

## Victory Over Dark Places : Lesson 8 Homework

### Day 1 : Scripture Reading

Jesus came to be our Lord and Savior but also to be our rabbi. He came to show us how to walk. As Jesus literally walked with His disciples, perhaps the greatest gift He gave them was to shepherd them into dark places while He was still physically present. Today, He is still discipling people with great intentionality. He is still wanting His followers to partner with Him to bring His kingdom. The very fact that you are a part of this study, in this particular time and place, is His invitation for you to learn from Him to walk like Him. Before reading today, ask Him to teach you and show you all that He has for you in this text.

Using our color coding system, read Matthew 16:13-28.

**Blue:** What is Jesus like? How does He work? What is His character?

**Green:** What does Jesus promise?

**Orange:** What does Jesus ask of us?

**Pink:** What is worthy of prayer and pursuit in your own life?

### Day 2 : Scripture Meditation + Prayer

Read Matthew 16:13-16.

What is the question that Jesus asks in Matthew 16:13?

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What is different about the question that Jesus asks in Matthew 16:15?

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Who do you say that I am? This is potentially one of the most important questions that Jesus can ask. It is at this point, after walking after Jesus for years, that the disciples first verbalize that they believe that He is the Son of God. Although He has performed many miracles and given many sermons, it is in this place that He asks this pivotal question. In this place, in a place like Caesarea Philippi, who do you say that I am *here*? We live in a culture with many opinions about who Jesus is and who He isn't. We live in a culture that is not far from what the disciples encountered that day at the worship center to Pan. It is easy to declare who God is on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee. It is easy to declare who God is in church on Sunday mornings. It is

easy to declare who God is in a synagogue surrounded by like-minded Torah believers. It is easy to declare who God is when life is happy, smooth and peaceful. But Jesus is asking this question in a particular place. Who will you say that I am when you are in the minority? Who will you say that I am when your answer is unpopular? Who will you say that I am in the face of persecution? It is in these types of situations that the rubber meets the road and we will need the steel of truth and conviction in our spine to stand in the face of opposition.

What does Jesus say back to Peter in vs. 17?

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Jesus seems to indicate that this is not something that Peter was convinced of by human effort but it is something that was revealed to Him supernaturally, by God the Father. Spending time with Jesus brought about a supernatural awareness of truth. Conclude today by asking God to impress upon your heart a desire to spend time with Him, to get to know His path and to walk after Him. Ask God to reveal to you who He is in a way that only He can.

### **Day 3 : Meditation + Journaling**

One of the most effective ways to internalize and metabolize the truth is to write about it. Take some time to complete one of the exercises below in order to put a stake in the ground of your life regarding who Jesus is.

- Below is the Apostle's Creed. It is universally recognized as a symbol of our collective theology and faith. In your journal, take time to physically write it out. As you do, think and pray through each sentence and statement.

I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth;  
And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord;  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, dead, and buried.  
He descended into hell.  
The third day he rose again from the dead.  
He ascended into heaven,  
and sits at the right hand of God the Father almighty.  
From there he shall come to judge the living and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

- Remember a season of your life when it was easy to live into and declare who Jesus is and perhaps a season when it was more difficult and required more faith. Write about both. As you look back can you see His presence in both spaces? Who was He in those situations?

#### Day 4 : Scripture Study + Contemplation

As we have looked at this encounter in Matthew, and have learned how important the place was as context, we can begin to grapple with life in the ancient world. The ancients understood something that we don't always recognize; everything in life is supernatural. To them, there were no natural disasters. There were no natural consequences. Everything occurred at the hands of the gods and they had a god for everything. They understood that sex was not just sex, money was not just money, sport was not just sport and power was not just power.

When Jesus brings His disciples here, to this popular place of worship, the Rock of the gods and the Gate of Hades, He puts the two juxtaposed kingdoms in plain view.

Why is important that Peter says (in vs. 16) that Jesus is the son of the *living* God?

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Where does Jesus say He is going to build His church in verse 18?

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Could it be that Jesus wants His church to take root in places like this? Could it be that Jesus brought His disciples all the way here to help them understand and teach them that He wants the message of His kingdom to be brought to places like this? He then takes it one step further by promising that as the church moves in, it will take ground against the gates of hell!

As you may recall from Lesson 3, city gates are institutions that are on the defensive. They keep attacking forces out. In this statement, Jesus is indicating that the *church* will be the attacking force. His people and His kingdom will be on the offense! What keeps *the church* from being willing to strategically move against worldviews and forces that are robbing family, friends and neighbors of life and hope?

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What keeps *you* from being willing to strategically move against worldviews and forces that are robbing family, friends and neighbors of life and hope?

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Conclude today by praying and asking God to give you courage, wisdom and grit to not only stand in the truth of who He is but to move forward into all the spaces He has called you in order to take back ground for the Kingdom of Heaven!

### **Day 5 : Prayer**

As the week comes to an end, take the opportunity to live into the spiritual discipline of prayer. There is no way we can be on the offense against the chaos in our families, our relationships, our workplaces, our neighborhoods and even our own hearts without a deep, personal relationship with Jesus and the power of His holy spirit.

Begin by praying Scripture and focusing on God and who he is. Create space to ponder some of the things He might be asking of you. Here are some prompts that may help:

- Thank God for sending Jesus and the characteristics of His kingdom found in Matthew 16 or any of the other passages you have worked through (maybe the things you underlined in blue).
- What did you underline in orange this week? Is there anything you saw that He is asking of you? Ask for courage and wisdom.
- Recall His promises and pray them back to Him (Did you underline anything in green?). Ask Him to bring His kingdom for you and your community in keeping with all He has promised.
- Pray over the things He has revealed to you (the things you underlined in pink). Ask for His help.

Conclude by asking Him for an extra measure of the Holy Spirit so that you can be empowered and equipped to step into the chaos around you in order to partner with Him in rescuing and redeeming our broken world. Pray for the requests of your small group or other people you love that God brings to mind.

### **Matthew 16:13-28**

<sup>13</sup> When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?”

<sup>14</sup> They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”

<sup>15</sup> “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?”

<sup>16</sup> Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

<sup>17</sup> 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. <sup>18</sup> 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. <sup>19</sup> 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." <sup>20</sup> Then he ordered his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

<sup>21</sup> 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.

<sup>22</sup> Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!"

<sup>23</sup> 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."

<sup>24</sup> Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. <sup>25</sup> For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. <sup>26</sup> 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? <sup>27</sup> 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.

<sup>28</sup> "Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."