



SERMON: 40 Days of Discipleship – *“True Identity: The Messiah & the Rock”*

Watch [this week's sermon](#)

Read [Matthew 16:13-20](#) – **“Peter’s Declaration about Jesus”**

- Jesus first asks what other people are saying about him before asking the disciples personally. Why do you think Jesus begins with the opinions of the crowd? How do cultural assumptions and popular opinions still shape how people think about Jesus today? In what ways can those voices sometimes influence how we understand him?
- Then Jesus makes the question personal: “But who do you say I am?” Why is this question so central to the Christian faith? What makes answering it personally different from simply knowing what others believe? How would you describe who Jesus is in your own words today?
- Peter declares that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the living God. Why would this confession have been so bold and even dangerous in that context? What does the title Messiah reveal about who Jesus truly is and what he came to do? How might our understanding of Jesus change if we move from describing him with adjectives to trusting him as Messiah and Lord?
- After Peter’s confession, Jesus speaks about building his church and giving Peter a new role in God’s mission. What does this reveal about how God works through ordinary people who respond in faith? How might understanding who Jesus truly is reshape the purpose and direction of your life? Where do you sense Jesus inviting you to trust him more deeply right now?

Read [Matthew 14:22-33](#) – **“Jesus Walks on Water”**

- In the middle of the storm, Jesus declares, “Take courage. I am here.” Why is that phrase so significant in the story? What do you think the disciples might have understood when Jesus used the words “I am”? How does remembering who Jesus is change the way we face the storms in our lives?
- Peter actually steps out of the boat and walks on water toward Jesus. What do you admire about Peter’s response in that moment? What might it have taken for him to step out of the boat in the middle of a storm? Where might Jesus be inviting you to step toward him in faith right now?
- Peter begins to sink when he focuses on the wind and waves instead of Jesus. Why do you think our attention shifts so quickly from faith to fear? What are some “storms” or distractions in your life that pull your focus away from Christ? How have you experienced that tension between trust and fear?
- Even when Peter begins to sink, Jesus immediately reaches out and catches him. What does that reveal about Jesus’ character and his relationship with his disciples? How does this story challenge the idea that faith means never struggling or doubting? Where do you need to hear Jesus saying, “Do not be afraid. I am here”?

Read [John 14:6](#) – **“Jesus, the Way to the Father”**

- Jesus says, “I am the way.” What do you think it means that Jesus is not just someone who shows the way, but that he himself is the way? How is that different from treating Jesus as one helpful guide among many? Where do people today tend to look for direction or meaning apart from him?
- Jesus also says, “I am the truth.” Why do you think truth matters so much when it comes to understanding who Jesus is? How can culture, personal experience, or tradition sometimes reshape the way we think about truth? What does it look like to allow Jesus himself to define what is true?
- Jesus finishes by saying, “I am the life.” What do you think Jesus means by life in this context? How is the life Jesus offers different from the kind of life the world promises? Where have you seen glimpses of that deeper life when you center your faith on him?
- Jesus concludes with a very direct claim that no one comes to the Father except through him. Why do you think this statement can feel challenging or uncomfortable in a world with many different beliefs? How does this claim connect with the sermon’s emphasis on building life on a firm foundation? What difference does it make in daily life if Jesus truly is the way, the truth, and the life?

Read [Ephesians 1:4-5](#) – “Spiritual Blessings”

- Paul says that God chose us in Christ before the world was made. What does it mean to you that your relationship with God began with his choice rather than your effort? How might this change the way you think about your worth or place in God’s story? Where do people often look for identity if they do not understand this truth?
- The passage says that God’s desire was for us to be holy and without fault in his eyes. How is this different from the pressure many people feel to prove themselves or earn approval? What does it reveal about God’s heart toward his people? How might believing this shape the way you see yourself and others?
- Paul describes believers as being adopted into God’s family through Jesus. What images or emotions come to mind when you think about adoption in this context? How does adoption help us understand the depth of God’s love and commitment? What difference does it make to know that belonging to God is a gift rather than an achievement?
- This passage shows that identity flows from who God says we are in Christ. How does this connect with the sermon’s challenge not to let culture or personal assumptions define who Jesus is or who we are? What voices most often compete with God’s voice when it comes to your identity? What might change if you consistently viewed yourself through the truth of being chosen and adopted by God?

**APPLICATION: Pick one to put into practice this week.**

1. **Anchor Your Answer to Jesus’ Question:** Take a few minutes one day this week to sit quietly with Jesus’ question from Matthew 16: “Who do you say I am?” Write down your answer in a sentence or two. Then read John 14:6 and ask God to deepen your understanding of who Jesus truly is beyond simple descriptions or assumptions.
2. **Refocus Your Eyes in the Storm:** When you notice anxiety, stress, or chaos pulling your attention away from God this week, pause and pray a short prayer like Peter’s: “Save me, Lord.” Then name one way Jesus has already shown his presence or faithfulness in your life, reminding yourself that he is still with you in the storm.
3. **Let Jesus Shape Your Identity:** Each day this week, read Ephesians 1:4–5 and reflect on the identity God gives you: chosen, loved, and adopted into his family. Ask yourself how that truth might change the way you think, speak, or act in one specific situation that day, letting your identity in Christ shape the way you live.

## DAILY BIBLE READINGS & QUESTIONS

View this week's [Daily Bible Readings](#)

### Monday

16

Matthew  
17:1-27

### Tuesday

17

Matthew  
18:1-35

### Wednesday

18

Matthew  
19:1-15

### Thursday

19

Matthew  
19:16-30

### Friday

20

Matthew  
20:1-34

#### Monday, March 16: Matthew 17:1-27

1. On the mountain Jesus shines like the sun, talks with Moses and Elijah, and is named by the Father as his beloved Son, yet on the way down he speaks again about suffering and being killed. When you hold that glory and that path of suffering together, how does it stretch your picture of who Jesus is and what it means to follow him when you would rather stay on the “mountaintop” moments?
2. Later in the chapter the disciples cannot heal the boy, Jesus speaks about faith as small as a mustard seed, and then he quietly provides the temple tax through a coin in a fish’s mouth. When you look at those scenes side by side, what do they reveal about your own mixture of weakness, fear, and dependence on Jesus, and where do you sense him inviting you to trust him in a practical situation that feels beyond your resources right now?

#### Tuesday, March 17: Matthew 18:1-35

1. Jesus places a child in the middle as the model for greatness, warns against causing “little ones” to stumble, goes after one lost sheep, and then tells Peter to forgive not seven times but seventy seven times. When you hold those scenes together, what picture do you get of the kind of community Jesus is trying to form, and where do you notice ways your own instincts about status, offense, or fairness clash with that vision?
2. In the parable of the unforgiving servant, a man who has been forgiven an unpayable debt violently grabs a fellow servant over a tiny amount, seeming to forget what he has just received. When you imagine that scene, what does it reveal about how easy it is to enjoy God’s mercy yet withhold it from others, and what is one specific relationship or situation where Jesus may be inviting you to practice the kind of forgiveness you have been shown?

#### Wednesday, March 18: Matthew 19:1-15

1. The Pharisees ask about the legal grounds for divorce, but Jesus takes them back to God’s original design for marriage and names “hardness of heart” as the real issue. How does that shift from arguing about what is technically allowed to examining the heart behind our choices challenge the way you think about commitment, and where do you see hardness of heart showing up in relationships around you or in yourself?

2. Right after a hard conversation about marriage, divorce, and even choosing singleness for the kingdom, the disciples try to send children away and Jesus instead welcomes and blesses them, saying the kingdom belongs to such as these. When you hold those moments together, what do they reveal about the kind of humility and dependence Jesus is looking for, and what might it look like for you or for your group to receive the kingdom more like a child in this season?

**Thursday, March 19:** Matthew 19:16-30

1. When Jesus tells the rich man to sell his possessions, give to the poor, and then follow him, the man goes away sad not because he disagrees but because he has great wealth. How does that scene expose the difference between admiring Jesus' teaching and actually releasing what holds you back, and where do you sense a similar attachment in your own life that would be hard to surrender if he asked?
2. After the rich man leaves, Jesus talks about camels and needles, impossibility with humans, and possibility with God, then promises that those who leave things for his sake will receive far more and "many who are first will be last." When you hold that upside down promise next to your own ideas of success, security, and reward, what is one specific way this passage invites you to rethink what "coming out ahead" really looks like as a follower of Jesus?

**Friday, March 20:** Matthew 20:1-34

1. In the parable of the workers, those who worked all day are angry that the last workers receive the same wage, while the owner insists on his freedom to be generous. How does that tension between fairness and generosity reveal your own reactions to God's grace, and where do you notice yourself struggling when others seem to "get more" than they deserve?
2. In the same chapter Jesus predicts his suffering, the disciples argue about seats of honor, he teaches that greatness means being a servant, and then he stops to heal two men who cry out for mercy. When you hold those scenes together, what do they reveal about the kind of king Jesus is and the kind of greatness he calls you to, and where might you need him to open your eyes to serve rather than to be seen?

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Daily devotions](#)
  - Podcasts:
    - [Pastor Mike Drop!](#)
    - ["Gospel" – Word with Webb podcast](#)
  - Videos:
    - [BibleProject: Matthew 14-28](#) (7:10)
    - [BibleProject: Gospel of the Kingdom](#) (4:50)
    - [BibleProject: The Gospel](#) (5:38)
  - Articles:
    - ["What are the Gospels?" by Tim Mackie \(BibleProject\)](#)
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