LIFE BIBLE MINISTRY

Matthew 16 (Part 2) :13-20

Who Do The People Say I Am?

Pastor Paul LeBoutillier · April 18, 2026

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

We're in the 16th chapter of Matthew and we are at verse 13. It goes like this, When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, Who do the people say the Son of Man is? They replied, Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, still others, Jeremiah, or you know, one of the prophets. But what about you? He asked, Who do you say I am?

Simon Peter answered, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus replied, Blessed are you, Simon, son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven. 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. 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.

And then he warned his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Christ. Would you stop just right there and let's pray together. Father, open our hearts to the ministry of your word. Teach us today, we pray, in Jesus' name, amen. We're going to be covering basically three questions from this passage, and I'll...

For those of you note-takers and those of you who make mental notes, we'll put them up on the screen here for you. They are basically these. Who is Jesus? Obviously, it's a very important question. Next, who is Peter?

There's some interesting information given about Peter that needs to be interpreted properly. And then finally, who was given the keys of the kingdom? So let's deal with the first question, and that is, who is Jesus? It says it in verse 13 that Jesus posed first a question to his disciples, who do the people say that the son of man is? And the disciples responded in verse 14 by, you know, giving him the usual stuff.

We know that King Herod had actually perpetuated the belief that Jesus was John the Baptist. Come back, probably haunt him personally, because he had had John beheaded. Little did Herod know, the two men were seen in public on several occasions simultaneously. But you know, being probably the

superstitious man he was, it sounded good to him. Other people thought Elijah because, of course, Malachi prophesied that Elijah would return before the great and dreadful day of the Lord.

Some people even said Jeremiah, and there were other reasons for that, or some of the other Old Testament prophets or whatever. And there really are kind of two, I think, important conclusions that we come to when we hear about what the people thought. And the first conclusion is that people are generally divided on just who Jesus is. Nothing's changed. 2,000 years, nothing's changed.

I mean, you know, you go out and ask people today, and you're going to see that same division, that same, you know, sort of response. People are just, they just have a hard time coming together on it. And I think a second thing is interesting about all these answers. None of them were correct. Did you ever notice that?

There's not one of them. Nobody said, well, some people think you're the Messiah. Nobody got it even right, you know? Well, that's a really good lesson for you and I about public opinion, you know? I honestly believe that you're never going to correctly discover anything necessarily useful by listening to public opinion on the subject of Jesus.

In fact, if public polls tell us anything, they probably tell us that people are confused, particularly about the person of Jesus. But that question that Jesus is asking, you know, who do people say that, you know, the Son of Man is? That's, I think, without a doubt, probably the most important question that anybody is ever going to ask. Because have you ever noticed that Jesus is the great divider? What I mean by that is that, I mean, bring up the subject of Jesus and you will divide a room real quickly.

It's interesting to me how people will put up with religious talk as long as you're talking in generic terms, using the generic term God, which isn't a name, it's just a title. And frankly, somebody's God could be anything at all. And so people will talk about that and they'll be okay. But I tell you something, just try this next time you're in a room and people are talking about God. Bring up Jesus and just watch the room get tense real fast.

Jesus bugs people. And one of the reasons he bugs people is because he said some pretty crazy things about himself that people just don't like to think about unless they're followers of Jesus. Then we think they're very cool things to think about. But Jesus made some claims about himself. I want to show you a couple of examples of just how intense his claims were.

You know, I mean, a lot of people have made a lot of claims. Jesus outdid them all. You're ready for this? John chapter 14, verse six, I am the way, I am the truth, he says, and I am the life. And by the way, nobody comes to the father except through me.

Booyah. I mean, just put that in your pipe and smoke it, right? There you go. I mean, that's pretty intense, you know? And how about from John chapter 10, verse 30, I and the father are one.

Good, good. That'll get people throwing rocks at you. It worked with Jesus. Go try it. Actually, he's the only one that can say it.

Now, so this is the kind of stuff Jesus went around saying. And when you do that, when you go around telling people things like, by the way, I am not. A way, I am the way. I am not a truth. I am the truth.

I am not, you know, a life. I am the life and you can't get to the father. Except through me. There is no way to get to heaven, essentially, is what he's saying, except through me. Oh, and by the way, the father and I were one.

That's going to make a room very tense. You know, when you make those kinds of claims about yourself. And to me, it is absolutely a no brainer that people are trying in the world to remove Christ from Christmas. People, Christians, they shake their head and they go, I don't know what's going on with this world that we live in. I do.

Who would want to be constantly reminded about those kinds of claims? If I wasn't a believer, I'd want to kick Jesus out of Christmas. I'd want to get rid of him from, sure, we'll replace him with a bunny for Easter, right? We'll get, we'll make, we'll make Christmas and Easter into secular, you know, holidays and it'll be comfortable. Why?

Because we keep Jesus in there. We got to keep dealing with his claims. He said he was God. He said he's the only way to get to God. He said he's the truth.

It's not very tolerant of him, you know, to say things like that. You see, so you can, you can understand how critical is this question that he is, is asking of his disciples, you know, who do the people say that I am, you know? So after hearing the public opinion about his identity, Jesus, notice, you'll notice, I love how he does this. He zeroes in and makes the question a little more personal. He says to them in verse 15, and you got to kind of almost dramatize this in your minds.

I don't know if you do that. I have a theater going on in my brain. I don't even have to go to the theater. It's just all up here. And, and, and in my mind, in the movie, they're all kind of laughing.

Well, some people think, you know, you're John the Baptist. Some people think you're this, and they're all kind of chuckling. And it's like, yeah, you know, and Jesus says, what about you guys? Who do you say that I am? And I could just imagine it just gets very quiet for a second, you know, as they kind of just look at each other, maybe some darting glances back and forth, right?

And, and of course we know that Peter's the one that's going to speak up, but, but, but, you know, this question, this, this personal question, who do you say that I am? This is, this is so key because it, it, it's not just who is he for other people? It's who is he for you? You see, I believe that there are a lot of people who come to church on a semi-regular basis who, if asked the question, could answer it properly, at least properly from the standpoint of technically correct. You know, if you asked them and you said, you know, who is Jesus?

They would say, he's, you know, the savior of the world. He's the son of God and the savior of all mankind. I think they would probably be able to say that. But it's that personal question that we kind of struggle with. I find that people struggle with when I'm talking to them one-on-one.

I'll even ask people, do you know who Jesus is? Yeah, yeah, he's the savior. Okay, let me ask you one more question. Is he your savior? See that's the personal question and that's where people go, I'm not sure.

You see, they're absolutely certain in many cases that he is the savior. But where they struggle and stumble is, is he my savior? Is Jesus your savior? You know, we say that, we use that term and it's gotten to be kind of a cliche sort of thing but we talk about, is Jesus your personal savior? Have you accepted him as your personal savior?

I understand that people sometimes kind of get rubbed the wrong way when we say that but you know what, it's a good phrase. It's actually a meaningful question because it doesn't just say, is Jesus the savior? It's asking, is he yours? And so we need to take this whole focus of God and Jesus and stop talking about it like it's out here somewhere, you know. And we have to start internalizing what we know and understand and that's why we talk about accepting.

You know, you've noticed how we did communion this morning and again, I like to bring up when we do communion the fact that we're taking these things and putting them in our mouth. We don't just sit and look at them, right? We personalize it. Your body symbolized right here in me. Your blood symbolized in this cup in me, taking it in, ingesting it.

You know, Jesus actually got in trouble for using symbolic type, well, it didn't sound symbolic to the people to whom he was saying it. In John chapter six, Jesus actually said to the people, unless you eat my

flesh and drink my blood, you have no life in you. And the people were like, ooh, that's gross. And then of course at the end of the passage, Jesus said, you know, the words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life, you know, because the people were getting all freaked out. But he was making a point about, about personalizing Jesus Christ in our lives.

That's pretty personal. When you talk about eating somebody's flesh and drinking his blood, again, it's a symbolic reference, but you got to still admit that's pretty personal. Have you personally received Jesus Christ? Anyway, so Peter, of course, you know, I say, of course, because he's, he's usually the first one to speak up in matters and, and most often, uh, says really dumb things. But on this particular occasion, he gets an A plus, uh, and actually we're told, uh, spoke by the inspiration of the spirit.

Verse 16 says that Simon Peter answered, you know, you are the Christ, the Messiah, the son of the living God. And Jesus comes back in verse 17 and says, blessed are you, Simon, son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my father in heaven, I am willing to bet that Peter had no idea that he was speaking by the inspiration of the Holy spirit. I think he was just speaking. And I think that's why Jesus had to tell him that, by the way, that wasn't you, Pete. So don't get a big head about this whole thing.

Like, you know, you're the guy who's got this dialed in and nobody else does. That was my father who laid that one on your heart and you just spoke it out and that's good. And that's a, and that there, there's a, there's a blessedness to that because you were the recipient of that revelation. But I just want you to know where that comes from. And then Jesus goes on to speak about Peter in some of these verses, uh, that go on.

And that is the second point on our, on our outline here, which is, uh, who is Peter? Because there's been some confusion about this. I know some of you, uh, maybe had been raised a Roman Catholic, uh, and, and maybe even some of you still go there from time to time and you probably realize that, you know, there's a little difference of, uh, interpreted interpretation and opinion as it relates to the person of Peter and so forth. And a lot of it centers around these verses, verse 18. Look with me in your Bible.

It says, and I tell you that you are Peter and his name there means stone. Okay. Uh, Petras is simply, and then he goes on to say, and on this rock, which is Greek Petra, I will build my church and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. Now in classic Roman Catholicism, they believe, and again, I'm saying they, because that's, you know, it's, it's not what I believe. They believe that Jesus is saying to Peter, you are the rock and on you, I will build my church.

Now, Protestants have traditionally not bought into that sort of interpretation of the whole process. So it kind of leaves you a scratch in your head if you're not real biblically savvy and you kind of thinking, well, who's right? Because they believe that Jesus built the church on Peter, which seems like a crazy idea, but see, that's where they get the whole idea of the Pope. It was G Peter in their mind was the first Pope. And since then they've handed down the papacy to these various individuals and they're still doing it today and so forth.

So but the whole, the whole papal authority is basically founded in these verses as it relates to a Roman Catholic theology and so forth. So who's, who's right? You know, is the church built on Peter? Well, I think if you want to ask somebody about that, you should probably ask Peter. See what he has to say.

Let's take a look. First Peter chapter two, beginning of verse four, Peter writes, as you come to Jesus, the living stone rejected by men, but chosen by God and precious to him. Notice he calls Jesus the living stone. You also like living stones are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ for in scripture it says, and here he quotes the old Testament, see, I lay a stone that is talking about a foundation in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone. And the one who trusts in me, Oh, don't say that it says the one who trusts in him, right?

Will never be put to shame. You can see here by what Peter wrote is that Peter believed that Jesus Christ is the one who is being spoken of. And then he quotes an old Testament passage, actually two old Testament passages in that one section. He quotes Psalm one 18 and Isaiah chapter eight, and he connects the stone to Jesus. And, and you have to understand that in, in, in Messianic prophetic passages in the old Testament, the idea of the rock or the stone is a very common one as it relates to Messiah.

He's often referred to as the stone, the cornerstone, the rock and so forth. This is a common sort of an idea. Jesus is simply bringing it forward into the new Testament understanding and, and, and he is, is talking about himself. Listen, the church of Jesus Christ is built on Christ himself. Peter was kind of a weirdo.

I mean, he was a neat guy in a lot of respects, but later on in this very chapter, Jesus is going to rebuke him because he's then following a satanic line of thinking. He's actually going to say, get behind me, Satan. That's kind of hard to hear right after you've heard, blessed are you, you know, Peter, son of Jonah, but that was kind of Peter. And in fact, Peter is even going to stick around long enough to get a rebuke from the apostle Paul, which is told about in the book of Galatians. Peter tended to kind of mess up from time to time, whether he was putting his foot in his mouth or doing the wrong thing.

Don't get me wrong. He was a great guy. He was a used powerfully, but the church of Jesus Christ is not built on him. And I love the fact, there's a wonderful prophecy. I want to show it to you.

Isaiah chapter 44 great verse Do not tremble Do not be afraid Did I not proclaim this and foretell it long ago? You are my witnesses and then look at this. Is there any God besides me? No, there is no other Rock, I know not one God says here in Isaiah in no uncertain terms. There's no other rock There's no other Foundation if you will, you know Paul was writing And he he talked about the fact in his letters that there He said there's there's only one foundation and that's Christ and you he says you can't build on any other foundation.

There's you know He's the only foundation and then in Galatians, you know, it's funny when when The the Apostles the other biblical writers refer to Peter. There's not one single passage where they single him out as being greater or something different frankly from the other Apostles and nor does Peter Do that about himself Peter is very humble in his writings giving all of the glory to Jesus all the focus when Paul does write About Peter and he clumps him in often with some of the others look at from Galatians chapter 2 verse 9 He refers to James and by the way, that's not James the original Apostle that man had already Been beheaded by Herod. This is James the actual half-brother of Jesus who kind of took the other James's place But then he clumps him up with Peter and John and he says those reputed to be pillars now What he's saying here is that Peter is really no different than James who's really no different than John They were some of their they're called Apostles really Paul's being very humble. He's he's just like them Pillars their pillars. They were pillars of the the early church.

They weren't not one of them was the pillar Paul never writes Anyone else no one else writes that Peter held any special position not one single time in fact if anything the biblical writers Confirm over and over again that the church is built on Jesus Christ. It's never ever Assumed the church is built on Peter. It's just it's just not a reality And then we come to the third question of our study here on the screen it says so who was given the keys of the kingdom now, this is an interesting question and I I Think that there's kind of a maybe a little bit of a dual meaning to this idea of the keys of the kingdom But here's what it says verse 19 He says 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 and I and I think that there is an element of truth that suggests that the keys of the kingdom have have been given in In in some respect to the church at large, but this is an area where I'm not afraid to say that Peter was given I think a special kind of a Dispensation of grace as it relates to the keys of the kingdom and let me explain why? Think about it. What do keys do?

They open things, right? That's what you use a key to do to open something so You've you can open things or you can close things. Do you know that Jesus criticized? the Pharisees For closing doors as it related to the gospel. Let me show you this passage from Matthew 23 It says woe to you teachers of the law and Pharisees you hypocrites.

Look at this. You shut the kingdom you shut it and And and you do it in men's faces. That's us. That's a very very offensive thing to do He says you yourselves do not enter nor do you let those enter who are trying to So the Pharisees and religious leaders were closing doors Peter Uniquely got an opportunity to open doors and what we see in the Bible what we see in the book of Acts are two instances where Peter was able to take the keys that were given to him and Open this thing up to the two people groups that frankly Exist on earth. I don't know if you knew that but we all come down to basically two groups Jew and Gentile and Peter was there for both of them He was the spokesman He was the one who proclaimed the gospel and it was after his proclamation of the gospel that the spirit moved the spirit fell in power and glory and the first is in Acts chapter 2 the disciples are all together and they're praying and worshiping and Suddenly the Holy Spirit falls upon the assembled group.

They begin speaking in unknown languages meaning They weren't unknown to everybody, but they were unknown to the speakers and and it was a miracle It was a work of the Spirit and it was going on and there was a noise It sounded like a roaring and it attracted people to them and they and they came and they were like What is this all about and some people heard it going on? And so they mocked there's always going to be mockers and the people who mock said, ah, they might they've been drinking Don't bother with them and Peter stood up Here's the man who had denied Jesus, you know Previously and he stood up and he began to speak to the people he meant of Israel. Listen to me. These people are not Inebriated that's not what's going on here. This is the work of the Spirit.

He began to quote Joel says this is a fulfillment of that prophecy that was laid out in Joel about the coming of the Holy Spirit and and he and he gave the gospel and and and The Bible says 3,000 people came to Christ that day Click first key The gospel is now the new this work of the the church. You know how Jesus said I will build my church That was its inauguration that day That's when the church began. It was future tense when Jesus spoke of it here in Matthew He says he didn't say I've been building or whatever He said I will I will build my church on on that rock. I will build my church So the church began and then and then, you know, you read over in Acts chapter 10 You don't need to turn there now, but you'll remember that Peter is staying at the home of another individual He's up on the roof. He's getting kind of hungry So he he asked for something to eat and while he's waiting for it to be prepared it says that he fell into kind of a trance and had a vision from the Lord of this sheet with animals and and he Began to he was

really confused about it, but he later Came to understand that God was speaking to him about how he had accepted the Gentiles and that they were Included in God's plan and he wanted him to go preach to the Gentiles and wouldn't you know it lo and behold a couple?

Of guys show up at the door right at that time knock knock knock. We understand There's a guy named Peter here wondering if he could come and talk to us if Peter's like, yeah, sure I'll go and he goes gets to the house of a Gentile, which by the way, it was unlawful for a Jew to enter But he walks in before he knows it He's standing in this guy's living room and they're just sitting there looking at him. He's like, hey, I'm here. What do you want? So the guy begins to tell him.

Yeah an angel appeared to me and said to go send for you So we're just waiting to see what you got to say Peter's like whoa And he puts it all together I mean connects the dots and he he kind of looks at the Bible and he's like, okay And he kind of talks out loud to these or thinks out loud to these people and he's like, okay I think I get it now. I think I see That God has accepted the Gentiles too. And so he starts telling him about Jesus What happens boom the Holy Spirit falls on those people just like it did the Jews at Pentecost Click the second key the door is open And the gospel is now Running madly throughout the course of humankind and it hasn't stopped It's still running madly It's still you know moving Powerfully and by the way that that concept of still moving powerfully is something I want to go back and focus for just a moment on verse 18. Did you you know, this is where Jesus said I will build my church and And then he says and The gates of Hades will not overcome it, you know Some translations say in the gates of hell will not overcome it and and that's semi Unfortunate because that the word that is translated here really is is Hades It really means grave or or death and that's better You know, we we like to say, you know, the powers of hell cannot stand again, you know It's really not what Jesus said What yeah, it sounds good, it'll preach let me tell you Especially they put a little echo in your microphone right at the right time, you know But what Jesus was saying is the power of the grave the power of death will not prevail and when it talks about the gates of something the gates of a city was a very important focal point of the strength of City and he's saying that the the focal point of death the gates of death will not prevail against my my my church Jesus Jesus is is is saying here that first of all it's my church. Did you catch that by the way?

And on this rock I will build My church, it's not Peter's Church It's not Paul's Church. It's not your church. It's not my church. It's his It's his He said I will build it Well, that's a phrase that has smacked me in the face many many times over the years when I've tried to do something stupid to promote his church as If he needs me You know to get Paul I've called you for a time just such as this my church is floundering I need you to get on the phone and start making some phone calls get some promotion going

Let's get this thing whipped into shape Yeah, no, he says I will build I will build my church He's saying I'm gonna build my community of people my my called-out ones That's what you and I are called out of the world To live in the community of faith we live in the world too But we're part of the community of faith and we're called to live apart from from the ways Of the world and and and so how strong is the the church well again the gates of Hades the gates of death I I believe that Jesus was speaking at least in part probably the greater part of his own resurrection. I Really do I believe that he's speaking about the fact that death is not going to hold him down Of course, it can't now it can't hold us down either But you know It's not long from when Jesus spoke these words that they're gonna head back to Jerusalem for the very last time we're getting toward the end here, at least in terms of that chronology and These men are going to witness His arrest I Don't know where they are in the crowd during the trial, but they're going to witness his crucifixion and And after That after the death of Jesus they are going to become fairly despondent Fairly discouraged and they're gonna think well, that's it.

It's over And they're gonna be scared for their lives and they're gonna huddle together in a little group and kind of look at each other Blankly and say now what do we do? We thought he was the one That's exactly what those disciples said to Jesus not knowing it on the road to Emmaus They said well, we thought he was the one and Jesus is walking, you know, and they don't they don't recognize him But they're walking. He's what's going on you guys. Oh, yeah You know, where'd you come from? You haven't heard about what's going on around here Jesus of Nazareth is wonderful incredible guy did crazy Wild miracles, but the religious leaders hated him and they turned him over, you know to the Gentiles and the Romans Crucified him and you know, we thought he was the one that's what they're gonna say and That's when Jesus is gonna say how slow you are to believe the scriptures and then he's gonna do a Bible study I wish would have been recorded.

I Mean that's a Bible study to sit in on is walking along the road to Emmaus as Jesus the living word Quotes the scripture, you know from Genesis to Malachi related to the promises about the Messiah and so forth and Jesus knew that these guys were going to become despondent at his death He knew that and so he says to them here, by the way guys. I'm building a church And I just want you all to know something The greatest power of the grave will not prevail against this work of building this church that I have begun it will continue And he didn't elaborate right then but I'm sure the guys caught on later, you know, he was talking about his resurrection Three days later Jesus rose from the grave death itself would not stop this church of his from getting started And that is the church that you and I are members of It's a glorious thing and you know what it hasn't stopped it hasn't stopped to this day and It has only spread and by the way, the church is not Calvary Chapel We're just one simple humble expression That's all It's one of the reasons

why we never baptize people into Calvary Chapel It's another reason why we don't have a membership here at Calvary Chapel It's not important whether you're a member of Calvary Chapel for your eternal destiny The only important membership that you need to really be concerned about is membership in the body of Christ and that happens Supernaturally when you give your heart to Christ and receive all that he has given for you whether you're a member of Calvary Chapel You know You can be a member of Calvary Chapel card carrying have the dove tattoo on your arm the whole nine yards and you can if you Never accept Jesus Christ, it will profit you nothing That's why we don't make a big deal about church membership or you need to go through a class, you know I shouldn't say that it I know some churches do it and you maybe even went to one and that's Fine, I guess but you know what? I think it puts the emphasis on the wrong area Because that doesn't get you into heaven Knowing Jesus accepting personally That's what gets you there and And that's what we're a part of You