



MATTHEW

The Savior-King and His Kingdom

The King's Identity!

Matthew 16:13-20

Message #45 of 80 – S1076

Sermon given on December 17, 2023



Sunday Morning Service

Pastor Rick Lancaster

The King's Identity!

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Opening Comments

- Open your Bibles to **Matthew 16**
- Today, we continue a series through the gospel of Matthew – **The Savior-King and His Kingdom**
- Let's open this time in our service with a word of prayer. - **Pray**

Teaching

- **The King's Identity!**
- In 2005 I had the great blessing of visiting Israel.
- That trip had a tremendous impact on my faith.
- The places and accounts of the Bible suddenly became more vivid.
- I walked the same paths and visited the same places we read about in Scripture.
- I stood on the seashore on the sea of Galilee and could imagine Jesus teaching.
- I sailed in a boat on the lake. Thankfully there was no storm.
- I visited what is believed to be the Garden of Gethsemane where there are olive trees that may have stood there when Christ was there.
- I walked some of the streets of Jerusalem.
- I walked into a tomb that might have been where Jesus lay. He wasn't there.
- Before that trip I had to imagine many of the things I was reading and studying in the Bible.
- I no longer had to imagine many of them, I saw them myself.
- Everyday was filled with one spiritual moment after another.
- One such powerful moment was where today's text takes place.
- **Matthew 16:13a**
- Caesarea Philippi was about 25 miles north of Galilee.
- It was on the northern border of Israel and there was a strong Gentile influence including pagan worship practices.
- It was the site of the worship of the god Pan.

- Show picture **‘Caesarea Philippi’**.
- The cave on the left was where one of the tributaries that feeds the sea of Galilee started.
- In the mouth of the cave was a large statue of Pan and it was believed that the cave was the entrance to the underworld.
- Show picture **‘Caesarea Philippi Alcoves’**.
- To the right of the cave was large flat stone area where pagan rituals were practiced.
- In the rock face of the cliff alcoves were carved out where idols of a variety of gods were kept for worship.
- This is the context for what comes next.
- **Matthew 16:13b-14**
- The world has long had many different ideas about who Jesus is.
- In the end, it doesn’t matter who the world thinks Jesus is.
- **Matthew 16:15-16**
- The most important question that every human must answer in this life is, ‘Who is Jesus?’
- Our eternity hangs on having the right answer to that question.
- Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. That is a fact.
- But confessing that fact will not save anyone.
- Only a confession of faith will save someone.
- We must believe what we say.
- Peter answers for all the disciples.
- Peter’s response is not the result of some radical miracle like Jesus’ walking on the water.
- This is not an emotional response brought on by fantastic things Jesus was doing.
- This is coming from Peter’s heart and mind.
- God doesn’t get emotional about our emotional responses, but He does get emotional about the responses of our faith.
- They are walking along with nature and the backdrop of pagan idol worship all around them.
- When Jesus calmed the storm, they asked the question, ‘Who can this be...?’ They don’t have that question any more.

- Jesus responds to Peter's faith.
 - **Matthew 16:17**
 - Jesus tells Peter – you didn't figure this out by walking with Me, listening to My teaching, seeing My miracles – God revealed it to you.
 - No one figures out who Jesus is on their own (**John 6:44**).
- No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.**
- Peter is blessed because the Father revealed it and Peter believed it.
 - That same blessing is available to anyone who is willing to trust God and believe.
 - This marks a turning point in the gospel.
 - From this point Jesus makes it clear what is coming, talking plainly about His upcoming passion week.
 - Next come a couple of verses which have been misinterpreted for hundreds of years by some religious groups.
 - **Matthew 16:18**
 - 'church' – First occurrence in the New Testament.
 - The church is the visible expression of Christ as king.
 - There is only one church, and it is not Calvary Chapel French Valley or any other group or denomination.
 - The church is comprised of every person who has put their faith in Christ Jesus and been baptized by His Holy Spirit.
 - The true church has one Head, Christ Jesus.
 - The rock that Jesus will build His church on is the confession of Peter.
 - The church is a confessing church.
 - 'the gates of Hades shall not prevail' – Nothing in this universe, not even the immense power of Satan can destroy Christ's church.
 - Though Satan might throw all his evil forces at the church and bring persecution, affliction, or distress, he will never prevail over it.
 - The same truth applies to individual believers.
 - No matter what Satan brings against a true believer, he cannot destroy us (**John 10:27-29**).

My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. ²⁸ And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. ²⁹ My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of My Father's hand.

- Let that encourage every Christ-follower – Satan can't destroy you. God won't let Him.
- Another verse people disagree about its interpretation.
- **Matthew 16:19**
- 'the keys of the kingdom of heaven' – Some suggest that Peter was made responsible for allowing people into heaven.
- This is where the idea of Saint Peter standing at the Pearly Gates comes from.
- It might make for good memes and jokes, but not for good theology.
- Only Jesus is responsible for letting people into heaven (**John 14:6**). Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."
- 'the keys of the kingdom' – It was commonly held that the teachers of the Law held the keys of heaven as they interpreted and unlocked the Scriptures through their teaching.
- Jesus is now handing that role down to Peter and the disciples and all others who would follow.
- Peter did have a unique place in that role.
- He was the first to unlock the gospel to the Jews in Acts 2 and then He unlocked the gospel for the Gentiles in Acts 10.
- Peter was the first, but he was not the only one.
- All believers have experienced a time when a teacher of the Word unlocked something about the kingdom of heaven that had been previously hidden from them.
- 'bind...loose' – this is a call to accountability to be faithful the Head of the church – Jesus.
- Those called to the work of unlocking the kingdom, must be faithful the truth.
- Peter and the other apostles were given special dispensation for the early days of the church.
- We see them exercising the binding and loosing at such times as the council at Jerusalem where they determined that Gentiles did not need to be circumcised.
- The text ends with Jesus telling them not to tell anyone.
- **Matthew 16:20**

- Most were not ready to receive the truth that Jesus was the Christ – the Messiah – the Savior of the world.
- Jesus had one more big thing He was going to do before the time was right for the disciples to begin proclaiming the truth about who Jesus was – He needed to go to the cross.
- He will start talking about that starting in the next text we look at in a couple of weeks.
- Next week will be a special Christmas message and the week after that Pastor Brandon, our missionary pastor in Indonesia will be here and will be sharing with us.
- Jesus asks one question that stands out in the text, “Who do you say that I am?”
- There is no more important question in the universe than that one.
- The world will always have weird ideas about who Jesus is.
- Who do you say that He is?
- **Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God!**
- Say it with me – it is up on the monitors. One more time.
- We make it real in our heart by believing it is true.
- We make it real in our life by being willing to let the Holy Spirit teach us everything that it entails.
- One last time, say it with me – Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God.
- Let’s pray and ask the Holy Spirit to help us make it more real in our hearts. **Pray**
- Have a radical week!
- Worship Team comes up to play the last song!