

JESUS PREDICTS HIS DEATH AND [RESURRECTION](#)

Matthew 16:13-23

Key Verse: 16:21

"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 and on the third day be raised to life."

Up until now Jesus taught his disciples that he is God, through many events. For example, Jesus fed the five thousand with five loaves and two fish. On another occasion, he healed many sick people. The number was over four thousand. In order to heal them one by one, it took a full three days and nights. After that Jesus had great compassion on them and fed them with seven loaves and several fish. Through these events Jesus showed his disciples that he is the Son of God through his miraculous signs and his divine compassion toward people. Jesus also raised dead Lazarus. Lazarus had been in the tomb for four days, but Jesus raised him from the tomb (Jn 11:38-44). Thus he comforted two sorrowful sisters, Mary and Martha. We can say that in the first part of Matthew's Gospel Jesus taught his disciples that he is the Son of God, and they vaguely understood that he is the healer of sick people and the preacher of the kingdom of God. But it was only their general concept, not their faith in Jesus that he is the Son of God. In today's passage Jesus teaches the meaning of his death and resurrection. May his teaching come to our hearts true.

First, Peter's confession of Christ (13-20). As we studied in the last chapters, Jesus was going up to Jerusalem. Jesus had been to Jerusalem many times. But this time was the last time, when he would become the Lamb of God for the sin of the world. Jesus and his disciples came to the region of Caesarea Philippi. Caesarea Philippi is 110 miles north of Jerusalem, in the northernmost part of Palestine. So we can say that this is the starting point of Jesus' going up to Jerusalem. It was very clear that Jesus was teaching his disciples that he is the Son of God who came as the Savior of the world. But his disciples had their own strong ideas and dreams. His teaching didn't penetrate into their hearts. But through their common life with Jesus they were influenced so greatly that they came to know at least that Jesus is the Son of God and that he saves men from their sickness and that he preaches the kingdom of God.

It was time for Jesus to test their faith. So Jesus first gave them an objective question: "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" (13) Usually an objective question is easy. So they answered in unison, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets" (14). It is indeed amazing: The Pharisees despised him and rejected him and hindered his earthly messianic ministry, but people didn't care about their constant slandering and attempt to do away with him. People of all regions believed that Jesus is one of the prophets of God. His disciples passed the objective test with an A+.

The second test, however, was not easy; it was a subjective question. Jesus asked in verse 15, "But what about you? Who do you say I am?"

This time they had to say what they had in their hearts. Simon Peter stood up from his chair and answered. Look at verse 16. "Simon Peter answered, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.'" His confession of Christ was very correct, and it is the [foundation](#) of Christian faith.

Even to Jesus it was a remarkable confession. So Jesus admired him. Verse 17 says, "Jesus replied, 'Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven.'" In this verse we learn that to know who Christ really is is not man's speculation or knowledge. The knowledge that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, should be given from above. In order to acquire this knowledge from above, we must follow Jesus like Peter, putting aside things of the world without reservation. Knowledge that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, is not obtained by human intellectual effort. It is obtained from God when an individual person believes Jesus, that he is the Son of God and Savior of the world, through common life together with him or through studying the Bible teachings and putting them into practice. Those who acquire the knowledge that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God are blessed ones.

When one has clear personal knowledge that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, he becomes firm and steady in his inner man. When he lives in this world he is not shaky. He is not fearful. He is not deceived by magic artists. He is not directed by his sinful nature. He becomes like a rock. Look at verse 18. "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." Here, "the gates of Hades will not overcome it" means that one who believes that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, can defeat the power of sin and death, because Jesus destroys the power of Satan on the cross as the Lamb of God by shedding his blood for the salvation of all mankind.

In verse 18 we see that Peter became the rock, and Jesus promised to build his church on the rock. Here, the concept of church must be clear. A church is not a building but a person. Generally, "church" means the community of those who confess that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Look at verse 19. "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." In this verse, "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven" means that Peter would see the [kingdom of God](#) and also enter the kingdom of God. Not only would he enter the kingdom of God, but also he would guide others to the kingdom of God by God's grace. Those who can confess Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, can see the kingdom of God while on earth. Here, the verb "to see" has the meaning of "to experience." Those who do not have a confession of faith in Christ experience the things of the world: The Presidency of the United States of America and the rulers of this nation, Representatives in the House and Senators in the Senate. Those who have no confession of faith in Christ can see Bulls' games and be Bulls' fans. They also see many ugly and horrible things. Those who see only things of the world are endlessly unhappy because of their overflowing perceptions and imaginations about them. But those who see

the kingdom of God are endlessly happy, thinking of our Lord Jesus Christ's promise and his ministry on the earth. Those who have a confession of faith in Christ also suffer much to follow the footsteps of Jesus. But these sufferings are indeed worthwhile.

Look at the last part of verse 19: "...whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." This verse tells us the concept of relationship. A simple explanation is John 15:5. It says, "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." This verse clearly describes the vine and branch relationship. In other words, it describes love relationship between God and man, and between man and man. Those who have a confession of faith that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, have God's love, just as from the tree the branch gets sap, or living water. Those who have a confession of faith that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, love one another while they are on their pilgrimage. On the other hand, those who have no confession are all separated and selfish and egocentric without any root or any life.

Jesus was happy that Peter made a confession of faith, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." He wants us to have a confession that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. These days many people hate to have commitment and a confession of love. Those who hate a confession of love or confession of faith do not have their name in the book of life, and their life on earth is eating and sleeping, suffering and no more.

Second, Jesus predicts his death and resurrection (21). Look at verse 21. "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 and on the third day be raised to life." On the basis of Peter's confession, Jesus began to teach them the meaning of his death and resurrection. First he said he must go to Jerusalem. At that time Jerusalem was known to be the fortress of Satan. God wanted to make Jerusalem a city of God and a world mission center. But it turned out to be the fortress of Satan. Therefore, when Jesus said, "I am going to Jerusalem," it meant he decided to go up to Jerusalem to suffer much, be rejected and condemned by the elders of the Jews and finally die on the cross. John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." God, in his great mercy, gave his one and only Son to save men so that those who believe in him will not perish but have eternal life. Here, "God gave his one and only Son" means God's utmost expression of his love.

Yesterday one of our missionaries wrote me that her only son was born as a premature baby. So doctors in the hospital put many needles in his brow and hands and feet to inject him with nutrition and life-giving resources. Then she fainted at the sight of that tragic, premature baby, who looked too small to be a human being, with many torturing machines and needles. She complained why this happened to her only son. She complained why her only son was a premature baby and why her only son was so small to look at. She complained why she became like a rabbit going through medical experiments. So she cried out, "O, God."

Then God gave her John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." Through her premature baby son she came to know the love of God who gave his one and only Son to this world. >From that time on she thanked God for her prematurely born son.

Jesus came to this world as the Son of God and he healed the sick and preached the kingdom of God. Finally he came to Jerusalem to die for the sin of the world. When we think about his death on the cross, we feel that Jesus lost to the power of Satan. However, when we prayerfully think about Jesus' death on the cross, we find it was an eternal victory over Satan, the incarnation of hatred. Jesus defeated Satan's hatred and sin and death through his love by being crucified on the cross.

But Jesus' death on the cross was only the beginning. His final victory was his rising again to life on the third day. Jesus won the spiritual victory over the hatred of Satan and the power of sin and death through his crucifixion. But the true victory was God's power to raise the dead Jesus from the grave. Acts 2:24 says, "But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him." Yes! God did not abandon him. God raised good Jesus from the dead and restored his love relationship.

When Jesus died, he was sorrowful to see so many sinners. So he prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" (Lk 23:34a). But the most sorrowful thing in Jesus' heart was his separation from God. His most sorrowful prayer is in Matthew 27:46. It says, "About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, 'Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?'-which means, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'" Until then Jesus had no problem. His incarnation, suffering to take on a human body, and even death on the cross did not matter. But after death, being abandoned in the stone grave really mattered, because it meant separation from God. So Jesus cried out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" But through Jesus' resurrection God restored his vine and branch love relationship with Jesus. He also made Jesus the advocate for all sinners who come to him with repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

Jesus cleanses man's guilty conscience and sense of curse. There is a young man. In his family history, all men have died before the age of 45, except for one person. So he was very fatalistic in his heart. Finally he wanted to participate in psychedelic Christianity in order to solve his fatalistic element of life. But Jesus cleanses man's sense of curse. And Jesus condemns no one. Romans 8:1 says, "Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus...." Once in the early morning the Pharisees brought a woman caught in the very act of adultery and asked Jesus, "Shall we stone her to death or not?" Jesus saved her from the hand of the devil and said to her, "Then neither do I condemn you. Go now and leave your life of sin" (Jn 8:11). There is no condemnation in Jesus. We see so many people who are very angry all the time. Their anger is not a natural element of human life. Anger comes from a sense of condemnation. Those who have a sense of condemnation are always angry at whomever they see. If nobody is there, they are angry at themselves and torture themselves. But whoever comes to Jesus, Jesus does not condemn, but forgives.

Third, "Get behind me, Satan!" (22-23) Peter heard Jesus' prediction of his death. Actually Jesus also told him about his resurrection. But Peter could not catch Jesus' word about resurrection. Peter only heard Jesus' prediction of his death and he was so fearful and angry. So Peter took Jesus aside and began to rebuke him: "Jesus, what are you talking about? Why should you die when you are the Christ, the Son of the living God?" Actually he was rebuking Jesus, not because Jesus was dying on the cross, but because his own human ambition and dream were shattered. He had a dream of becoming a Premier in the messianic kingdom he thought Jesus would establish. But suddenly Jesus publicly predicted his death and resurrection. Peter, who only caught the word "Jesus' death," missing his resurrection, rebuked the Christ, the Son of the living God. Here we learn that Peter had head knowledge that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. But he had no real faith that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. How dangerous it is to have only head knowledge. Here we learn that we must come to Jesus and ask his mercy that we may have true knowledge that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, in our souls.

Jesus also rebuked Peter. Look at verse 23. "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.'" We are living in this world. So we are occupied by the things of the world. It is easy for us to think of the things of the world. It is very difficult to be filled with the living word of God and the true meaning of Jesus' death and resurrection.

Today we learned that Peter made a confession of faith, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Yet it was nothing but his head knowledge. When Jesus predicted his death and resurrection, Peter rebuked Jesus. May God help us to have true knowledge that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. May God richly bless you that God's grace may rest on you.