessary development of His work as the Healer of the sick, the Shepherd of the people, the Refuge of the troubled and distressed. Had there been no signs of the times, there might have been some reason for signs in the heavens; but when there were signs in abundance of the kind to appeal to all that was best in the minds and hearts of men, why should these [signs] be discredited by resorting to another kind of sign much inferior and far less adapted to the securing of the special object for which the King of heaven had come into the world? The signs of the times were after all far more easily discerned than those signs in the heavens by which they were accustomed to anticipate both fine and stormy weather.”

So, the Lord’s only response is--verse four--, ““An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah.’ So he left them and departed.” Our commentator adds, “How sad for Him; how awful for them! Had there been in their hearts one single aspiration for the true and good, He would not have left them so. Where are these Pharisees and Sadducees now? What do they now think of the work of that day?”

We don’t know where Jesus and His disciples went after leaving Magadan, but Matthew tells us that, when they reached their destination--verse five--“they had forgotten to bring any bread.” As the Lord Jesus grieved over the ignorance of the Sadducees and the Pharisees and the way they were misleading the people, the disciples are worried about what they’re going to eat. Seizing this teaching moment, Jesus tells them--verse six--, “Watch and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”

The disciples, whose minds had yet to be fully in tune with the Lord said to themselves, “We brought no bread,” thinking that Jesus was scolding them for not having enough provisions. Now, in addition to mourning over the sad unbelief of the Jewish religious leaders, Jesus mourns over the blindness of His own disciples; and not only blindness to the insight of His words, but also forgetfulness of what had just happened a few days ago. Why should the mere supply of bread be any cause for them to be anxious after what they had already seen?

So, Jesus asks them in verse eight, “O you of little faith, why are you discussing among yourselves the fact that you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive? Do you not remember the five loaves for the five thousand, and how many baskets you gathered? Or the seven loaves for the four thousand, and how many baskets you gathered? How is it that you fail to understand that I did not speak about bread? Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” “Then,”--verse twelve--“they understood that he did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”

They knew how leaven worked. They knew it took only a small amount to secretly and silently work its power to transform flat bread into a puffy loaf. They knew how Moses had explained that, in preparation for the first Passover, everyone was to remove every speck of leaven from their homes, for leaven was the symbol of moral corruption. Unleavened bread represented a new life, cleansed from the leaven of a sinful nature, and, according to Exodus, chapter twelve, verse nineteen, anyone who ate leavened bread during the Passover would be rejecting this new life and was to be “cut off from the congregation of Israel.”

The teachings and practices of both the Pharisees and the Sadducees carried that moral corruption that had silently and insidiously infected the children of Israel--the legalism and secularism of the Pharisees and the skepticism of the Sadducees. The doctrines of the Pharisees were the

commandments and inventions of men that they imagined to be the law of God so that justification was earned through the works of the law. The doctrine of the Sadducees was based on a strict adherence to the Torah--the Law of Moses contained in the first five books of the Old Testament--and denying that the rest of the Old Testament was authoritative. Since the Torah doesn't mention an afterlife or angels, for example, they didn't believe in either, which is why the Sadducees were so sad, you see.

In verse thirteen, we find Jesus below Mount Hermon, near the border with Syria at a place called Caesarea Philippi that [you can find circled in red on this map](#). We pick up the story in verse thirteen: “Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, ‘Who do people say that the Son of Man is?’ And they said, ‘Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.’ He said to them, ‘But who do you say that I am?’ Simon Peter replied, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’ And Jesus answered him, ‘Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.’ Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ.”

Caesarea Philippi lay near the headwaters of the Jordan River at the foot of Mount Hermon, far to the north in Israel. It was enlarged and remodeled by Philip the tetrarch, one of the sons of Herod the Great, and named Caesarea in honor of Caesar Tiberius. The name “Philippi” was added to distinguish it from the Caesarea that lay along the Mediterranean coast between Joppa and Carmel. Some church traditions say that the woman with the issue of blood had come from here.

As word spread about what Jesus and His disciples had done, the people had begun to draw some strong conclusions in their own minds about who He

was, so He posed this question to them, “Who do the people say that the Son of Man is?” He’s referring, of course, to Himself as the Son of Man, just as He already has in several conversations.

It’s not that He wondered what they were saying about Him, for He already knew. It wasn’t that He needed to gather some intel about whether or not He was on track with His mission. He asked the question as a segue to set them up for the follow-on question in order to prepare them for what was to come.

The answers to His question were fairly predictable. Verse 14: “Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” Herod and the members of his court believed Jesus was John the Baptist come back from the dead. Elijah was another good possibility for those who weren’t ready to proclaim Him as the Messiah. After all, Elijah had multiplied the widow of Zarephath’s oil and wheat to last through the drought, a little like Jesus had just fed the five thousand with a couple of fish and a few loaves of bread.

Others who weren’t quite convinced / or who were afraid of what others would say about them chose the safe route of saying that He was a prophet come back from the dead. According to popular tradition, Jeremiah had safely hidden the ark of the covenant and the altar of incense somewhere in the mountain where Moses died. In spite of all these rumors and guesses about Who He was, people knew about Him, and many believed, but most were hesitant or reluctant to claim He was the Messiah.

After everyone’s had the chance to offer his reflections from what others have said about Who He was, perhaps there was a pause before Jesus spoke-- just a moment for His disciples to consider all the inaccurate opinions and misguided feelings about Who He was. It was then that He came to the crisis point of the conversation in verse fifteen: “But who do you say that I am?” It’s a direct, penetrating question that doesn’t come out well in our English

translations because Matthew's words show that Jesus asks, "But you--who do you say that I am?"

I wonder if they saw that one coming. There were times of great wisdom and understanding where the disciples clearly understood, but they were few and far between. There were flashes of insight here and there, but the darkness quickly closed in again. Now, Jesus didn't want to know what others thought, He wanted to know what they thought--an entirely different question altogether.

He was entirely unlike every other rabbi they had known or heard of. He was a Master Teacher who saw more clearly than anyone they had met. His character was transcendently noble and pure. He was humble/ and yet they had seen Him calm the storm-tossed sea, cast out demons, heal people of all sorts of illness and disease--even restore life to the dead, and they saw Him forgive sins. There was truly no one like Him. But was He the Christ, the suffering Messiah that Isaiah wrote about who would give His life as a ransom for many?

Peter thought so, and so he said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." As the spokesman for the disciples, Peter captured the shared belief of them all. Often energetic, outspoken, and emotional rather than intellectual and spiritual, Peter has one of those exceptional flashes of insight and firmly and passionately replies, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

His confession wasn't based on mere human opinion but was grounded on a divinely wrought faith that was displayed in his adoration and worship. It was a confession of Jesus Christ as a true man, as the promised Messiah, and as the eternal Son of God and therefore the God-Man and Savior of the world. It's a confession of the mystery of the Incarnation in the widest sense, the great central mystery of godliness, "God manifest in the flesh."

Peter acknowledges Jesus to be the true Messiah, commissioned and sent by God to reveal His will to man, to accomplish everything that the prophets

had foretold concerning Him. No mere man, not even the most exalted of men--which a lot of people thought the Messiah would be--but the very Son of God, of the substance of the Father, begotten from everlasting, God of God, perfect God and perfect man, Son of God and Son of man. And all this wisdom came from the mouth of Peter!

But Peter didn't come up with the idea on his own. "Jesus answered him"--verse seventeen--: "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven." Jesus addressed him as "Simon Bar-Jonah" where the "Bar" means "son," so Jesus addressed him as the son of Jonah.

Peter's declaration that Jesus is "the Christ, the Son of the living God," didn't come from Peter's piercing intellect or his keen insight into and evaluation of what Jesus has said and done. From what we've seen of Peter, he wasn't really that kind of person. God the Father took all of the things Jesus had said and done and revealed to Peter / that had been hidden from everyone else. This was a fulfillment of what Jesus had said earlier in Matthew, chapter eleven, verse 27: "All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him." Finally, the Father has revealed to Peter Who the Son really is through an inward conviction brought about by the work of the Holy Spirit. Peter now embraces the Father's proclamation at Jesus' baptism: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

But hadn't Peter and the other disciples already made this confession? In the first chapter of John's gospel, Andrew, a disciple of John the Baptist at the time, heard John identify Jesus as the Lamb of God. He immediately went to find Andrew and told him--verse forty--, "We have found the Messiah.

Two verses later, Jesus calls Philip to follow Him, and--verse 45--, "Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him of whom Moses in

the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.’” Verse 47: “Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said of him, ‘Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!’ Nathanael said to him, ‘How do you know me?’ Jesus answered him, ‘Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.’ Nathanael answered him, ‘Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!’ Jesus answered him, ‘Because I said to you, “I saw you under the fig tree,” do you believe? You will see greater things than these.’”

Both of these confessions were “flesh and blood” revelations--they were emotional and/or rational deductions from observations that only led to an intellectual acknowledgment that their observations coincided with their expectations. Peter’s confession here at Casarea Philippi went far beyond that, having been revealed by the Father--far more than that which had been reasoned in their minds. Now, Peter places all his hope for eternity in the hands of Jesus as the Messiah--not as the average Jew of that day expected Him to be, but the very Son of God Who would be the Savior of the world.

Human understanding and reasoning can never produce this revelation. Again, chapter eleven, verse 27: “no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.” Paul puts it this way in First Corinthians, chapter two, verse fourteen: “The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.” The Father had given Peter the spiritual discernment to offer this confession, without which he could never have made it as he did.

Those today who might agree with you that Jesus was a great teacher or a great role model or a great prophet have come to that conclusion because it’s been revealed to them by “flesh and blood”--by the rational, intellectual processes common to us all. But that won’t get you into heaven. It’s only by agreeing with and placing your eternal confidence in the revelation of the Holy Spirit about the truth of Who Christ is and what He has done to pay the eternal

penalty for our sin through His death and resurrection that makes heaven attainable. That doesn't come from a book or a logical conclusion. It only comes from, as Jesus said, "my Father who is in heaven."

What follows next in Jesus' response has been a matter of contention between various branches of Christianity for centuries. The first part of Jesus' declaration is fairly straightforward. In verse eighteen, He says, "And I tell you, you are Peter." Before this moment, Jesus has referred to Peter by the name given to him by his parents: Simon Bar-Jonah, meaning "son of a dove." But now, Jesus changes his name to "Peter"--"petros" in Greek, meaning "rock"--a name that more accurately represents what he would become: firmness, stability, sturdiness, and strength-- although it was still in the process of development. John tells us that Jesus told him his name would be Peter in the first chapter of his gospel, but John writes of him as "Simon Peter" throughout most of the rest of his gospel.

But here's the rest of verse eighteen: "On this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." There are at least three possibilities about what this could mean. First, that this rock on which the Lord would build His church is Peter's confession. Second, the rock is Jesus Himself. Third, the rock is Peter.

The first possibility is that the rock is the confession, first spoken by Peter. In other words, Jesus was essentially saying, "Upon this rock--this truth that you have confessed, that I am the Messiah--I will build my church and it will be made up of others who make confessions like this." Because Peter confessed Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of the living God, Jesus would likewise confess that Peter is now a living stone that, in addition to others, is "being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ," as Peter writes in the second chapter and verse five of his first letter. One of the problems with this / is the fact that the Church isn't built with confessions, but with actual

believers. A confession requires a confessor, so it seems that Jesus had individuals in mind here.

The second possibility is that the rock is Jesus Himself. This is reflected in other New Testament passages, including Ephesians, chapter two, beginning in verse nineteen, where Paul writes, “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, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord;” and First Corinthians, chapter three, verse eleven: “No one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”

The third possibility seems to be the simplest understanding of the passage, as if Jesus were saying, “You are a rock. You have shown yourself to be firm and committed to the work of laying the foundation of the church. Upon you I will build it. You will be the first to make the gospel known to both Jews and Gentiles.” And so he preached the first sermon after the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and took the gospel to the Gentile Cornelius and his family, thus laying the foundation of the church among both Jews and Gentiles.

However, Peter’s not an infallible witness for the gospel. He’s rebuked by Paul--Galatians, chapter two, verse eleven--and he doesn’t hold a place of prominence in Jerusalem after this. It’s James, not Peter, who presides at the Council in Jerusalem in Acts, chapter fifteen. Mark and Luke record Peter’s confession, but only Matthew includes this statement about the rock.

Perhaps this will help clarify what Jesus intended. In verse eighteen, Jesus says, “You are petros,”--meaning “rock”--“and on this petra,”--also meaning “rock”--“I will build my church.” The difference between the two words for rock that Jesus used here are well-known in classical Greek. One commentator describes what he envisioned the background of the conversation to be: “The little group is standing on one of the huge rocky flanks of mighty

[Mount] Hermon, great boulders here and there around them; and in all probability, well in sight, some great stones cut out of the rock and made ready for use in building, like those ... to the north of Hermon; for this region was famous for its great temples. Now,” he says, “when we remember that the two words our Lord uses (*πετρος* and *πετρα*) for “rock” in our version have not precisely the same meaning--the one (*Petros*, Peter) signifying a piece of rock [or] a stone, the other (*Petra*) suggesting rather the great bed-rock out of which these stones are cut and on which they are lying--we can understand that, while the reference is certainly in the first place to Peter himself, the main thing is the great fact just brought out that he is resting, in the strength of faith, on God as revealed in His Son. Thus, while Peter is certainly the piece of rock, the first stone which is laid upon the great underlying foundation on which all the faithful build, and therefore is in a sense ... the [first stone laid on the] foundation stone, yet the foundation of all is the Bed-Rock [--Christ Himself--], on which the first stone and all other stones are laid.” So, perhaps the best solution to the question, “What is the rock that Jesus is talking about here?” may be some combination of the three possibilities.

But we also need to remember that Jesus tells Peter, “I will build **my** church.” It’s not Peter’s church, it’s the Lord’s church. This is the first time we find this word “church” in the New Testament. It comes from a verb that means “to call out” and was used in that day to refer to an assembly of people. It applies to Christians as those who have been “called out” of the world to be, as Peter writes in First Peter, chapter two, verse five, “built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”

Last of all, regarding His church, the Lord says at the end of verse eighteen, “The gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” As ancient cities were surrounded by walls and the gates by which people came into and left the city, these gates were the main places for holding court, transacting business, and

discussing public matters. The word “gates,” therefore, came to refer to counsels, designs, and evil purposes.

Simply put, the organized powers of evil will not prevail against the organized society made up of authentic followers of the Lord Jesus Christ with Him as the Head. All the plots, strategies, and intentions of the enemies of the church will not be able to overcome it. Ever.

Then, just before concluding this conversation by telling His disciples not to tell anyone that He’s the Messiah, the Lord tells them in verse nineteen: “I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”

The Jews often used the phrase “to bind” and “to loose” to mean “to prohibit” and “to permit.” To bind a thing was to forbid it; to loose it was to allow it to be done. So, the disciples used that figurative key to open the door to the kingdom of heaven to those, for example, who responded to Peter’s sermon at Pentecost, and closed it to those like Simon Magus of Acts, chapter eight who offered money to Peter for the ability to lay hands on people to receive the Holy Spirit. And we’ll hear more of what this means in chapter eighteen.

In response to Peter’s stunning and divinely-inspired answer to the question about who they thought He was, Jesus opens their eyes to the consequences of that truthful confession. In verse 21, Matthew writes, “From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.” Surely this was far more information than the disciples had expected or anticipated. They could well have whole-heartedly agreed with Peter about Who Jesus was, but what were they to think about what Jesus was saying now?

Even though they had traveled with Him for more than a year at this point, they weren't familiar enough with the true understanding of the Messiah, especially a suffering Messiah, so, when Peter hears Jesus talk about His coming death and resurrection--verse 22--: "Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, 'Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you.'" Just a few seconds ago, Peter had proclaimed that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God." In spite of this lofty and very correct understanding, there was no place in Peter's mind for Jesus to die. The common translation, "Far be it from you, Lord," is actually more like a desperate plea for God to intervene, for Matthew's original words mean, "God be merciful to You; this shall not happen." Peter's theology could not allow something like this to take place.

But Peter's mistaken conclusion, no matter how sincere, had to be checked, and the Lord Jesus immediately recognized the source of Peter's misplaced zeal--verse 23--: "[Jesus] turned and said to Peter, 'Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.'" Peter had unwittingly allowed his own desire for how the Lord should be revealed to the world as the Christ, the Son of the living God to be used by Satan to tempt Jesus to follow a path other than the cross.

One commentator notes that "none are more formidable instruments of temptation than well-meaning friends who care more for our comfort than for our character." Satan took Peter's sentiments and used his weakness and ignorance to tempt the Lord, so Jesus rebukes Satan for trying to be a stumbling block to divert Him from His destiny to be the Savior of the world.

So that the disciples would not fall victim to this temptation for Jesus to follow a path other than the one most necessary, He reminds them as He had done back in chapter ten, verse 38, this time saying--verse 24--: "Then Jesus told his disciples, 'If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it,

but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life? Or what shall a man give in return for his life? For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done.”

Jesus directly addresses Peter’s misunderstanding of what it means to be an authentic follower of Christ. Everything relating to this world--even life itself--must be renounced and forsaken if we would truly “come after Him.” There’s nothing to be gained by owning the whole world if you lose your life, because you won’t be able to enjoy it. The same law applies to our spiritual life. Nothing you could ever possess in this life is worth missing out on eternal life. Nothing--because the alternative is eternal punishment for holding onto those things that won’t matter in eternity.

But this was the hope of the average Israelite in those days, and Peter voiced that same hope when he rebuked the Lord for saying that He must die. In order to underscore the fact that every life will be evaluated on the basis of whether or not the individual saved his life only to lose it, or lost his life for the Lord’s sake to find it, Jesus told them--verse 27: “The Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done.”

This final judgment, previewed by Daniel in chapter seven, verse thirteen, of the book that bears his name, will reveal the reward of giving up everything to be found in Christ as well as the punishment for choosing instead the things of the world. The Lord’s judgment will be discovered as “he will repay each person according to what he has done” where what he or she has done is not works to try to earn God’s favor, but what that individual has done to demonstrate holding on to the things of this world or giving up everything for the sake of Christ.

Then, by way of driving home the certainty of this judgment and as an encouragement to them to persevere, the Lord says in verse 28, “Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.” This expectation doesn’t refer to the end of the world since all the disciples have died long ago, which leaves us with three possibilities: His transfiguration, the Day of Pentecost and the coming of the Holy Spirit, or the destruction of Jerusalem.

The event that best fits the context of this declaration and one that would happen in the lifetime of some, but not all, of those who were present / was the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. It’s not necessary that Jesus would personally appear, but that His presence would be seen by its effects: the judgment on the Jewish nation for their persistent rejection of their Messiah, the establishment of a spiritual kingdom in place of the physical kingdom, the ever-expanding reach of the gospel, and the fact that John and possibly others lived beyond the end of Israel as they knew it. This was to be their hope as they gave up their lives--both the “stuff” of life as well as their physical lives if necessary--to be found in Christ and be secure with Him throughout eternity.

So, the question for today might well be, “Who do you say Jesus is?” Are you, like the disciples, worried about such trivial things as bread? “Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.” Are you saving your life--holding onto it, trying the best you can to survive, not willing to entrust everything to Christ--only to lose your life in the end, or are you losing your life--surrendering all to Jesus--in order to find your life preserved for eternity in heaven?

Thank you for being a part of our oh-so-brief glimpse into the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus as seen through Matthew’s eyes as he leads us to understand Who Jesus is through His works and His words so that we might be the people of God He’s calling us to be for such a time as this. Next week, following Pastor Trey’s message from chapter seventeen, we’ll turn to chapter eighteen of Matthew’s gospel to hear a question about who’s the greatest in the

kingdom of heaven, a word about the great value of children in His answer, and a question about forgiveness that Jesus answers with a parable.

As always, as it's still a good thing to do, keep calm, trust in the Lord, and wash your hands! God bless you!

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