



Sermon Outline

SEASON FOUR - WHO'S WHO (AND WHO'S NOT)

MATTHEW 16:13-20

COME
And SEE

The
CHOSEN



Who's Who (and Who's Not)

This resource helps you tell the story of Peter's "great confession" at Caesarea Philippi—that Jesus is the Christ—as recorded in Matthew 16:13-20. It includes two clips to show the congregation (from Season 4, Episode Two), a suggested script for setting the scene before you show each clip, and a short sermon outline with main teaching points and pastoral prompts.

Sermon Title: Who's Who (and Who's Not)

Text: Matthew 16:13-20

Dominant Thought: Jesus is who he's been said to be.

[Download the Episode Clip #1: Peter's Great Confession 1](#)

[Download the Episode Clip #2: Peter's Great Confession 2](#)

Setting the Scene for Clip #1 (suggested script)

A huge moment in the life and ministry of Jesus—and in the life and ministry of the church—unfolds in the second episode of Season 4 of *The Chosen*, and we're going to watch it all play out in two clips from the show. The first clip is a short one, but it establishes some very important context. Let me set the scene a bit for you. It's important to know that in the scene we're about to watch together, John the Baptist has just been executed by Herod Antipas, a Roman tetrarch—that is, a type of Roman regional ruler. As you would imagine, the disciples are knee-deep in grief over the loss of their friend, and Jesus, not wanting his followers to grieve as those who are without hope, takes them on a little trip. To where? Watch...

***If you've never introduced your congregation to *The Chosen*, here is a slightly different first half of the script:** The creators of *The Chosen*, a TV series about the life of Jesus and those who followed him, let us look in on some of the key moments in the life and ministry of Jesus.

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Sermon Outline

Introduction

*Show the clip from *The Chosen*, using the suggested script above to set the scene.

*Once the clip’s been shown, here’s a suggested script for transitioning to the sermon proper: “It’s tempting to rush right past the little geographical asides that the gospel writers include in their accounts, because we’re tempted to think it can’t possibly mean all that much that such-and-such happened in such-and-such a place. But it’s no small thing that the disciples are walking into Caesarea Philippi...”

Sermon Body

I. The many powers of the world insist they’re all-powerful.

Main Teaching Point: To walk into Caesarea Philippi was to stare down the powers of the world that insist they’re all-powerful. To walk into the city was to walk among the religious powers of the day and days past—to walk among the gods of the age and ages past. The city had long been a central hub for the worship of Pan, a terrifying half-man-half-goat god who was said to be able to conjure up among the people a devastating, violent fear and all-out domestic panic. A cave located in the city, one that reached unusual depths, was a designated spot to toss sacrifices in an effort to appease him, thus diverting his power. But there were even more gods and goddesses that set the people of Caesarea Philippi trembling, their stories told in carvings etched into the side of the rocky cliffs that ran along the city’s edge. And long before any of these deities, it’s believed the city had been set aside as a place to worship Baal, an ancient god of fertility and rain associated with the demonic. Such religious powers! But this, too: to walk into Caesarea Philippi was to walk among the political powers of the day and days past—to walk among the all-powerful emperors and tetrarchs of Rome. It’s in the very name of the city: *Caesarea Philippi*. You know who Caesar Augustus (sometimes called Augustus Caesar) is: founder of the Roman Empire and emperor of emperors. A massive marble temple stood in the city in his honor. And the “Philip” in “Philippi”? He was the iron-fisted tetrarch who was the son of Herod the Great

who slaughtered the children of Bethlehem. And emperors and tetrarchs alike are the ones behind the murder of John the Baptist himself and are ever and always breathing murderous threats down the neck of Jesus and his followers. To walk into Caesarea Philippi was to stare down the religious and political powers of the world that insisted they're all-powerful—unconquerable.

Pastoral Prompt: While we'd like to think some grand chasm exists between the ancient world and our own, any such chasm is akin to a thin crack in a sidewalk. Do you see that to walk into any town or city today is to stare down the powers of the world that insist they're all-powerful? We have our own gods and goddesses and our own empires and emperors that demand appeasement—that demand a variety of material and spiritual sacrifices here and there, lest we lose our place, our work, our wealth. Do you see that *today* we walk in the same shadows cast by the same powers of yesterday, and like those who went before us, we tremble at the powers that seem unconquerable? But...

II. The many powers of the world are not who they say they are.

Main Teaching Point: That is, they are *not* all-powerful; they are *not* unconquerable. Did you notice the subtle declaration of this deeper truth in the scene from *The Chosen*? Before Jesus and his followers walk amidst the powers, they walk by a marble head that's been severed from a statue, laughably laying sideways in overgrown grass. "That's Baal," says one disciple. They all seem a bit unnerved. But do you see the deeper truth? Baal has fallen. He's no longer "the" religious power. He's been swapped out for the latest in a long line of religious powers that are welcomed when a people grow bored. All this to say, these religious powers are ultimately powerless and *quite* conquerable. But then, so are the political powers. The "Caesar" of Caesarea has long been dead. And the tetrarchs, Philip included, only ever busy themselves with jealous and petty acts against one another—and history shows that their house divided will not stand. And circle back to the context of this visit to the city by Jesus and his followers: the death of John the Baptist. His murder was the result of the "great and mighty" Herod being seduced by ... a dance recital. Ultimately powerless and quite conquerable *indeed*.

Pastoral Prompt: Do you see that no matter what it is they say and insist, the religious and political powers of this world—of *our* world—are ultimately powerless and quite conquerable? What will never be overturned is the turnover consistently seen in philosophies and fads, traditions and teaching, leaders and leadership structures. The only way the powers of the world

even exist, let alone maintain their existence, is by the appeasement from—and the material and spiritual sacrifices of—a people who are ever and always fickle with regard to loyalty, because they are ever and always growing bored or distracted. The foundations of the powers that are supposedly foundational are tenuous at best. Do you see that *today* we walk in the same shadows cast by the same powers of yesterday, and like those powers of yesterday, today's powers prove themselves time and again to be ultimately powerless and quite conquerable? And so perhaps it's time for us to look elsewhere...

Transition to Clip #2

*Transition to showing the second clip from *The Chosen* by using the following suggested script: "The first clip from *The Chosen* showed Jesus and his disciples making their way *into* Caesarea Philippi. Here's a second clip that shows what happened once they stopped and stood in the heart of the city..."

*After showing the clip, consider reading the text on which it's based Matthew 16:13-20. You could transition from the showing of the clip to the reading of the text by saying something like: "Did you see that fun little moment in the clip where Jesus nods to one of the disciples to start writing down what was about to happen? The disciple he gives a bit of a winking look to is Matthew, who did indeed record what happened in Matthew 16:13-20. I know we just *watched* this, but let's *listen* to it, too..."

*After reading the passage, you could transition back to the sermon proper with a word similar to this: "We've seen the many powers of the world who insist they are all-powerful. We've seen that the many powers of the world are not who they say they are. And here we have a moment where Jesus asks a piercing question of his disciples: 'Who do you say I am?' And an answer comes from Simon—now renamed 'Peter': 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.'"

III. Jesus is who he's been said to be.

Main Teaching Point: It's quite the thing for Peter to say in Caesarea Philippi, of all places.

"You are...the living God." Given everything that's been pointed out thus far via the scenes from *The Chosen*, from the Scripture the scenes are based upon, from ancient history—how Baal has fallen, how gods and goddesses are swapped out in light of the people's fancy or who's in charge—these words from Peter are especially potent. And this, too: "You are...the Christ." That title's reserved only for the Messiah—the one true King who will rescue not only all of Israel, but

all the nations of the world. Given everything that's been pointed out thus far via the scenes from *The Chosen*, from the Scripture the scenes are based upon, from ancient history—how Caesar has long been in the ground, how emperors and empires have claimed power only to fall time and again—these words from Peter are especially potent. “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” With these words, standing in Caesarea Philippi, Peter is saying, “*You* are everything these powers can only *claim* to be.” He says this because at this point he's watched Jesus fill nets with fish, turn water to wine, teach with matchless authority, cause lifeless legs to walk again, cause blind eyes to see again, cause leprous skin to be pure again, cause deaf ears to hear again, send demons fleeing, stir freedom in forgiveness, feed the 5,000, walk on water, and raise a child from the dead. He has seen and so he knows that Jesus is who he's been said to be through his words and his actions—the only one who is truly all-powerful.

Pastoral Prompt: And do you see that even today Jesus is who he's been said to be—that hundreds upon hundreds of years later you can utter the same words as Peter and feel just as confident as he did about just how true the words ring? All gods and goddesses and all manner of gods and goddesses have fallen, while Jesus stands—and we know this to be true all the more in the wake of the Resurrection (something Peter had not yet witnessed when he made his initial confession). All emperors and empires and all manner of emperors and empires have fallen, while Jesus and his kingdom stand—and we know this to be true all the more in the wake of the advancement of the kingdom to the very ends of the earth (*another* something Peter had not yet witnessed when he made his initial confession). Never once since that moment in Caesarea Philippi has Jesus nor his kingdom been relegated to the dustbins of history. He remains *the Christ*, the Son of *the Living God*. He *is* who he's been said to be, first by Peter and by millions upon millions since.

IV. We are who Jesus says we are.

**This fourth and final movement of the sermon doubles as our suggested Conclusion.*

Main Teaching Point / Pastoral Prompt: The moment that unfolds in Caesarea Philippi is most fundamentally about Jesus. It speaks to just how set-apart he is among all other gods and goddesses, among all other emperors and empires. But it is also about us—about the church and our own “set-apartness.” He states clearly in the scene from *The Chosen* and in the Scripture it's based upon that it's upon the very reality of who he uniquely and exclusively is and upon what he uniquely and exclusively does that he will *build* his church—his gathered people—and *send* his church as his gathered people. The events of Matthew 16:13-20 set up the commissioning that comes in Matthew 28:16-20. All that unfolds in Caesarea Philippi sets the stage for the story of Jesus to be taken to the very ends of the earth. Peter sees and knows that Jesus is who he's

been said to be. The rest see and know. They will see and know all the more that Jesus is who he's been said to be on the other side of the cross and the empty tomb. And they are sent that all others might see and know that Jesus is who he's been said to be. And because they actually *went*, even today we now see and know that Jesus is who he's been said to be. And we, too, are sent—sent that others still might see and know that Jesus is who he's been said to be. We are now who Jesus says we are—his church, his gathered people, ever and always sent. And here, too, is who he has said we are: a people against whom the Gates of this world and the world beyond will never hold.

