

Monday, September 5, 2022

Confronting the “Gates of Hell”

Mark 8: 34 (NLT)

Then, calling the crowd to join his disciples, he said, “If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me.

1. Considering their location at Caesarea Philippi, why was Peter’s use of the word “living” significant when he declared Jesus to be “*the Christ, the Son of the living God*”? **READ: Matthew 16: 13 – 16**

2. The church has long debated Jesus’ meaning of “rock” in Matthew 16: 18 *On this rock I will build my church.*
 - Traditionally ,the “rock” is Peter’s confession the Jesus is the Christ.(i.e., Christ, the Son of the living God, the foundation of the church. **READ: Acts 4: 10 & 11 and 1 Corinthians 3: 10 -15)** This is Pastor Jeff’s view.

 - Some consider Peter to be the rock, the leader of the church upon whom Jesus will build His church.

 - Consider this: Rabbi’s used visible objects, metaphors, to convey their lesson. At Caesarea Philippi there was the “rock of the gods” on where numerous statues of pagan gods were displayed in niches carved into the face of the cliff – What could be the symbolic meaning of Jesus’ declaration. “*on this rock I will build my church*”? Could this be another metaphor that Jesus was using to convey that upon the rock of pagan values and dead idolatry that the church would replace those values an institute wordship to the living God?

Tuesday, September 6, 2022

Confronting the “Gates of Hell”

Mark 8: 34 (NLT)

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Matthew 16: 13 – 18 (ESV)

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” ¹⁴ And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” ¹⁵ He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” ¹⁶ Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” 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. 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.

1. The cave at the base of Caesarea Philippi was called the “gates of hades,” and in this setting Jesus continued teaching about the building of His church. He boldly declared that *“the gates of hell will not prevail against it.”* If the purpose of gates is to defend, who or what would be attacking the forces of hell? What did Jesus say would be the outcome of this battle?
2. Would you say the church today generally views itself as being offensive or defensive in the battle against evil?
3. How might this view differ from what Jesus taught His disciples in Caesarea Philippi?
4. How might an offensive vs defensive mentality affect the way disciples **(YOU)** minister in the culture around them today?

Wednesday, September 7, 2022

Confronting the “Gates of Hell”

Mark 8: 34 – 38 (NLT)

Then, calling the crowd to join his disciples, he said, “If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me. ³⁵ If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake and for the sake of the Good News, you will save it. ³⁶ And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul? ³⁷ Is anything worth more than your soul? ³⁸ If anyone is ashamed of me and my message in these adulterous and sinful days, the Son of Man will be ashamed of that person when he returns in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”

1. The text tells us that Jesus taught not only His disciples, but the pagan crowd as well. What types of people were probably present when Jesus addressed the crowd near Caesarea Philippi?
2. What did He tell the crowd they must do if they wanted to be one of His followers?
3. In what ways would people who worshiped Pan and other gods have to “give up your own ways” in order to follow Jesus?

READ: 1 Peter 4: 3 & 4 and 1 John 2: 15 – 17

4. How might the disciples have felt when Jesus suddenly called out to the pagan crowd? What impact do you think His strong words about being ashamed of him had on His disciples that day and in the future days of their ministries?

Thursday, September 8, 2022

Prepared to Change the World

1 John 2: 3 – 6 (NLT)

And we can be sure that we know him if we obey his commandments. ⁴ If someone claims, “I know God,” but doesn’t obey God’s commandments, that person is a liar and is not living in the truth. ⁵ But those who obey God’s word truly show how completely they love him. That is how we know we are living in him. ⁶ Those who say they live in God should live their lives as Jesus did.

One reason the gospel spread rapidly during the days of the early church was because Jesus’ disciples weren’t simply people who heard his teachings and agreed with them. Rather, Jesus had called them to be His chosen disciples who had a passion to not only know what Jesus knew, but to put His teachings into practice and to seek to live as He lived. Jesus’ disciples in turn developed close relationships with others who would themselves become disciples.

1. Jesus trained His disciples by instruction and example, and also by giving them opportunities to practice what they had learned. Read the following accounts of Jesus sending out His disciples to minister.

a. Sending out the Twelve READ: LUKE 9: 1 – 9

- 1) How did Jesus instruct them?
- 2) What did the disciples do?
- 3) What were the results?

b. Sending out the Seventy-two READ: Luke 10: 1 - 12; 17 – 20

- 1) How did Jesus instruct them?
- 2) What did the disciples do?
- 3) What were the results?

Friday, September 9, 2022

Prepared to Change the World

Matthew 28: 16 – 20 (NLT)

Then the eleven disciples left for Galilee, going to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. ¹⁷ When they saw him, they worshiped him—but some of them doubted!

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Today's passage from Matthew 28 is referred to as **The Great Commission**. As you read the passages below, note the ways in which Jesus' disciples carried out His instructions.

1. **READ Acts 26: 19 – 30** To whom was the message of Christ to be taught?
2. **READ 1 Corinthians 4: 15 – 17** In what ways were the disciples training up new disciples?
3. **READ 1 Thessalonians 1: 6 & 7** How important is it to model the message of Christ for others?
4. **READ Hebrews 6: 10 - 12 and 13: 7** What were believers to imitate?

Saturday, September 10, 2022

Prepared to Change the World

John 14: 21 (NLT)

Those who accept my commandments and obey them are the ones who love me. And because they love me, my Father will love them. And I will love them and reveal myself to each of them.

1. Do you consider yourself a disciple of Jesus who passionately seeks to become like Him in every way? Why or why not?
2. In which areas of your life do you need to focus more attention?
3. Which obstacles must you overcome or which sins must you turn away from in order to devote yourself fully to your relationship with Jesus?
4. What kind of model are you of Christ? When people see you, do they see someone who is totally committed to following Jesus' teachings and seeks to be like Him?
5. Just as the 72 disciples experienced joy when they saw God's power at work, God also wants us to experience joy in serving Him. When have you received at least a glimpse of God working through you? How has that encouraged you to faithfully live according to Jesus' teachings?