

**This Question Changes Everything**  
**July 20<sup>th</sup> 2025**  
**Text: Matthew 16:13-19**

**Video: The Chosen Clip**

We are going to be looking at that passage this morning. So I pray that video clip from The Chosen whets your appetite a bit to open up scripture together. But first, let me welcome you to Coram Deo Bible Church. I'm Grady Adkins and I serve as the Executive Pastor of the church and Superintendent of the school. While Pastor Rob is on a little vacation we are in the middle of our summer series and have had the privilege of hearing from a few of our pastors on staff. Last week we opened scripture with Pastor Garth, before that, Pastor Robbie led us, and the week prior to that, if you can remember that far back, we kicked things off with a recap from High Five.

That's actually where we will pick up today. If you recall from three weeks ago (which I know is very difficult, I mean I can't hardly recall what I ate for lunch yesterday) but if you can – you might remember that we opened our Bibles to Matthew 16 when Jesus asked his disciples, "Who do you say that I am?" ...and then we answered that question by looking at various truths from Scripture that your children learned at High Five. 5 truths. They were:

1. Jesus is Creator
2. Jesus is Messiah.
3. Jesus is Almighty God
4. Jesus is Risen Savior
5. Jesus is King of Kings

This morning, we are going to look at that text again, but rather than answering it with various passages of scripture, we are going to dissect the passage itself – which is called expository preaching. Expository preaching is where the central idea of the sermon is derived from the specific passage of scripture that you are studying. Then you explain it within its own context, and apply it to your life. Expository preaching is what we are all about around here. Basically, we open up scripture, read the passage, soak up the richness of that passage, and let it speak for itself. Because the very pages of the Bible you hold in your hand is God's Word, and it should speak for itself. We start with Scripture as the foundation and let God's living, true word speak to us. So let's do that this morning, as we do every Sunday, and open up to Matthew 16 to soak up verses 13-19.

If you need a copy of God's Word, grab the attention of one of our ushers who are walking by now. While they are passing those out let's review a bit to understand the context of what is leading up to this passage.

Jesus ministry had already started. He already preached the sermon on the mount, and already performed some miracles such as feeding the 5,000. And just before verse 13,

the Pharisees and Sadducees (religious leaders of that time) questioned Jesus - basically testing him trying to determine who he really was. Then Jesus finally found himself away from the religious leaders and present with his disciples and followers.

This is where we'll pick up. Starting in verse 13. We read...

**SLIDE: Mt 16:13-19**

<sup>13</sup> Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" <sup>14</sup> And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." <sup>15</sup> He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" <sup>16</sup> Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." <sup>17</sup> 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. <sup>18</sup> 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. <sup>19</sup> 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."

Often we simply read *the words* of Scripture without allowing the gravity of those words to take hold. I mean, it can be easy to simply read these words like a regular book...as if they are just words on paper. So, let's pause a moment and try to put ourselves in the context of what is going on. Or better yet, try to picture yourself with Jesus hearing this question for the first time. Because This Question Changes Everything!

**Slide: This Question Changes Everything**

The question being the question that Jesus asked his disciples. Who do you say that I am? And it changes everything because if you answer the question just as Peter did – with a personal confession – then it changes you completely.

In verse 13 Jesus starts by asking a general question "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" Just to clarify, Jesus was referring to himself as the Son of Man, which, by the way was his favorite way of referring to himself. In the gospels he does this approximately 80 times. Interestingly, he refers to himself as the Son of Man even more than he refers to himself as the Son of God. The title Son of Man highlights both his humanity and his role as the Messiah.

But back to his question. Jesus asked a general question and he received general responses – that is, responses that weren't personal in nature to the person answering. Their responses, you can see in verse 14 - "John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah, one of the prophets." This question fired up their brain waves so they would be ready for the next question. And in verse 15 we read the very personal question that Jesus asked his followers. "Who do you say that I am?"

What a personal question! "Who do you say that I am?" And that's one of the driving questions that everyone of us must eventually answer. Who is Jesus?

## Video: Who is Jesus

### Slide: This Question Changes Everything

Now I know what you're thinking. "If this question changes everything, what changes for people who answer it like many in the video who don't truly believe in Jesus?" The ones who say things like...

"He was a dude that lived back in the day. Pretty awesome. He had a beard."

"He was a guy with a positive message that gave a lot of people hope."

"He probably existed, but I don't believe he was the Son of God."

For those people what changes? The answer to that is "nothing." Nothing changes for those who do not believe in the Person, Work, and the Word of Christ, nothing changes. Because the truth is we are all born on a trajectory destined to spend eternity apart from God in hell.

Gulp. And we know that's true because we read it in passages like **Psalm 51:5**, "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in my sin did my mother conceive me." Or **Romans 5:12**, "...just as sin came into the world through one man (that's Adam) and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned."

In my sin my mother conceived me. Death spread to all men because all sinned. Honestly, it seems as though we're not born into a very optimistic future because we are on a trajectory destined to spend eternity apart from God in hell. Ouch. More than ouch!

But, **Slide: This Question Changes Everything** and it changes everything if you confess Jesus personally.

### Slide: Confess Jesus personally

That's the first point. Confess Jesus Personally.

Take a look back at verse 15. <sup>15</sup> He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"

[Now stop right there because there's the question. Who do you say that I am?

Personal. Straight forward. It gets to the heart of belief. And Peter stepped forward.

Answering in a way that changed everything. We're talking Life altering! Trajectory

altering! It changed everything!] He said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

This was a significant declaration. And when we look at Peter's personal confession we see two important truths about Jesus.

First, he answers Jesus question by saying "You are the Christ." Interestingly we often interchange the name of Jesus (his birth name) with Christ, just thinking his name is Christ. When, in actuality, Christ is not Jesus name, but His title. And that's just a little nuance, but an important one because Jesus title, Christ, is defined as "messiah, or anointed one." In other words, The title of Christ means savior. And that's exactly what

Peter meant when he said “You are the Christ!” Peter confessed Jesus as savior. But he didn’t stop there. He continued. “**You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.**”

The Son of the living God! And at this point we see the first time Peter confesses Jesus as Lord. The Son of the Living God. Peter, through the power of God (which we will see in just a minute), connected the dots of the Old Testament with what he was witnessing before his very eyes ... and they were opened in a way that he could do nothing else but confess Jesus as Lord. And it changed everything.

Because he was no longer on a trajectory of death, but a trajectory of LIFE. Life everlasting!

And Jesus replied. Check it out. Look in your Bible. Verse 17. Jesus said – “**Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.**”

Now what in the world does this mean? Or maybe even what in heaven does that mean? What was Jesus saying? First of all, let’s look at Simon’s name. Simon Bar-Jonah simply means Simon, Son of Jonah. This is actually Peter, as we will see in the next verse when Jesus calls him Peter. But before we get there, what does Jesus statement mean? **Blessed are you! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.**

This means 2 things. First, “flesh and blood has not revealed this to you” means:

**Slide: True understanding of Christ does not come from human explanation.**

Think about it - If man, such as myself or Pastor Rob, could instill a true understanding of Christ in the lives of people then there wouldn’t be people still getting saved who have been sitting in the church for years. And that happens. Praise the Lord it happens. But this doesn’t negate the importance of telling others about Christ. As we know the Lord uses conversations and observations of others to plant seeds of the gospel truth in the hearts of others. But the true revelation, the true understanding of Christ does not come from human explanation.

Rather, a true understanding of Christ comes from divine revelation.

**Slide: True understanding of Christ comes from divine revelation.**

As Jesus said to Peter in verse 17, **For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.** But my Father who is in heaven.

Only God can do the heart work. The grace of God is the only way that anyone can behold the beauty of Christ. Jesus says in John 6:44, “**No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him.**” In and of ourselves we are blind. But God, in his mercy opens our eyes to see Jesus, to know who He is, to believe in Him, and to confess Him as the Christ, the Son of the Living God. This ultimately is the testimony of every single Christian.

Your great confession follows your great conversion which is a great work of God. Have you experienced that in your life? Or, are you one of the people who sits in this room week after week, feeding your desire for information and in a weird way rationalizes that you are saved because you are doing the work of sitting in a seat each week and know answers to Bible trivia.

If that's you, let me encourage you to open up your heart to the Lord and allow HIM to do the work instead of YOU trying to do the work yourself. Because you can't. I pray that this very moment you grasp the fact that it's not your perfect attendance, impeccable character, bubbly personality, affirming attitude, or your nice niceness that makes the difference. Let go of yourself, embrace the work of Christ, and open your heart to Him. See Jesus as the Christ. The Son of the Living God.

So I ask you, Who do you say that I am?" How you answer that question will determine how you follow him. If you think Jesus was a good teacher, then you will follow him like you would a good teacher. If you think Jesus merely had good ideas, then you will listen to what he says every once and a while. If you think Jesus was a good example, then you might try to follow that example.

However, oh and it's a big however. If you believe Jesus was and is the promised messiah who came to earth to save us from our sins, to conquer sin and death, and to reign and rule over all as Lord, then that changes everything!

**Slide: This Question Changes Everything**

Especially when you confess Jesus Personally.

**Slide: Confess Jesus Personally**

And if you have confessed Jesus personally as your Lord and Savior, then it should change everything about how you live. Because now, with Jesus, you can proclaim Jesus confidently. And that's the next point.

**Slide: Proclaim Jesus Confidently**

Let's look back at our text. Starting in verse 17. We read. <sup>17</sup> 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. (ok, picking up here) <sup>18</sup> 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. <sup>19</sup> 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."

Ok, this is a fiery passage, and it can seem a bit confusing. I mean you're probably sitting there thinking what on earth (or in heaven) do these verses have to do with

proclaiming Jesus confidently. I mean, at first glance I see something about Peter, a rock, the gates of hell, and keys. What is Jesus saying? I think there are three things we find in verses 18 and 19 that help us proclaim Jesus confidently with others. And the first is that God will build his church.

#### Slide: God will build His Church

In verse 18 Jesus says, <sup>18</sup>And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, Ok, stop right there. This is one of the confusing parts. What is the rock that the church is built on? Is it Peter? Is it Jesus? Is it the apostles? Is it the Gospel? Yes. Let's tease this out a bit. The name Peter means "rock," so there's a bit of a play on words going on here. In essence, Jesus is saying, I tell you, you are rock, and on this rock I will build my church. Now remember, by God's grace alone Peter just confessed that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God. And then immediately after Peter confesses, Jesus says that it is the church that He is building upon Peter's confession of faith. Therefore, based on the immediate context of this passage we can understand that the rock of the church is the people of God proclaiming the gospel of Christ. Let me say that again. The rock is the people of God proclaiming the gospel of Christ. And this is not to take away from the uniqueness of Peter being the first to proclaim Jesus confidently as Christ, but it is to remind us that as we proclaim the gospel, we too are building on the foundational confession made by Peter approximately two thousand years ago. How amazing is that? And as we proclaim Jesus confidently, God will build his church.

And be encouraged. Because as we proclaim Jesus confidently, Jesus says, the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. See that? See that? We are still in verse 18. ...the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. The gates of hell is a Jewish idiom for the "powers of death." So be encouraged.  
God will build His church and, secondly:

#### Slide: Death will not Prevail

Death will not prevail. And it will not prevail in two ways. First, death cannot stop the messiah. As we know, the gates of hell and the forces of Hades tried as they put Jesus to death, even death on a cross. But Jesus rose from the dead in victory over the grave. Death cannot and will not stop Jesus, the Christ, the Son of the LIVING God.

And secondly death will not stop us, the church. In his book, *Principles for Churchmen*, J. C. Ryle writes:

#### Slide: JC Ryle quote

Nothing can altogether overthrow and destroy the church. Its members may be persecuted, oppressed, imprisoned, beaten, beheaded, burned. But the true Church is never altogether extinguished: it rises again from its afflictions; it lives on through fire and water. When crushed in one land, it springs up in another. The Pharaohs, the Herods, the Neros ... have laboured in vain to put down this Church. They slay their thousands, and then pass away and go to their own place. The true Church outlives



them all, and sees them buried each in his turn. The Church is an anvil that has broken many a hammer in this world, and will break many a hammer still. The Church is a bush which is often burning, and yet is not consumed.

Be encouraged. You CAN proclaim Jesus confidently because

1. God will build his church.
2. Death will not prevail.
3. We speak with Christ's authority.

#### Slide: We speak with Christ's authority

Let's take a look back at verse 19. Jesus continues. He says, <sup>19</sup> 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."

Ok. What's this bit about keys and binding things? People have used this verse incorrectly and come up with some incorrect ideas and practices, such as people walking around claiming to bind this or that object or demon, while claiming the authority of Jesus. And in doing that they are taking this verse out of context. That's why it is important to consider the context of Jesus instruction because it pertains to the gospel. So here's our understanding.

When Peter, or another apostle, or even any other follower of Christ for that matter, proclaims the gospel of Jesus Christ, it is done so under the authority of Jesus. That's what it means. Under His authority. Which, side note is the meaning of Coram Deo. As a reminder, the name of our church – Coram Deo – is Latin meaning in the presence of God, under the authority of God, for the glory of God. And a side, side note, Coram doesn't stand alone. You need Deo with it! Coram Deo. It's like one word. Meaning Under the authority of God, which brings us back to the passage and out of the side note - we proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ under His authority. And it is His authority to save sinners or judge sinners.

Jesus authority to save means that we can say to any person in the world, "If you do not turn from your sin and trust in Jesus as Savior and Lord, you are bound to your sin and its payment for all eternity in hell." Authority has been entrusted to the church to proclaim this message. And we speak with Christ's authority.

Until Jesus return, he has entrusted the keys of the kingdom to the apostles and then on to successive generations of church leaders. As we preach the gospel and make disciples, we open the door to believers and that door is closed when unbelievers fail to properly answer the question, "Who do you say that I am?".

In this passage Jesus entrusted the church with the responsibility to proclaim the gospel. How are you doing with that? Sharing the gospel, proclaiming the gospel with others. Before we close let me encourage you to make a commitment to boldly share the truth of the gospel with others. That concept might be new for some of you. Or the

concept of sharing your faith might not be new, but actually doing it might be new. If that's you and you don't know where to start, let me encourage you to simply follow the model that Jesus laid out for us in this very passage.

Check it out. Jesus was with people who knew him. He wasn't with strangers, he wasn't standing on a street corner proclaiming he is the messiah for everyone to hear. He was with his friends and having a conversation.

And he started by asking a general question that wasn't invasive. "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" It was an easy question that anyone could answer. But it got them thinking about Jesus.

And then, after listening to their answers he made it personal. He created an opportunity for someone to proclaim Jesus as Lord and Savior. And he finished by encouraging them.

We can follow that same model and it doesn't have to be weird. With a friend, or a close group of friends who you know not to be saved, simply ask them a starter question. Make it general. Maybe it's something like What do people at your work think about Jesus...or church...or Christians...or whatever else you want to talk about as it relates to Christ. Then follow it up with another question. What do you think about it? And at that point you have opened the door for a conversation. And then finish by encouraging them. Maybe it's an encouragement to come to church. Maybe its an encouragement to get coffee sometime and continue the conversation. Or it's any other encouragement that you feel the Lord prompting you in the moment.

If you aren't having those conversations let me encourage you to start because as Scripture says, until Jesus returns, he has entrusted the keys of the kingdom to the church. As we preach the gospel and make disciples, we open the door to believers and that door is closed when unbelievers fail to properly answer the question, "Who do you say that I am?".

That is the question that changes everything. Who do you say that I am? He is Messiah, the appointed one, savior, Lord. He is the Son of Man, the Son of God, the Son of the Living God. He is the Christ. He is the earthly Christ, the expected anointed king of the House of David who would rule over God's people. He is the heavenly Son of Man, whose universal rule – over all peoples, all nations – will be without end, an everlasting dominion, an indestructible kingdom. And he is the Son of God in whom we must take refuge through faith. He is King of Kings, Lord of Lords, and He shall reign forever and ever!

So, who is Jesus? Who do you say that I am? Jesus still asks his church that question today. And how we answer it turns our lives, our ministries, and trajectory in one direction or another. This question changes everything! And it's my prayer that you have answered that question just as Peter did! You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.



Let's stand together and worship the Lord for who He is and what He has done.

Worship

1,000 Names

I Believe

Benediction

By way of benediction, let me read to you from Daniel 7:13-14. <sup>13</sup> "I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. <sup>14</sup> And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

Announcements:

1. Talk or Pray (Chad & Sarah Kraklio)
2. Guest Central
3. HS Camp
4. CDA Update

YOU ARE LOVED