

Matthew 16:13-28

“The Kingdom is Built Upon the Rock”

Pastor Bruce Zachary

Jesus asks, “But who do you say that I am?” It is the most important question that any human can contemplate, and the most consequential answer of your life and eternal life. Our culture and environment shape our view of Jesus. But who is Jesus really? What’s the benefit of following Him, and what will it really cost you?

Study Guide Qs

- 1. Who do people (i.e. the culture around you) say that Jesus is? Try to ask some of your neighbors where you live, work, study, and play prior to meeting with your Neighborhood Group.**
- 2. Who do you say that Jesus is? How has your understanding of who He is grown in the last year?**
- 3. Generally we seek to avoid suffering. Yet, in the Christian life suffering precedes glory. How has suffering caused you to grow as a disciple?**
- 4. What does taking up your cross look like in your life (i.e. How are you trying to surrender your will to His)?**

Jesus is Our King and the Community Realm: Jesus came, lived among us, and loved us. How do you plan to love your community this season?

Intro

Subject: Who is Jesus?

Object: Follow Jesus

Context: The disciples have been following Jesus for about two years, and are beginning to understand who He is.

I. The profession of our faith [13-20]

A. Who is Jesus [13-15]?

¹³ When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, “Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?” ¹⁴ So they said, “Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”¹⁵ He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Caesarea Philippi [13] is 25 miles north of the Galilee, and is where the Jordan River begins. It was an epicenter for various ancient religions because of a large cave at the site. There the Canaanites worshipped Baal, the Greeks and Romans built temples to their gods, and Jews referred to the cave as a gateway to the

underworld. It was as if Jesus deliberately takes the 12 to this particular site to place Himself on trial among the various religions. Jesus asks His disciples, “Who do people say I am?” In essence, “What’s the word on the street?” There were a variety of opinions, and all were favorable and equate Jesus as a prophet. Some thought Jesus was John returned from the dead (e.g. Herod Mt. 14:2) because of Jesus call to purity and repentance, some Elijah because of the miracles (Mal. 4:5), some Jeremiah the weeping prophet because of Jesus’ compassion [14]. Then Jesus asks His disciples, “But who do you say that I am?” [15]. It is the most important question that any human can contemplate, and the most consequential answer of a life and eternal life.

** Growing up and view that Jesus was a good guy, rabbi, sage, not Messiah

** Our culture and environment shape our view of Jesus

1. Jesus is the Christ: the Messiah who will restore man to God [16-20]

¹⁶ Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”¹⁷ Jesus answered and said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven. ¹⁸ And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. ¹⁹ And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” ²⁰ Then He commanded His disciples that they should tell no one that He was Jesus the Christ. Peter responds as a spokesman for the group, that Jesus is the Christ [16], the Messiah or Anointed One, the Son of the living God. It is not an emotional response but a reasoned response from their experience with Jesus, and the Scriptures, and God’s revelation [17]. Simon is the son of Jonah (Bar-Jonah) [17] as Jesus is the Son of God. Simon is now called Peter (*petros* a small stone), and upon the rock (*petra* big rock) Christ will build His Church. What does “this rock” refer to? Peter’s confession of faith in Jesus as the Christ is the best view based on the language and context. The Roman Catholic view that Peter is “the rock” and first Pope, is not supported by the Scriptures. Peter is not the head of the Church. He is called to give an account to leaders at Jerusalem [Ac. 11:28], James (not Peter) presides over the Jerusalem Council [Ac. 15], and Paul rebukes Peter for hypocrisy [Gal. 2:11-14]. Other views of “the rock” include the teaching of Jesus [Matt. 7:24] and Jesus Himself [Eph. 2:20]

2. Jesus builds His Church and it will prevail against evil opposition [18-20]

The keys to the kingdom [19] represent authority vested in the Church to influence this world for Christ and oppose evil. Why does Jesus instruct them not to tell [20]? Likely not time to declare His identity as Messiah [Cf. Palm Sunday]

a. Expectations: Jews desire for a Messiah to overthrow Roman oppression now, or establish an earthly kingdom immediately. Cf. Our expectations of Jesus as a cosmic genie who grants us wishes.

i. Today billions of people on the planet are professing Christians

II. The prediction of our faith [21-23]

A. Jesus Predicts His Death and Resurrection From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.²² Then Peter took

Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, “Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!” ²³ But He turned and said to Peter, “Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.”

1. Jesus prepares faithful people to continue the work [21]

Once the disciples know that Jesus is the Christ, it is time to reveal the cross, His death and resurrection [21]. He must suffer many things and be killed [Is. 53, Ps. 22].

2. Jesus’ road to glory passes through the suffering of the cross [22-23]

The disciples did not yet appreciate that the road to glory passed through the cross. Peter with apparent good intentions opposes Jesus [22]. Peter doesn’t want Jesus to suffer. Jesus rebukes Peter and remarks that Satan inspired his suggestion [23]. One minute Peter had great spiritual insight and the next he is ignorant of God’s ways.

Phil. 3:10 That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,

III. The price of our faith [24-28]

²⁴ Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. ²⁵ For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. ²⁶ For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? ²⁷ For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works. ²⁸ “Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.”

A broad invitation is made to anyone to follow and be Jesus’ disciple [24]. In that culture rabbis had a limited group of disciples by invitation only.

A. Three requirements to be Jesus’ disciple [24]

1. Deny self: yield your will to God.

2. Take up your cross: lose your life to find life in Christ [25]. **Lu. 9:23** daily

a. The cross is a symbol of death. It is not a reference to a physical infirmity. We are called to die to self.

3. Follow Jesus: we are to follow Jesus not simply a creed or set of principles.

If you focus on your physical life you’ll lose your spiritual life [25]. Any reasonable person, with a simple understanding of eternity would trade all the world’s treasure for salvation and eternity with God [26]. Jesus offers assurance of eternal rewards for believers [27]. The rewards greatly exceed any sacrifice we make for Christ. And assures the disciples that the cross will not be the end, and that they will see His kingdom come [e.g. the transfiguration [Mt 17], the resurrection and ascension, Pentecost - the birth and spread of the church].

B. True commitment is seen in sacrificial devotion and obedience. There is simply no place for half-hearted commitment for Jesus’ disciples.

Conc. Who do you say that He is? Will you follow Him?