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Glory in Confession

Matthew 16.13-23

Series: The Glory of Christ

The Village Church

May 10, 2026

I. Text

A. **Matthew 16:13–23** (ESV) —

1. 13 Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?”
2. 14 And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”
3. 15 He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?”
4. 16 Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”
5. 17 And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.
6. 18 And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.
7. 19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”
8. 20 Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ.
9. 21 From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.
10. 22 And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, “Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you.”
11. 23 But he turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.”

II. **The Location**

A. **Caesarea Philippi**

1. Kind of an out-of-the-way place in the north of Israel
 - a. Near Mt. Hermon
 - b. Headwaters of the Jordan River
2. Philip had rebuilt this city and named it Caesarea Philippi in honor of Tiberius Caesar, the Roman Emperor
 - a. Philip was a son of Herod the Great; half-brother of Herod Antipas who was once called by Jesus, “that fox”, and who was involved in Jesus’ trial

- B. Not to be confused with Caesarea on the coast; aka Caesarea Maritima
 - a. Caesarea Maritima was built by Herod the Great in honor of Caesar Augustus – a great harbor
 - b. Maritima was one of the largest cities in Judea; military and political headquarters of the Roman procurator, at that time, one Pontius Pilate
 - c. Caesarea Philippi was much smaller
- 2. Yet, Caesarea Philippi was one of the most beautiful places in Israel, a favorite of tourists
 - a. Nevertheless a pagan religious center
 - b. Temple to the Roman God Pan
 - c. For tourists the place is called Banyias; the original name was Paneas, but the “p” doesn’t translate well in Aramaic, so Paneas became Banyias
- C. One wonders why Jesus decided to retreat to this particular place
 - 1. About as far away from Jerusalem as you can get and still be in Israel
 - a. And at the center of pagan religious influence
 - 2. In one sense, it’s a good place for a retreat
 - a. Can have time away from distractions with disciples, teaching them
 - b. Also away from the crowds, which provide their own kinds of distractions
- D. The timing of this encounter was most likely the summer of the third year of His ministry
 - 1. And in a sense, it was time to regroup a bit, and get back to basics
 - 2. Jesus’ popularity had been diminishing
 - a. Can see it plainly through the Gospel of John which lays out the three years of Jesus’ ministry pretty clearly
 - b. As Jesus said more and more “hard sayings”, more and more people left
 - c. Prompting Jesus, at one point, to ask, “Do you want to go away as well?” (John 6.67)
 - 3. So, there was increasing confusion and controversy over who this Jesus really is
 - a. Some with expectations of Jesus as Messiah in a military-political sense were becoming increasingly disillusioned
 - b. And yet no one could dismiss His incredible miracles and healings
- E. So it was time to have a bit of a recalibration, a retreat of sorts
 - 1. And the focus of the retreat had to do with the identity of Jesus

III. The Questions

- A. So, Jesus uses an interactive approach to his retreat
 - 1. He asks them questions
 - a. Two, actually
 - b. Both concerning His identity

- c. But each asked in a little different way
- d. One asking for the opinion of the people, the general population
- e. The other asking for their opinion
- 2. This was one of the first polls ever recorded!
 - a. Maybe not – but I can't think of another one
- 3. Of course, Jesus wasn't terribly concerned about polls
 - a. He wasn't today's politicians – always trying to find which way the parade is marching, then running to the front to pretend that he's the leader!
 - b. It has been said that Lyndon Johnson used to carry around in his pocket the results of the latest polls
- 4. But Jesus wasn't like that; polls would not influence His decision making
 - a. He was just as likely to send people away as to tell them what they wanted to hear

B. **The People**

- 1. So, the first question He poses to the disciples was this:
 - a. **Matthew 16:13** (ESV) —
(1) 13 ... **“Who do people say that the Son of Man is?”**
- 2. The way Jesus asks the question is itself significant
 - a. First, he's asking for the view of the man in the street; what's the word on the street about Me?
 - b. Really, as we said, one of the first opinion polls!
- 3. But He doesn't say, “who do people say that I am?”
 - a. He says, “Who do people say that the Son Man is?”
- 4. He uses a title for Himself: “the Son of Man”
 - a. It is Jesus' favorite self-designation in the gospels
 - b. Of all the titles, Lord, Christ, Son of God, Messiah, King – they are far and away outpaced by the title “Son of Man” when Jesus speaks about Himself
 - c. Others use other titles; He uses “Son of Man” about Himself
- 5. Now, “Son of Man” is one of the most misunderstood titles of Jesus in the NT
 - a. Misunderstood about us
- 6. We normally make some theological assumptions about Jesus based on our understanding of orthodox doctrine
 - a. Right doctrine – but in this case wrongly applied
- 7. We know, for instance, that Jesus is the God-man
 - a. He is divine and human at the same time
 - b. The hypostatic union – two natures in one person
- 8. So, we take that biblical truth and we apply it to His names
 - a. We say, “Son of God” refers to His deity
 - b. And “Son of Man” refers to His humanity
- 9. So, we say, whenever Jesus speaks about Himself as the Son of Man, He's simply being humble
 - a. When others want Him to claim His Messiahship, His deity, He

- replies (we say), “Aw shucks. No, I’m just the Son of Man – I’m just like you!”
10. But this is when Jesus would say, “You people don’t know the scriptures or the power of God!”
 - a. Because when Jesus uses the phrase “Son of Man” He has a specific reference in mind
 11. **Daniel 7:9–14** (ESV) —
 - a. 9 “As I looked, thrones were placed, and the Ancient of Days took his seat; his clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames; its wheels were burning fire.
 - b. 10 A stream of fire issued and came out from before him; a thousand thousands served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; the court sat in judgment, and the books were opened.
 - c. 11 “I looked then because of the sound of the great words that the horn was speaking. And as I looked, the beast was killed, and its body destroyed and given over to be burned with fire.
 - d. 12 As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but their lives were prolonged for a season and a time.
 - e. 13 “I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven **there came one like a son of man**, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him.
 - f. 14 **And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.**
 12. How does that description grab you?
 - a. That’s no self-denigration; no statement of humility
 - b. That’s a bold statement the He is the One presented before the ancient of days to whom the glory and kingdom were given
 13. The Jews who were acquainted with the scriptures would have understood this designation
 14. **Matthew 26:63–65** (ESV) —
 - a. 63 ... And the high priest said to him, “I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.”
 - b. 64 Jesus said to him, “You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.”
 - c. 65 Then the high priest tore his robes and said, “He has uttered blasphemy. What further witnesses do we need? You have now heard his blasphemy.
 15. Caiaphas knew exactly what Jesus was claiming
 - a. So, when Jesus posed this question to His disciples, there was no question in Jesus’ mind of His identity

16. So, then, what was their answer?
17. **Matthew 16:14** (ESV) —
 - a. 14 And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”
18. John the Baptist – he’d been beheaded
 - a. But people thought he might have come back from the dead!
19. Elijah – misunderstanding of the prophecy of Malachi
20. **Malachi 4:5–6** (ESV) —
 - a. 5 “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes.
 - b. 6 And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction.”
21. The people thought Elijah, who didn’t appear to have died – he was taken up – would reappear, a sort of reincarnation
 - a. Jesus would have to clear that up
 - b. The angel had told Zechariah that his child, John the Baptist would come in the spirit and power of Elijah (**Luke 1.17**)
 - c. Jesus then said, much later, that in John the Baptist, Elijah had come, and they had done to him whatever they pleased (**Mark 9.11-13**)
22. So, John the Baptist, or Elijah; now “others Jeremiah or one of the prophets”
 - a. An extra-biblical text – 2 Maccabees – has Jeremiah hiding the tent and altar of incense, and the ark in a cave
 - b. And he would return to reestablish the sacrificial system
23. And of course, other prophets were thought of as well – just Jeremiah, John the Baptist, and Elijah were at the top of the list in this poll
24. The common denominator among the respondents to this poll was that this Jesus was a prophet of some kind
 - a. And, of course, they were right about that
 - b. But they had no idea how right they were!
25. A prophet is one who speaks for God
 - a. We tend to think of prophets are those who speak of the future
 - b. They do; but that’s really the secondary activity of the prophet
 - c. The prophet forth-tells as much as he foretells
 - d. He speaks for God; often in judgment, in warning, in exhortation, or in encouragement
26. And Jesus, of course, does that in spades
 - a. Better than any other prophet imaginable
 - b. Even greater than Moses
27. But knowing what we know from the Bible, we can take it a step farther
 - a. Two steps farther in fact
28. Jesus is the **subject of prophecy**
 - a. In other words, He was One who spoke for God

- b. **Hebrews 1:1–2** (ESV) —
 - (1) 1 Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets,
 - (2) 2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.
- c. That’s the classic role of the prophet – the spokesman of God
- 29. But Jesus is also the **object of prophecy**
 - a. He’s the One about whom the other prophets spoke
 - b. **Luke 24:44** (ESV) —
 - (1) 44 Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.”
- 30. And finally, Jesus is the **essence of prophecy**
 - a. **John 1:1** (ESV) —
 - (1) 1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
 - b. He not only speaks the Word; He *is* the Word
 - c. **Revelation 19:10** (ESV) —
 - (1) 10 ... [the angel tells John] For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.
- 31. So, is the word on the street correct?
 - a. Well, yes – but they had no idea what kind of prophet Jesus was
 - b. Jesus was the subject, object and essence of prophecy
 - c. And yet, He was so much more

C. **You**

- 1. So, Jesus then turns the question around, and directs it to the disciples themselves
- 2. **Matthew 16:15** (ESV) —
 - a. 15 **He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?”**
- 3. Jesus directs the question, not just to one person – but to them personally, but altogether – 2nd person plural
 - a. Ultimately, the question of Jesus’ identity is a personal issue
 - b. Our individual salvation rises and falls with an accurate knowledge of who Jesus is
- 4. Peter, of course, takes the leadership role – as he usually does
 - a. He answers for the group
 - b. Most likely they’ve have ample opportunity to discuss this with each other
 - c. He’s confident he has the pulse of the group
- 5. **Matthew 16:16** (ESV) —
 - a. 16 **Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”**
- 6. Two titles are given by Peter

- a. Christ (Messiah)
- b. Son of the living God
- 7. The Christ, or Messiah, specifies His mission
 - a. And Son of the living God affirms that Jesus' mission is the Father's mission
 - b. God has sent His Son as the Messiah, the Christ
 - c. The anointed One who will save His people from their sins

IV. Peter's Blessing

- A. This is Peter's finest moment!
- B. Matthew 16:17 (ESV) —
 - 1. 17 And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven."
- C. "Blessed" – makarios (Gk); reminiscent of the Beatitudes
 - 1. Peter is blessed in this response!
- D. Jesus uses Peter's name before Jesus sanctified it
 - 1. "Simon Bar-Jonah" – his ordinary, human name
 - 2. And the point is, in Peter's human condition, he couldn't have figured this out on his own
 - a. Flesh and blood didn't reveal it
 - b. Only God the Father revealed it to you!
 - 3. And it wasn't because God did it by direct instruction
 - a. It was because God revealed it to him by His Spirit
 - b. It was tacit, intuitive
- E. What a great moment for Peter!
 - 1. But then Jesus takes it further, based on Peter's response
- F. Matthew 16:18–19 (ESV) —
 - 1. 18 And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.
 - 2. 19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."
- G. "Peter" – petros (Gk) – detached stone
 - 1. "Rock" – petra (Gk) – rock
- H. Probably too much is made of this name, thing
 - 1. The idea is that Peter's name sounds like the Greek word for rock
- I. Remember, Peter is speaking collectively on behalf of the disciples
 - 1. Cf Ephesians 2:19–22 (ESV) —
 - a. 19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,
 - b. 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone,
 - c. 21 in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.

- d. 22 In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.
- 2. Apostles and prophets are the foundation of the church; not one man
- J. Peter is who is was by the gracious revelation of God, not by any characteristic of Peter himself
 - 1. So the church is built on the confession that Peter made which comes by grace through faith in the identity of Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God
- K. And then there is the prophecy of the victory of the church over the forces of evil
 - 1. The gates of hell shall not prevail!
 - 2. Cf Revelation's message to the churches re: overcomers
- L. Key issue – authority
 - 1. In countercultural distinction with the anti-authoritarianism of this age
- M. **Matthew 16:20** (ESV) —
 - 1. 20 **Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ.**
- N. Here the Messianic secret is explicitly articulated that we have referred to often
 - 1. “Don't tell anyone that Jesus is the Christ”
- O. Why not?
 - 1. Well, because the people had a different definition of the Christ, or Messiah, than Jesus intends
 - 2. Which we'll see in a moment in spades

V. **Peter's Curse**

- A. **Matthew 16:21–23** (ESV) —
 - 1. 21 **From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.**
 - 2. 22 **And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, “Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you.”**
 - 3. 23 **But he turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.”**
- B. Now Jesus explains the true meaning of His Messiahship
 - 1. He must suffer, die, and be raised
 - 2. He had earlier proclaimed as much, though in somewhat veiled terms
 - a. Now He's forthright and plain in His description
- C. Then there is Peter's great oxymoron
 - 1. **“Lord!... never”**
 - 2. So, Peter contradicts His Lord!
 - a. The One whom He has already confessed is the Christ, the Son of the Living God
 - b. He now says this Lord doesn't know what He's talking about!
- D. Then Jesus identifies Peter with Satan!
 - 1. “Get behind me, Satan!”
 - 2. Prefigures Peter's later denials

- a. Which contrasts with Jesus' threefold temptations by Satan
 - 3. Satan is trying like crazy to keep Jesus from His appointed mission
 - a. So, when Peter tries to do the same thing, He reminds Jesus of Satan's attempts
 - b. Satan tried to give Jesus the kingdoms of the world without suffering
 - c. It's as if Peter has switched sides; he's now on the other team!
 - 4. Jesus tells Peter that he's setting his mind on the things of men, not of God
 - a. That's something we should all be careful of
 - b. Especially in this polarized, politically fractured world
 - 5. How easy it is to slip from God-honoring inspired thinking to human thinking
 - a. Peter shifted this way in a matter of hours
- E. Sometimes our best days and our worst days come merely hours apart
 - 1. That's the way it was with Peter

VI. **Glory**

- A. So, what does this say about the Glory of Christ
 - 1. Much in this story
 - 2. Titles
 - a. Son of Man is a title of great glory
 - b. The confession of Jesus as the Christ – according to Jesus' own definition of the Christ
 - c. Son of God shines through it all as coming direct from the Father
 - 3. The revelation to see the glory of the Son in Jesus
 - a. Peter's best moments
- B. But the warning is to not divorce the glory of Christ from the suffering of Christ