



Kingdom Value

The Preeminent Confession

Matthew 16:13-20

How to Prepare

Begin preparing by reading the full passage a few times. Then answer the questions for yourself. Then think about how your Small Group might answer them. Try re-wording the questions to fit you and your Small Group. Don't feel tied down to the discussion guide, just be sure to discuss the main point of the text in your conversations.

Resources-

<https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/what-are-the-keys-of-the-kingdom-of-heaven>

<https://www.gotquestions.org/upon-this-rock.html>

<https://www.gotquestions.org/keys-of-the-kingdom.html>

Sermon Outline:

Matthew 16:13-20

1. The Confession that Jesus is the Christ. Vv. 13-17
2. The Construction of the Church. V. 18
3. The Conferment of the Keys. Vv. 19-20

Matthew 16:13-20

loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven."

Peter's Confession of Christ

20 Then He warned the disciples that they should tell no one that He was the Christ.

13 Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?"

14 And they said, "Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets."

15 He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"

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

17 And Jesus said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.

18 I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.

19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you

Discussion Questions

Ask a volunteer to read Matthew 16:13-20.

INTRODUCTION

Here is a question or two to help introduce the topic and jump-start discussion.

1. Why is it important to know what you truly believe about Jesus? What is there to lose by failing to grasp His identity?

UNDERSTANDING AND APPLICATION

These questions should help your Small Group dig deeper into the text and then apply it to your lives today.

I. The Confession that Jesus is the Christ. Vv. 13-17

2. What were the popular opinions about Jesus at the time, and what does that suggest about how people viewed Him and His ministry? How does that compare to popular opinions about Jesus and Christianity today?

3. Why did Jesus ask His disciples the specific question, "who do you say that I am?" Why was it important for disciples to not only know His identity but also confess His identity?

4. When you consider the popular opinions about Jesus as well as their physical location at Caesarea Philippi, what is so significant about Peter's confession that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God? What does Jesus' response in verse 17 tell us about the nature of true faith?

II. The Construction of the Church. V. 18

5. What is the primary point of verse 18? What does the word church (ekklesia) mean, and why is it significant that Jesus says that He will build His church? In what way is this encouraging to the church?

6. Have someone read 1 Corinthians 3:11, Ephesians 2:19-21, and 1 Peter 2:4-6. With these scripture helping us properly interpret what Jesus is saying, what do you think Jesus means when He says, "on this rock I will build my church"?

7. What would the phrase "gates of Hades" actually refer to in the minds of the original readers? What does Jesus' statement that "the gates of Hades will not overpower" His church mean, and how should this encourage and embolden us?

III. The Conferment of the Keys. Vv. 19-20

8. Jesus is speaking directly to Peter (who is representing the Apostles and, by extension, the church) in verse 19. How do texts like Matthew 18:15-18 and John 20:22-23 show us that Jesus is not talking exclusively about Peter but also about all who would be a part of Christ's church?

9. What are the keys that Jesus was going to give (and now has given) to the church? (Hint, what was Jesus about to do, and what is the only way to have eternal life, and what does Peter preach in the first Christian sermon in Acts 2 after Christ's ascension, and what do all of the Apostles preach everywhere they go?)

10. What is the church's responsibility regarding gospel ministry, and what role does church discipline (Matt. 18:15-18) play in gospel ministry? How can we personally take on the responsibility to proclaim the gospel and call brothers and sisters in Christ to walk faithfully in the gospel?

Commentary (from ESV Study Bible)

Matt. 16:13 Caesarea Philippi, some 25 miles (40 km) north of the Sea of Galilee, had been a center of the worship of (1) Baal, then of (2) the Greek god Pan, and then of (3) Caesar. At this time it was an important Greco-Roman city, with a primarily pagan Syrian and Greek population. In fact, its name had recently been changed from Paneas to Caesarea Philippi by Philip the Tetrarch (one of Herod the Great's sons), in honor of himself and Augustus Caesar. Excavations at the site have revealed coins minted to depict the temple built to honor Augustus Caesar, and a pagan cave dedicated to Pan, with shrines and cult niches that are still visible today. Regarding the title Son of Man, see note on 8:20.

Matt. 16:14 John the Baptist . . . Elijah . . . Jeremiah . . . one of the prophets. The responses are in line with the popular messianic expectations held in Israel, arising from a strand of OT predictions about a great prophet who was to come (cf. Deut. 18:15–18; Mal. 4:5).

Matt. 16:16 Simon Peter replied. Peter acts once again as spokesman for the Twelve (cf. 15:15). Christ means "Messiah" or "Anointed One" (see note on 1:1). Son of the living God. Jesus is the Son of the God who is alive, unlike the pagan gods of Caesarea Philippi (see note on 16:13). Jesus is God's unique Son (cf. 1:21–23; 2:15; 3:17; 4:4, 5; 7:21; 8:29; 10:32–33; 11:25–27; 12:50; 15:13; 18:35; 20:23; 24:36; 25:34; 26:39, 42, 53; 28:19), the fulfillment of the OT promise of a divine son as anointed king (2 Sam. 7:14; Ps. 2:7).

Matt. 16:17 Jesus answered him. Although Peter spoke for the group, Jesus' reply is directed at Peter himself. Blessed (Gk. makarios; see note on 5:3). Jesus is not conferring blessing so much as acknowledging Peter's condition of being privileged to benefit from God's personal revelation. Simon Bar-Jonah (Aramaic for "Simon son of Jonah"). Simon has a natural father, Jonah, but his ability to confess Jesus (16:16) came not from any flesh and blood source but from my Father who is in heaven.

Matt. 16:18 you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church. This is one of the most controversial and debated passages in all of Scripture. Roman Catholics have appealed to this passage to defend the idea that Peter was the first pope. The key question concerns Peter's relationship to "this rock." In Greek, "Peter" is Petros ("stone"), which is related to petra ("rock"). The other NT name of Peter, Cephas (cf. John 1:42; 1 Cor. 1:12), is the Aramaic equivalent: 'kepha' means "rock," and translates in Greek as Kēphas. "This rock" has been variously interpreted as referring to (1) Peter himself; (2) Peter's confession; or (3) Christ and his teachings. For several reasons, the first option is the strongest. Jesus' entire pronouncement is directed toward Peter, and the connecting word "and" (Gk. kai) most naturally identifies the rock with Peter himself. But even if "this rock" refers to Peter, the question remains as to what that means. Protestants generally have thought that it refers to Peter in his role of confessing Jesus as the Messiah, and that the other disciples would share in that role as they made a similar confession



Commentary (from ESV Study Bible)

(see Eph. 2:20, where the church is built on all the apostles; cf. Rev. 21:14). Jesus' statement did not mean that Peter would have greater authority than the other apostles (indeed, Paul corrects him publicly in Gal. 2:11–14), nor did it mean that he would be infallible in his teaching (Jesus rebukes him in Matt. 16:23), nor did it imply anything about a special office for Peter or successors to such an office. Certainly in the first half of Acts Peter appears as the spokesman and leader of the Jerusalem church, but he is still "sent" by other apostles to Samaria (Acts 8:14), and he has to give an account of his actions to the Jerusalem church (Acts 11:1–18). Peter is presented as having only one voice at the Jerusalem council, and James has the decisive final word (Acts 15:7–21). And, though Peter certainly has a central role in the establishment of the church, he disappears from the Acts narrative after Acts 15.

"Church" (Gk. *ekklēsia*) is used only here and in Matt. 18:17 in the Gospels. Jesus points ahead to the time when his disciples, his family of faith (12:48–50), will be called "my church." Jesus will build his church, and though it is founded on the apostles and the prophets, "Christ Jesus himself [is] the cornerstone" (Eph. 2:20). Some scholars object that Jesus could not have foreseen the later emergence of the "church" at this time, but the use of Greek *ekklēsia* to refer to God's "called out" people has substantial background in the Septuagint (e.g., Deut. 9:10; 31:30; 1 Sam. 17:47; 1 Kings 8:14). Jesus is predicting that he will build a community of believers who follow him. This "called out" community would soon become known as "the church," a separate community of believers, as described in the book of Acts. gates of hell (Gk. *hadēs*, "Hades"; cf. "gates of Sheol" [Isa. 38:10]; "gates of death" [Job 38:17; Ps. 9:13; 107:18]). "Gates" were essential for a city's security and power. Hades, or Sheol, is the realm of the dead. Death will not overpower the church.

Matt. 16:19 keys of the kingdom of heaven. Peter is given the authority to admit entrance into the kingdom through preaching the gospel, an authority that is subsequently granted to all who are called to proclaim the gospel. (Note the contrast with the scribes and Pharisees, who shut the kingdom in people's faces, neither entering themselves nor allowing others to enter; see 23:13.) In Acts, Peter is the first apostle to preach the message of the kingdom to the Jews at Pentecost (Acts 2), to the Samaritans (Acts 8), and to the Gentiles (Acts 10). whatever you bind . . . whatever you loose. Peter also has authority to exercise discipline concerning right and wrong conduct for those in the kingdom, an authority that is not exclusive to Peter but is extended to the church as a whole in Matt. 18:18; cf. John 20:23. Jesus delegates authority to human leaders in the church who are called to govern his church on earth, under his ultimate authority, through the application of his Word.

Matt. 16:20 Jesus warned his disciples against telling anyone that he was the Christ, since the concept of Christ/Messiah was widely misunderstood by the crowds—and often by the disciples themselves. See note on 8:4; cf. 9:30; 12:16; 17:9.