LIFE BIBLE MINISTRY

Matthew 16 (Part 3) :21-28

Two Sides of Peter

Pastor Paul LeBoutillier · April 18, 2026

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

Look with me in beginning of verse 13. You'll remember that this is that section where it said that when Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi he asked his disciples who do the people say the Son of Man is and you'll remember they went through the usual stuff of well some say some say some say finally he pointed to them and said who do you say and Peter's response was the very correct and very inspired you are the Christ the Son of the Living God he was obviously you know right on the money on that one and Jesus pronounced him to be blessed he said blessed are you Simon son of Jonah then he told him why he said you know this wasn't human reason or intelligence that conveyed this to you this was by my father in heaven and so forth well now skip down to verse 21 if you would please as we continue and pick up this passage where we left off it says that from that time on and that's a significant statement those first few words from that time on marks a shift in Jesus's public ministry up to this point he's been saying to the people the kingdom of God is near the kingdom of God is near the kingdom of God is near but from this time forward he is going to change basically his his his focus to speak now to his disciples about his coming work on the cross his sacrifice and death on the cross for the sins of mankind and it says 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 chief priests and teachers of the law and that he must be killed on the third day and excuse me killed and on the third day raised to life Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him never Lord he said this shall never happen to you Jesus turned and said to Peter get behind me Satan you are a stumbling block to me you do not have in mind the things of God but the things of men and then Jesus said to his disciples if anyone would come after me he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me for whoever wants to save his life will lose it but whoever loses his life for me will find it what good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world and yet forfeits his soul or what can a man give an exchange for his soul 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 he has done I tell you the truth some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom would you pray with me father open our hearts we want to lean into you Lord now to hear your voice incline our ear Lord God give us

understanding for we ask it in Jesus name there is so much going on in these verses that I'm not going to be able to get through all of it today I'm gonna flop some over to next week Lord willing but there is a picture the reason I had you go back and read a few verses from last week's study where Peter was kind of the man of the hour is because obviously it is contrasted very clearly with what we read in this passage where Peter makes a pretty serious blunder and what I think we need to see and I think that the Holy Spirit would have us to see take note of is just how quickly somebody can go from walking and talking in fact in the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to suddenly being a mouthpiece for the enemy which is a rather frightening sort of scenario but you know before you get to down on good old Pete who's kind of the poster child for you know what not to do often in the gospel accounts we need to remember that we have all walked in this sort of error in our lives and I'll explain here as we go what we're talking about you'll notice that Jesus begins in this section by saying you know the Son of Man is going to be turned over he gives the whole plan you know even gives the good news at the end you know he says yeah you know I'm gonna be turned over to the you know to the Gentiles in and and put to death but on the third day you know there will be a resurrection they kind of somehow miss that part and and who knows exactly how much you know they were understanding about what Jesus was saying about what would come in those in those days to come but obviously Peter heard enough that he reacted rather strongly to Jesus we're told in verse 22 here again that Peter took Jesus aside and began to rebuke him that's a pretty gutsy move for a man who just I don't know how long before maybe it was days who knows maybe it was hours had had had declared this man to be the son of the Living God which by the way I don't care what you say that means he's equal with God okay I don't care what you've been told it means he's equal with God so here you are essentially Peter you got to just kind of put yourself in his place for a moment and by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit you declare correctly I might add that Jesus is in fact the Son of God equal to God and then you find yourself rebuking him rebuking him you either got somebody with a lot of guts or a lot of lack of brains maybe both but it is a quite a statement for him to make you'll notice that it says Peter began to rebuke him it kind of sounds like Jesus cut him off and Jesus really you know responded pretty strongly to him but I want you to know something about Peter's error I want you to know this it is as common as the day is long maybe more common you might look at this you might read this and kind of come away thinking Peter is kind of adult you know it's like what a bonehead the guy just constantly puts his foot in his mouth saying all the wrong things what a dumb thing to say you know to rebuke this one whom you have declared to be the Son of the Living God and yet what he has done here in this instance is something that I dare say we have all done here's what happened Jesus said something he said I'm going to go to Jerusalem I will be rejected by the religious leaders I will be turned over to the Gentiles I will be killed now that's probably just about where Peter stopped listening and what he heard he didn't like have

you ever heard something from God that you didn't like okay so what does he do now he makes a critical error and he decides based on his own determination because I don't like it it must not be from God do you see the rationale do you see the way of kind of figuring things out now keep in mind I think that there's a little bit of puffed-up pride that's going on with Peter because he has just recently been told that he is a blessed man because he has actually uttered something that was from the Lord by the inspiration of the Spirit I think he's still kind of walking on that you know that cloud and I think that it has that pride that spiritual pride that sense of overconfidence in you know my ability to kind of discern and voice the will of God is such that I pretty much have this thing dialed in I mean why else would you pull the son of man aside and rebuke him unless you kind of just thought that wow I guess everything coming out of my mouth from now on is gold pure gold you guys might want to start jotting these things down when you hear them because yeah do you do you recognize dangerous ground there when you hear it I do been there been on that dangerous ground but essentially what Peter is doing here is something that you and I have also done we look at what God is allowing in our lives we look at what is in front of us we don't like it and so we assume that it's not from the Lord but you know if there's anything that that this story teaches us it's that you and I have a hard time figuring that sort of a thing out I mean This story helps us to understand that, that our ability to discern what is in fact the perfect will of God is skewed by the fact that our emotions, our feelings, and our desires get in the way, and we look at a thing going on, and we say, I don't like that, and because I don't like it, I don't want it, and because I don't want it, I'm assuming that God has no part of it, and that's where we get into trouble. It's funny, well it's not funny, but there are times when people come up for prayer, and I never want to say this in a way to discourage people from coming up for prayer, but sometimes, when people are going through a hard season of their lives, they assume that that is the work of the enemy. And people will come, and sometimes it certainly could be, but I think more times than not, it's probably not the enemy, but yet people will come up, and they're like, oh man, I just need you to pray for me, I'm just really under attack, the enemy's just really just, you know, stuff like that. And you know, I'm just trying to kind of listen and think through the thing, and sometimes it sounds a lot like God, working in their lives, cutting off the rough edges, you know, working to strengthen their faith, to develop their perseverance, so that they might be mature and complete, not lacking anything, and all this, and yet they're kind of just going, man, you know, we need to do battle with the devil.

And you know, there's a time for that, please don't let me lead you to believe that I'm saying that we should just kind of lay down and accept everything that comes our way, because I believe that there are times when we need to resist, and we need to put up some kind of an offensive kind of a strategy against the work of the enemy. I don't think we should just obviously lie down at all times and just let him kind of walk all over us, but the assumption, I'm suggesting the assumption that we make that it's not from God,

because it's not good, is a bad assumption, and that is what Peter has done. He's made that assumption. Jesus says, I'm going to go to Jerusalem, I'm going to die. Peter says, that's not good, and he rebukes him for it.

And obviously, Jesus responded pretty strongly. You'll notice in your Bible in verse 23, it says that Peter turned to Peter, excuse me, Jesus turned to Peter, I'm sorry, and said, get behind me, Satan. That's a strong thing to hear from the Savior. Especially in light of having just heard, blessed are you, Peter, son of Jonah. Well, I'd like to keep hearing that one, thank you very much.

But now, being called Satan, are you kidding me? And he says, look what he says, you're a stumbling block to me. And he says, you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men. So, stinging rebuke, tough stuff, yeah. I think there's three things that we want to kind of ask from this passage.

I'll put them on the screen here for you, for those of you taking notes, maybe these will help. First of all, what exactly is Jesus saying to Peter? We need to understand what is being said here. Number two, why did Jesus react so strongly? I mean, why didn't he just go, Pete, Pete, Pete, Pete, just chill, buddy.

Why did he come out with the whole Satan sort of a thing? And then thirdly, how is it that Peter could just be speaking for God one moment, and it seems like the very next, suddenly he is voicing the words of the enemy. So, let's look at our first question, and that is, what exactly is Jesus saying here? Again, Jesus turned to Peter and said, get behind me, Satan. Is Jesus calling Peter Satan?

Is Jesus saying that Peter is somehow been taken over by a demonic presence? Is that what he's suggesting or even saying outright? No, I don't think so. First of all, you need to understand something. Satan's name means adversary.

And that's an important thing to understand, because for Jesus to speak this way to him and say, get behind me, Satan, is at least in a sense expressing the reality of what Peter's remark has done. And that is, he has put himself alongside Jesus in an adversarial role. By saying to Jesus, no, you are not going to Jerusalem, you are not going to die. Well, that was God's plan. But for him to oppose that plan and to say to Jesus, no, and to be resistant, no.

Have you ever said no to God? I have, about a billion times. But that immediately puts us in an adversarial role with God. Because the will of God may be for this thing to take place, but I don't like it, so I resist it. I dig my heels in and I say, no, that's not where we're going.

And boom, immediately there's this opposition thing that's going on. And Jesus is making clear that Peter understands this opposition is the work of the enemy. And Peter's cooperating with it. Let me tell you something. Let me tell you something about Satan.

People talk a lot about, you know, Satan this, Satan that. Satan can only do in your life what you give him permission or freedom to do, for one thing. The reason that Satan has such a field day with some of us is because we have such a big field for him to play on. Jesus didn't give Satan that sort of a playing field. In fact, what he said to his disciples during the Last Supper is he said, the prince of this world is coming, but he has no hold on me.

Oh, wish I could say that. Don't you? The prince of this world is coming. And I got a target about that big. That's what's really going on in my life.

And you do, too. And Peter has a big target, too. And he's presenting that thing to the enemy, and the enemy is taking full advantage of it. Speaking now, declaring, you know, this thing through Peter. And it's, you know, like I said before, it's rather frightening to consider the idea that we could actually be the mouthpiece of the enemy.

But I believe that it's very possible. I believe that it is something that we have done. And I believe it is something that we will, in fact, do in the future from time to time. It's really quite easy to do it, to be completely honest with you. And we'll answer how in our two remaining questions.

Let's put the second question up here. And that is, why did Jesus react so strongly? Well, one of the reasons he reacted so strongly is because he'd heard all this drivel before. Not out of the mouth of Peter, necessarily, but out of the mouth of Satan himself. When Jesus was being tempted in the wilderness at the very outset of his public ministry, the enemy came to him and presented various temptations to him.

One of which, I'll put on the screen here for you, Matthew chapter 4. It says, again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in their splendor. And what did Satan say to Jesus? He says, all this I will give you if you just bow down and worship me. Now, please understand something.

Jesus had laid aside his glory, his majesty, to come to walk among men. But the Bible says after his death, burial, and resurrection, he was re-exalted. He was exalted, in fact, it says, to the highest place and given the name that is above every name. So there was kind of a restoration process there. And I know that sounds a little weird.

Jesus never set aside his divinity. He was always in God. There's a mystery involved with the incarnation where he emptied himself, Paul says in Philippians. He emptied himself. How, we're not really sure.

But there was a point where he would fulfill the will of God. And at the end of all that, he would be able to say to his disciples, all authority in heaven and earth has been given to me. Do you know we're going to read that in the very last chapter of Matthew? And that's what he's going to say. And it's all cool and wonderful and it's great news.

He'll say all authority in heaven and earth has been given to me. And he will, you know, yeah, I mean, it'll be done. But what Satan is doing here right now is he's saying, tell you what, I'll give this all to you, but you don't have to go through the cross. Because you see, that's the stinky part. That's the bloody part.

That's the hard part. That's the part where you have to suffer. The S word. We're not going to say that. Because you know what?

You really don't have to suffer. We can get the job done without all the blood. Without all the suffering. Without all the crying and the tears and the spears and the breaking of legs. Of course, that didn't happen to Jesus.

But the whole thing. We can get this done without all that. Now, you know, all you got to do is just, that's the thing right there. You got to be watching for. Is when the enemy comes along, suggests an alternate plan, rather than obedience to God.

All you gotta do is fill in the blank, but it's always some element of compromise. In Jesus's case, all you have to do is just bow down and worship me. Well, Jesus saw through that one, of course, immediately rebuked Satan back, quoting the word saying, you know, we're only to worship the Lord our God and so on and so on and so on. But listen, this plan of the enemy to come and suggest an alternate route that doesn't deal with the same pain and sacrifice and struggle and so forth is as common as anything. And it happens in your life and it happens in my life all the time.

Let me tell you this, Satan is still in the business of offering an alternative path. And all it takes is a little compromise. All it takes is just, and you know, he may not say it right out, but the suggestion is very clear. Listen, all you gotta do is just lower your standards a little bit, that's all. I mean, I know up to this point, you've believed that sex before marriage was something you should avoid.

But listen, listen, everybody's doing it. And if the person that you're in love with is telling you that they want to be able to do that before you get married, just because they want to be sure, then that's what you ought to do. Listen, you know, you can still get what you want. All you gotta do is just compromise just a little bit. Now, obviously, I've just thrown in a quick example there.

You name it, you name it. Compromise is compromise. And the problem with compromise is it always comes back to bite us, always. One thing I love about the Lord, he knows what we need, he knows our desires, and he knows how to fulfill our desires in a way that won't come back and bite us. So I love that about him.

You try to fulfill your own desires, you listen to the enemy about how to compromise to get them now, get them quick, and so forth, you're gonna suffer down the road. Although you might have that immediate gratification, you will pay. Let me put this up on the screen for you. Psalm 103, praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. Look at this.

Who satisfies your desires with good things. It's a great verse, love that verse. He satisfies your desires with good things. When you and I decide that we need to step out on our own at the suggestion of the enemy and satisfy our desires in our own way, in our own time, and so forth, we're always going to deal with problems. The problem here is that sometimes God doesn't do it in the time that we think he should, and we get scared, panicky, or whatever, and we rush out to do it ourselves on our own.

Listen, Satan can sense that impatience. I mean, like a shark is drawn to blood in the water, the enemy is drawn to that impatience in you and I to see the Lord work, and he comes along at that time and suggests another way to get there. Oh, you want to get married? Fine, this is the way you go, but it's not God's way. You need some extra money?

Here, do this. Little end around action, but it's all right, we'll get there, and we won't have to go through all the fuss and muss and the waiting. Oh, the waiting. You don't have to wait, get it now, you know. But you find out you have to compromise what you know to be right in order to get there.

And then you're dealing with the heaviness of a wounded conscience and all those kind of fun things. All right, the third, by the way, before I get into the third one, you and I need to learn to kind of talk like Jesus talked from the standpoint of being able to discern, first of all, when the enemy's throwing one of those compromise curves our way, and we need to have the same sort of response that our Lord and Savior did. Get behind me, Satan. You are a stumbling block to me. Yeah, strong words, but still, necessary.

Finally, third question, how could Peter speak for God one moment and speak for Satan the next? Well, you know, really, it's pretty simple. The best way to describe what Peter was essentially doing is to use a term that is used a lot in our culture, and that is fleshing out. You heard that? He fleshed out.

Or somebody might say, yeah, I was talking to my boss this week, man. He'd really gotten in my face. He was just really aggravating me, and oh, man, I just, I fleshed out. I just called him all kinds of names, and this and that, and the other thing, and I just fleshed out. You heard that?

Basically, it describes kind of just giving in and just going with the flesh, no holes barred sort of a thing, and it's essentially what Peter did in this situation, because remember, in his carnal understanding of what Jesus was saying to them, Peter didn't like it. He just didn't think it was a good idea, and so out of the depth of his own flesh, he came to Jesus and rebuked him. No, you're not gonna die, all right? That sort of a thing. This isn't gonna happen to you.

Well, Jesus pointed out right now that was a message from the flesh. Remember what Jesus said? He says, you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men. In other words, that came from the depth of your carnality, your humanness, your flesh. That was not a work of the Spirit, and that's crazy, isn't it, that we can do that?

It's crazy, it really is. I mean, I can get done teaching God's word and know that I know that I know that while I'm teaching, God is just doing a powerful work of ministering that word to people. I can go out and get in my car, drive around the corner, have somebody pull in front of me, and all of a sudden, what earlier my mouth was used for the grace of God can be used for bad stuff. It's really, you know, all you got to do is just give into the flesh, right? It's all you got to do.

It's pretty simple, actually. Think we've all done that. We've all given into the flesh at some time or another. When our minds are fixated on earthly solutions, carnal solutions, then we're never going to be able to do effectively the work of the kingdom or the work of God or anything like that. You know, I've got such wonderful elders here at Calvary Chapel for many years, most of them, and one of the goals that we have tried to always set in front of us as elders, not that we hit it on the head every time, but we've tried to set a goal in front of us that not to apply carnal knowledge to the leading of the fellowship, you know, to Calvary Chapel here, but instead to be led by the spirit.

It's hard, it's a challenge, but it's a goal. It's what we try to do, you know? It's like, hey, let's not do this because the world does it. You know, sometimes people in the body will come and say, yeah, well, why

don't you try this thing I heard about on the news, you know, or I got this thing, you know, in the mail, and it says if you invest this. It's like, well, those are the schemes of the world, you know what I mean?

And those really don't apply, you know, to the kingdom of God. So, you know, and in the same way, I think all believers need to be very cautious about doing what Peter basically did here, and that is just kind of responding out of the flesh or out of the things of the world. By the way, I use the word flesh, I use the word world. They are essentially one in the same because the flesh is what drives the world. The wisdom of the world is bound up in the carnality and human intellect of man.

By the way, God calls it foolishness, but it's man's wisdom, okay? And so as Christians, we need to decide what are we looking to and so forth? Or who are we turning to when decisions need to be made? Some Christians get kind of offended about this whole talk, and they'll, I heard people say things like, you know, God gave me a brain. I think he expects me to use it, you know?

Not if it means opposing the will of God. Peter had a brain, too. And look at the rebuke he got, but for just using his brain. And here he thought what he thought, or he said, rather, what he thought was right. And he ended up actually voicing the words of Satan.

That's how scary it is, you know, that we need to be careful about this sort of a thing. What's interesting about this. thing you know here we are we're picking on Peter so much I I almost hate to do it because I know I'm gonna meet him someday he's gonna go yeah Calvary Chapel I watched you on the big monitor once in a while you like to use me to for a punching bag lots didn't you buddy let's go for a walk how about walking on the water for a while I don't know I'll just say Pete you were such a great example you know what by the end of or getting toward the end of Peters life at least on this earth he was a changed man he blundered a lot but I think he blundered out of passion I really do I mean his heart was always in the right place he was just you know really really adept at putting his foot in his mouth and toward the end of his life when he began to write those letters which you and I know of as first and second Peter he learned what was behind all of this I know best attitude with God which by the way I think we've done that before I mean isn't that what Peter is essentially doing in this passage isn't he saying I know best and the reason I think I know best is because what you just said I don't like it and if I don't like it that must mean that it's not of God and so I know best later on I think Peter found out that what that was was pride that was pride that stinky rotten corrupted human pride and so toward the end of his life having learned those vitally important lessons Peter then writes and I'll put this on the screen for you from first Peter chapter 5 he says listen all of you this is a message to all of you clothe yourselves with humility literally put it on like clothing toward one another because here's why God opposes the proud Peter knew that he

knew that firsthand he's like you know what I put myself in opposition to God before by thinking that I knew best kind of just waltzing up to Jesus and going you know no that's not what's gonna happen this is what's gonna happen because I know best and I myself flat-out in opposition to God because of my pride he said God opposes the proud but he actually gives grace to the humble when you're humble what is humility it's basically simply saying to God I don't know best I don't know best you know there's something very freeing about that go home and say that about 10 times I don't know best God knows best I don't remind yourself of that every day I don't know best thank you Lord that I don't know best and that you do because I'm going to stop judging what you do as bad wrong or whatever based on my assessment and then after you've humbled yourself with with one another then he says humble yourself also therefore under God's mighty hand that he might lift you up when when you want him to know it actually says in due time see that again this is the problem it God's timing is such that we don't think that he lifts us up in due time he's actually overdue at least according to our assessment of the situation and since he's overdue that's when I step into that area of compromise making myself open to the suggestion of the enemy to take an alternative route to get where I want to go and do it on my own get get the job done whatever it might be I got to come back no God is gonna lift me up in due time I don't know when that is it's not probably when I want but it will be in accordance with the perfection of his timing not mine that's hard I'm telling you that's hard I mean being patient and waiting for the Lord never been easy read through the psalm see if David had a good time waiting on God I mean he just flat-out cried out to God like hey where are you come Lord why how long must I wait now waiting was never been easy but what's the alternative taking the situation in your own hands so Peter came to a place of recognizing the need for God's best in his life and I think that we need to do the very same thing obviously so my question to you is you know are you applying humility in your life and saying to God you know best in your marriage your home and your family and your finances and your business in your dealings however they may be or are you following the ways of the world and what you've learned from the world very very important questions can I just suggest here as we as we close some quick steps to keep us from making the same mistake that Peter made I'll put these on the screen right Taylor yeah we didn't I I blew him off the slides in first service so I said Taylor give me the first one and Taylor's like no so I had to fix it between services anyway here we go number one these are kind of in the form of resolutions first thing I'm gonna resist the temptation to respond according to my flesh when something comes up that kind of has me a little bit I don't know concerned about how it's gonna turn out how we're gonna fix it I am going to resist the temptation to respond according to my flesh my flesh is always responding but I have to be careful not to be dominated by those responses Peter was dominated you see when Jesus said I'm going to Jerusalem I'm gonna die there Peter just instantly responded according to the flesh no you're not he had to learn to resist that

secondly I am going to resist worldly wisdom boy I tell you everybody and their brother has an opinion about what you should do with your problems have you ever noticed and usually they're the kind of people who don't necessarily have the best track record themselves it's like hey let me as somebody who's been married seven times let me give you some marriage advice what so you know be careful listening to worldly if I ask yourself the question okay I've just been given a solution for this problem is it worldly or is it of the word is it biblical is it godly and am I gonna have to compromise something that I know to be true something that I know to be right in order to do it that's of the world thirdly I'm gonna start praying for God's wisdom God's plan God's direction you know we just don't do it enough we just flat-out don't do it enough we're faced with something and we don't pray you know I mean you got to wonder what would have happened if Peter would have just kind of shut his yap for a moment after Jesus said he was going to Jerusalem to die and just committed that statement to prayer you know just prayed about it I wonder what it would be like if you and I would pray about things instead of just jumping into the fray with what we think is a good assessment or solution or whatever prayer is this really wonderful thing that is just glorious that very few of us use fourth I'm gonna start investigating God's Word instead of jumping in and doing it the way I think it ought to be done I'm gonna start really looking into the Bible and saying what does the Word of God have to say about my situation now there are many many situations in the Bible for which there is no specific biblical reference but there is general wisdom that you can almost always apply in some way shape or form and if you don't know how to apply that wisdom this next resolution is also for you and that is I'm going to start getting godly counsel you know we all need counsel especially when when times are challenging I don't know about you but I have I have a hard time maintaining perspective about my problems I can see other people's pretty clearly but when it comes to my own I lose it just you know just can't see the forest for the trees it's that time that you need to kind of go to somebody who is a godly counselor and by the way the key here is godly counselor again you go to the world and get their opinion sure they've got all kinds of them but are they godly so I'm gonna go to somebody and say hey listen you have a track record that I can see in your life your marriage your home your family you you know you followed the Lord and and and I'm not trying to puff you up but I can just tell you I can see that there's been godliness in your life so I'm coming to you and I'm seeking counsel for this situation that I'm facing because I don't want to be like Peter I don't want to just run headlong into this thing and assume that I know what's best and just because I don't like it it must not be of God and I just can't do that anymore so I need to I need to really open my heart to what the Lord wants me to do here amen so some I think some steps for helping you