

Week of April 29, 2012
Jesus Works Through His Church

Passage Outline:

1. Jesus' Work Misunderstood (Matt. 16:13-14)
2. Jesus' Work Manifested (Matt. 16:15-19)
3. Jesus' Work Mandated (Matt. 28:18-20)

What's This Is About?

Peter makes a confession, on behalf of the disciples, that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the living God, and Jesus' promise to be with His followers always.

How This Impact Your Life?

This will challenge you to allow Jesus to work through you in the face of "the forces of Hell" and to reach "all nations" for Jesus.

1. Jesus' Work Misunderstood - Matthew 16:13-14

Matthew 16:13-14

¹³When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" ¹⁴They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

- A. Not everyone who knows of Jesus understands His work. Do you find that surprising? Don't be! People didn't understand Jesus when He was right in their midst.
- B. It really should not surprise us because Jesus' own disciples misunderstood His work even as He approached the end of His ministry.
- C. Before Jesus headed to Jerusalem for the final time, He gathered His disciples in Caesarea Philippi. The city, 25 miles north of the Sea of Galilee, had served as a worship center for the Greek god Pan. The city had recently been renamed in honor of Augustus Caesar and Philip the tetrarch.

If you have not already done so, please read the article "*Why at Caesarea Philippi?*" contained in the preparation packet you picked up last Sunday. If you missed the packet, it is available on the back table.

- D. Jesus began teaching as He often did, with a question. He asked His disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?"
- E. The term *Son of Man* was Jesus' favorite self-reference. It had originated from two Old Testament prophets, Ezekiel (Ezek. 2:1) and Daniel (Dan. 7:13).
- F. Jesus' self-designation as the Son of Man left room for His disciples to interpret His ministry.
 - i. Was He a prophet like Ezekiel?
 - ii. Or was He the divine Messiah predicted by Daniel?
- G. The disciples quickly answer: His question:
 - i. Some people believed Jesus was John the Baptist. King Herod clearly believed this about Jesus (Matt. 14:1-2).

- ii. Other people identified Jesus with Elijah, one of the most recognizable miracle-working prophets of the Old Testament. Some of Jesus' miracles resembled those of Elijah.
 - Elijah fed a widow and her son from one flour jar and an oil jug (1 Kings 17:9-16) as Jesus had fed "5,000 men" with a few loaves and fish (Matt. 14:13-21).
 - Elijah raised a widow's child from the dead (1 Kings 17:17-24) as Jesus raised a leader's child from the dead (Matt. 9:18-19, 23-26).
- i. Still others misidentified Jesus with Jeremiah. Though this one was less obvious, the similarities between Jesus and Jeremiah were striking. Like Jeremiah, Jesus proclaimed a message of repentance and experienced rejection among the religious leaders of His day.

H. People still misunderstand Jesus' work today, and they misunderstand the work of the church.

What is the Role of the Church?

Look up the following Biblical pictures of the Church and write out what each signifies in terms of the Church's role in today's world. Use a good Biblical Concordance for assistance.

"The Bride of Christ" _____

"The Family of God" _____

"a Royal Priesthood" _____

"Ambassadors for Christ" _____

2. Jesus' Work Manifested - Matthew 16:15-18

Matthew 16:15-20

¹⁵ "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" ¹⁶ Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." ¹⁷ Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, 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.

- A. Jesus questioned more specifically, "Who do you say that I am?" The time comes when we must answer for ourselves who Jesus is and what He came to do, and see if our actions line up with our beliefs.
- B. Simon Peter, serving as spokesperson for the disciples, answered the question.
- C. Jesus didn't ask whom the disciples thought or believed He was. Rather, He asked who they were prepared to say or to confess Him publicly to be.

If you have not already done so, please read the article "*The Disciples' Expectations of Jesus*" contained in the preparation packet you picked up last Sunday. If you missed it, additional copies are on the back table.

- D. Peter announces that Jesus was "the Messiah." The Greek word for *Christ* was the equivalent to the Hebrew word *Messiah*.

- E. Peter is announcing that he was ready to declare publicly that Jesus was the promised One from the Old Testament who fulfilled all the prophecies of God’s anointed messenger.
- F. This marked the first time in Matthew’s Gospel that a person in Jesus’ audience clearly had acknowledged Him as the Messiah.
- G. As if that assessment was not bold enough, Peter added that Jesus was “the Son of the living God.” While he did not fully understand the Trinity, he did understand that Jesus had a unique Son-ship relationship to God.
- H. Jesus declared that Simon did not arrive at that conclusion by his own *flesh and blood*. He had received divine understand from the Father as to who Jesus was
- I. Divine revelation, not human reasoning, led to the declaration that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of the living God.
- J. Jesus made a startling statement next. Jesus said He would build His church on this rock. This marks the first time in the Gospels the word *church* occurs. The Greek word (*ekklesia*) literally means “the called-out ones.” The *church* Jesus built would be the new community of people who followed the rule and reign of Christ in the world.
- K. What was this rock on which Jesus would build His church?
 - i. Some think it was Peter. The word *Peter* is masculine and singular, and means a little rock. Peter had indeed made a great confession of who Jesus is.
 - ii. But the word Jesus used is feminine and, indicates a much larger quarry stone or even a mountain. The confession “Jesus is the Christ” is that larger rock on which Jesus will build His church.
- L. This is further indicated as Jesus declared that “the gates of Hades will not overcome” the church.
 - i. The concept of the gates of Hades occurs in Isaiah 38:10 as a reference to death.
 - ii. Jesus is saying that not even the power of death itself, one of the most formidable enemies to humanity, could overpower the church.
- M. The church is unstoppable because it is Jesus’ church and because He is its builder. Since the time of Jesus, many things have threatened to destroy the church, from both from within and from without, but the church still exists.

What is the Role of the Church?

Look back over what you wrote concerning these Biblical pictures of the Church. Add what you need based on what you learned from this section of study.

“The Bride of Christ” _____

“The Family of God” _____

“a Royal Priesthood” _____

“Ambassadors for Christ” _____

3. Jesus' Work Mandated - Matthew 28:18-20

Matthew 28:18-20

¹⁸Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

- A. Before Jesus returned to Heaven, He left the church some final instructions in a passage known as the *Great Commission*.
- B. In English, this verse contains two commands—go and make disciples. In the original language only one of these is a command. *Make disciples* is the central focus of the passage.
- C. The other three verbs (going, baptizing and teaching) are participles, meaning they modify the main thrust of the passage, to make disciples?

If you have not already done so, please read the articles “*All Authority: A Word Study*” and “*To Make Disciples*” contained in the preparation packet you picked up last Sunday. If you missed it, additional copies are on the back table.

- D. Believers remain on earth to make disciples. Notice that Jesus did not call His disciples to make converts but to make disciples. This is leading people to faith, but it is also training them to follow Jesus throughout their lives.
- E. Jesus' challenge was not limited in geography. He said to make disciples of all nations. The word *nations* is the plural of *ethnos*, from which we get our English *ethnic*, thus ALL ethnic groups or peoples.
- F. But how do we reach these groups? The three participles help us understand how.
 - i. First by going: This does not mean some go and tell while others stay at home. The emphasis here is that everyone spread the message wherever they may be, crossing the world, or crossing the street.
 - ii. Next by baptizing: We are not “finished” evangelizing when people receive Jesus as Savior, but we have a responsibility to see them make public declarations of faith in baptism.
 - iii. Finally by teaching: New and old Christians need to be nurtured, developed and mature in their faith. To stop short of this is to stop short of making disciples.
- G. The command comes with a promise: Jesus promised He would be with us always. Jesus is not merely with us, but He is with us as we make disciples. I am not sure we fully understand that, because I hear people say:
 - i. *I'm too nervous to talk in public. I'm afraid that I'll make it worse if I go to visit this lost person.* What can be worse than not knowing the Lord and being separated from Him?
 - ii. *I don't know enough to witness yet.* This may be a true statement. That's why we are hosting the next Mission U seminar on May 12th to help you find the best way you can witness to Jesus. If you have not already signed up for that training – **DO IT TODAY!**