



The Necessity of Abiding in Jesus in Three Pictures

Matthew 16:13-23

The first picture is the experience of abiding in Jesus.

Verses 13-20:

Text Message:

- o This is the place we want to be! Life works best here!
- o Here Jesus and His disciples are in Caesarea Philippi, which from the 3rd century B.C. became a center of worship of the god Pan, the god of fright (i.e. “panic”).
- o Jesus uses these surroundings for some theological Q & A.
- o Not surprisingly, Peter, as a leader among the

disciples, answers.

o Notice the characteristics of this place of abiding in Jesus:

1) Confession of Christ (Verse 16).

We too can experience the boldness of confessing Christ!

2) Blessedness (Verse 17a).

We too can live with a kingdom heart and mindset!

3) Revelation (Verse 17b).

We too can receive from God what we otherwise wouldn't!

4) Destiny (Verse 18).

We too can know how we are to serve the cause of Christ!

A field trip to Caesarea Philippi has turned into a pretty great experience for Peter. God works in ordinary days!

The second picture is the experience of stepping out of abiding in Jesus.

Verses 21-23:

Text Message:

o What we are looking at here is not the position of

being “in Christ” (Ephesians 2:4-10), but of practical experience.

- o Notice the change in Peter’s experience when he stepped out of the place of abiding in Christ:
 - 1) From confessing Christ to rebuking Christ (Verse 22)!
 - 2) From being blessed to being rebuked (Verse 23)!
 - 3) From being “this rock” to a “hindrance” (Verse 23)!
- o *Can we imagine a more opposite experience?*
- o Jesus refers to Peter as a “hindrance,” which is the Greek word ***skandalon*** (σκανδαλον).
- o We get our English “scandal” from this word and the ESV footnote gives an alternate translation as “stumbling block.”
- o The word was also used to describe a specific part of a trap.
- Some key observations on the experience of stepping out of abiding in Jesus:
 - 1) We are more vulnerable after a spiritual “high.”
 - 2) Stepping out of the abiding place often is disguised as

what is helpful but doesn't reflect the mind of Christ.

3) We may be vulnerable in a specific area or mindset.

* Peter would "fall" again in relationship to Christ's death.

The third picture is the experience of returning to abiding in Jesus.

Text Message:

- o This text shows Peter's abiding in Jesus and stepping out of the place of abiding, but thankfully, this isn't the end of Peter's story (or ours)!
- o We see Peter's return to abiding in Chapter 17, where he experiences the glory of Jesus and a miracle.
- o Jesus wasn't finished with Peter, and He's not finished with us!
- o Peter is often faulted for his failures, but what mattered most was that Peter returned, and so can we!