



HIGHLANDS FELLOWSHIP

Summer at Highlands • He's With Me • Matthew 16:13-19 • 05/26/2019

Main Point

Belief in Jesus as the Son of God is the foundation of the church and must impact the way we live and love others.

Opening Doors

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What are some of the different ways you have heard Jesus described by non-Christians, either people you know or references you have heard in pop culture?

Why do you think people vary so widely on who they understand Jesus to be?

What do you consider to be the most important thing to believe about Jesus?

There has never been a person more famous, or controversial, than Jesus. Even during His day, everyone seemed to have an opinion about who He was and what He came to do. Some thought Him to be a great teacher; others saw Him as a miracle worker; still more concluded that He was possessed by a demon.

Similarly, opinions still abound today about who Jesus is. The question of Jesus' identity is the most important question any of us will answer in life, and it is the foundational truth that unites His church.

Digging In

Discuss the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ MATTHEW 16:13-17.

What do the different answers given by the disciples say about Jesus' reputation in the culture at the time?

How would you describe who Jesus is to someone who isn't a believer?

Jesus wanted the disciples to move beyond the culture's understanding of who He was. He wanted to know what they personally believed about Him, and as we see later in the text, He wanted them to know what they must believe about Him. Jesus also wanted to be sure His disciples were prepared before His death and had to know if they understood His identity, in particular that it entailed suffering. Because the disciples would carry His message into the world, they needed to be clear on His identity, not given to whatever the culture at the time thought about Him.

What do we learn about Jesus from Peter's response?

READ MATTHEW 22:39.

As Jesus followers, is loving others optional? Explain

What are some ways that we can love others as Jesus does?

As the Christ, Jesus brought God's complete message to earth; no one would ever be greater. The time comes when we must answer for ourselves who Jesus is and what He came to do, and see if our actions line up with our beliefs. As we learned in this week's sermon message, that means we must show up and love people like Jesus did.

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ MATTHEW 16:18.

Why do you think Jesus praised Peter for his confession?

Jesus affirmed Peter's response for at least two reasons: it was true, and it was revealed to Peter by the Father. Others who looked at the evidence attributed Jesus' work to a human prophet. Peter looked at the same evidence and pronounced Jesus the Christ.

These verses help us understand that Peter's confession of Jesus as the Son of God would become the foundation on which Jesus would build His church. Why is this the only sure foundation for the church?

We can readily see what Peter learned about Jesus and His church. But, in your own words, what did Peter learn about himself in this verse, too?

Read Romans 8:37. Why are you a "conqueror" like Peter? How does this encourage you?

As Christ's followers, we cannot become so inwardly focused on the church that we forget its mission—to proclaim the gospel to the world. Only Christ can overcome the darkness, brokenness, and lostness of our society. The gospel isn't just for us. The gospel is for the world. When we come to a place where we know who Jesus is and defend Him as Lord and Savior, we're called to live out His Word and share that truth with those around us.

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ MATTHEW 16:19.

What did Jesus indicate He would do in, through, and around Peter?

How do you apply this verse to your own calling?

Read John 13:35 and Matthew 28:20. How will we stand out as Christ's body in the world?

What confidence can we have as we stand out as He has called us to?

Keys are a symbol of authority. The point isn't that the church, or Peter, has been given authority to act on its own. However, the church does serve as the main instrument through which God works to proclaim the gospel. As such, we are called to stand out in the world. Truth must be worked out cognitively and practically, and true belief must be demonstrated in our lives.

Taking It Home

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

In this week's message, we were encouraged to show up, speak up, and stand out as those whose foundation is Jesus Christ, the Messiah and Son of the Living God. Which of those three are you struggling with the most right now? Explain.

How can the reality that God's church is unstoppable because of its foundation in Christ impact your life today? Tomorrow?

What are some specific ways you can engage those around you with the truth of the gospel?