

NEW IDENTITY

RECEIVING MY GOD NAME

WEEK THREE: MARCH 15, 2020

MATTHEW 16

1 The Pharisees and Sadducees came to Jesus and tested him by asking him to show them a sign from heaven.

2 He replied, "When evening comes, you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red,' 3 and in the morning, 'Today it will be stormy, for the sky is red and overcast.' You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times. 4 A wicked and adulterous generation looks for a sign, but none will be given it except the sign of Jonah." Jesus then left them and went away.

5 When they went across the lake, the disciples forgot to take bread. 6 "Be careful," Jesus said to them. "Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees."

7 They discussed this among themselves and said, "It is because we didn't bring any bread."

8 Aware of their discussion, Jesus asked, "You of little faith, why are you talking among yourselves about having no bread? 9 Do you still not understand? Don't you remember the five loaves for the five thousand, and how many basketfuls you gathered? 10 Or the seven loaves for the four thousand, and how many basketfuls you gathered? 11 How is it you don't understand that I was not talking to you about bread? But be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees." 12 Then they understood that he was not telling them to guard against the yeast used in bread, but against the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

13 When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?"

14 They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

15 "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"

16 Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

17 Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. 18 And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. 19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on

earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” 20 Then he ordered his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

21 From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

22 Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. “Never, Lord!” he said. “This shall never happen to you!”

23 Jesus turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.”

24 Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. 25 For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. 26 What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? 27 For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father’s glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done.

28 “Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.”

LEARN

Read Matthew 16:1-12. How do the Pharisees and Sadducees misunderstand Jesus? How do the disciples misunderstand Jesus in a similar way?

The Pharisees asked Jesus to prove his divinity by calling down a sign from heaven. They were looking for tangible, objective proof that Jesus had God’s power. Jesus, however, refused, and told them that the only sign that they would receive from heaven would be the resurrection. The disciples also made the mistake of associating Jesus’ words with physical objects rather than spiritual well-being. When Jesus warned the disciples about the Pharisees’ influence, the disciples applied their own expectations to his teaching and assumed that he was talking about bread.

Read Matthew 16:13-20. Why does Jesus change Simon’s name to Peter?

Jesus gives Simon the name Peter (which means “rock”) because the confession he gives, the statement that Jesus is the Messiah, is the foundation of the church. Peter was not wise enough on his own to realize that Jesus was the Messiah, but through God’s influence he came to understanding Jesus’ role as God’s son. With a new name, Peter becomes responsible for helping people to enter the kingdom of heaven.

Read Matthew 16:21-28. How does Simon Peter misunderstand Jesus' role as Messiah? How does Jesus connect following him with his own difficult mission (as explained in verse 21)?

Peter believes that Jesus should not suffer crucifixion and does his best to convince Jesus that these things will not happen. The Messiah was supposed to be a powerful king and warrior—how could that person's life end with torture and cruelty? However, Jesus had a very different plan in mind to confirm his place as the savior of God's people. Jesus tells his disciples that they too will suffer, and that if they wish to enter the kingdom of heaven they must pursue this suffering in place of earthly glory.

LIVE

In this week's LIVE section, we encourage group members to consider how both their strengths and weaknesses can be used to encourage others and build up the church. We also hope that members will consider how their understanding of Jesus in scripture influences their choices.

How can a lack of familiarity with Jesus as portrayed in the Gospels cause you to miss out on opportunities to be used by God? Have you ever missed such an opportunity?

As we find out in Acts (such as Acts 3, 4, and 10), God was able to use Peter to build up his church despite his imperfections. How can God use you despite your shortcomings?

WHAT'S NEXT?

This week, pray that God will encourage you toward a deeper understanding of him through daily reading of Scripture. Read Acts 3, 4, and 10 to see how God used Peter for his mission and consider how God can use us for his mission as well.