

### Dwelling in the Word

Prayerfully read Matt 16:13-17:9 and ask: 1) What words, phrases, or images stood out to you? 2) What does this say about what God desires to accomplish in you? 3) How could you respond to what God says in this passage?

### Beginning the Conversation

1. The disciple' answer to Jesus' question, "Who do people say I am?", included Moses, Elijah, and Jeremiah. What would be some of the different answers today to the same question? Who do people think Jesus is?
2. The transfiguration was literally and figuratively a "mountain top experience." Share a time when you've had a mountaintop experience. What are some things that made it memorable?

### Digging Deeper *(pick some of the following questions to discuss as a group)*

1. Jesus' identity was a question that came up a number of times in his ministry (see ), and in this passage Jesus himself brings it up. How do you think Peter (and the other disciples) knew that Jesus was the Messiah? List at least five reasons.
2. In his response to Peter's confession, Jesus says three important things about the church:
  - a. The church is built on "this rock" (16:18a). What "rock" do you think Jesus is referring to?
  - b. Death will not prevail against the church (16:18b). This image is of a church that overcomes the power of death by smashing open the "gates of Hades" with the gospel message. What does this say about the power of the gospel over death? Do you think there is a different perspective about death among followers of Jesus over against people generally? (see 1Cor 15:55-57; 1 Thess 4:13-18)
  - c. The church has been given the "keys of the kingdom," i.e., the authority of the church to "loose" and "bind" the Scriptures (16:19; see also 18:15-18). How have you understood this verse? What do you think about the interpretation that this gives the church in every time and context the authority to discern the meaning and applicability of the Scriptures?
3. Based on Peter's response to Jesus' comments about future suffering, as well as Jesus' late rebuke (16:21-23; see also Acts 1:6-8), how did Peter (and the other disciples) apparently understand the nature of Jesus' Messiahship? How did Jesus understand his Messiahship? What implications does that have?
4. What does it mean to be a "cruciform" disciple? (see 16:24-27).
5. Close your eyes and imagine the scene of the transfiguration (17:1-9). How do you think you would have reacted in that same situation? What do you think of Peter's reaction?

### Living it Out

1. In 17:5, God spoke out a reminder of Jesus' identity. It's a powerful reminder of who and *whose* Jesus is. Is there someone in your life that you could speak words of life to this week? Is there someone you know that could use a reminder of God's deep love for them?
2. The same Greek word to describe Jesus' transfiguration in 17:2 is used by the Apostle Paul to talk about our transformation into the image of Jesus by the Holy Spirit (Romans 12:2; 2Corinthians 3:18). In what ways would you like God to transform you into the image of Jesus?

## Revelations & Transfigurations (Matthew 16:13-17:9)

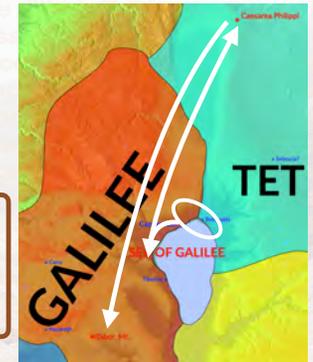


Discourse 4  
Community of the  
Kingdom (14-18)

March 1, 2026  
Pastor Tyler Williams  
Greenfield Community Church

## Journeying with Jesus

- Feeding of the 4000 plus – along the Sea of Galilee on a hillside (15:29).
- Confrontation with Pharisees and Sadducees – around Magadan/Magdala (15:39).
- Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi (16:13).
- Jesus' transfiguration – up "a high mountain by themselves" – perhaps Mt Tabor (17:1).



## Confession at Caesarea Philippi

"Who do people say the Son of Man is?" (16:13).

"John the Baptist...  
Elijah...  
Jeremiah...  
one of the prophets" (16:13).

"But what about *you*?  
Who do *you* say I am?" (16:15).

## Confession at Caesarea Philippi

"You are the **Messiah**, the **Son of the living God!**" (16:16).

- The clearest confession of Jesus' Messiahship (1:1, 17; 2:4; 26:63).
- "Son of the Living God" – the disciples earlier confessed this (14:33; allusion to 2Samuel 7:14; Psalm 2:7).
- Powerful reminder that the God with whom Jesus is connected is not an philosophical abstraction, but the dynamic God of Israel's faith and history.

## Confession at Caesarea Philippi

"Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, **but by my Father in heaven**" (16:17).

- Jesus congratulated Peter not on his personal insight, as if he somehow puzzled it out. Rather, Jesus blessed Peter as a willing recipient of divine revelation (cf. 11:25-27; 13:16).
- "No one can say, 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit" (1Cor 12:3).

## Confession at Caesarea Philippi

"You are **Peter**, and on this **rock** I will build my church..." (16:18a).

- Peter [*petros*] is the rock [*petra*]; he is identified as the first among the Apostles, upon whom the church will be built (cf. 7:24-25).
- The church is built on "the foundation of the apostles and prophets," who together with all the saints confess Jesus as "the Messiah" and "the Son of the living God" and "the chief cornerstone" (Eph 2:20).

## Confession at Caesarea Philippi

"... and the gates of Hades **will not overcome it**" (16:18b).

- "Hades" is referring to the realm of the dead, with the "gates" keeping people inside.
- So this is not a defensive image, but rather an image of *the church on the offensive*: the church will overcome the power of death by smashing open the gates of Hades (cf. 12:28-29; 1Cor 15:55-57).

## Confession at Caesarea Philippi

"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" (16:19).

- "Binding & loosing" refers to the rabbinic practice of discerning the applicability of Scripture (*halakah*).
- Significantly, Jesus entrusts to Peter (and later to the church in 18:15-18) the authority to discern how the Scriptures are to be applied.

## Confession at Caesarea Philippi

"We [the church] are summoned by the God who speaks to us in the Bible to *listen* to God speak, to *live out* what God directs us to live out, and to *discern how* to live out the Story in our own day" (Scott McKnight, *The Blue Parakeet*, 265).

## Confession at Caesarea Philippi

- Jesus tells them to not to repeat his identity as the Messiah to anyone (16:20; cf. 8:4; 9:30; 12:16), and then explains the path of suffering and death that awaits him in Jerusalem (16:21).
- Peter rebukes(!) Jesus, as he evidently didn't accept the notion of a suffering Messiah (16:22).
- Jesus in turn rebukes Peter with the infamous words, "Get behind me, Satan!" (16:23), and then teaches that his disciples must take a similar path (16:24-27).

## The Transfiguration

"There Jesus was **transfigured** before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus" (17:2-3).

- A number of features of this vision recall Moses at Mt. Sinai (Exodus 24:9-18; 34:29-35), while the appearance of Moses underscore Jesus' messianic identity as the "prophet like Moses" (Deut 18:15-19).
- As does the appearance with Elijah, who was to return as the forerunner of the Messiah (Mal 4:5).

## The Transfiguration

"This is **my Son, whom I love**; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!" (17:5).

- Exactly like at his baptism (3:17), the Father's voice confirms Jesus' identity as the Son of God.
- This terrified the disciples, but Jesus reassures them (17:6-7).
- And then, like after Peter's confession, Jesus tells them to not tell anyone about their experience (17:9).

## Invitation

"You are **the Messiah, the Son of the living God**" (16:16).

"This is **my Son, whom I love**; with him I am well pleased.  
Listen to him!" (17:5).

Who do you think **Jesus** is?