

Walking with Jesus

100 Days in the Gospel of Matthew

Home Church Questions (or for personal reflection) – March 1, 2020 Based on Matthew 16:13-28 and Pastor Cara's sermon, "Christ and his Bride"

Opening: Open with a short prayer for the Spirit's presence in your reading, learning, and sharing.

We are just past the halfway point in the gospel of Matthew (16 of 28 chapters) and in our walk towards Easter (March 1 is Day 61!). Spend some time reflecting as a group on what has stood out to you thus far in this journey: key ideas, key questions, key learning, the start of new transformations, other....

If it feels right, pray again with thanksgiving and petition.

If you haven't done so already, consider watching the Bible Project's video on the second half of Matthew: <https://bibleproject.com/videos/matthew-14-28/>.

Studying the passage

Read Matthew 16:13-28.

1. What is significant about the region of Caesarea Philippi? Why might Jesus have initiated this conversation in this spot?
2. Matthew is the only gospel that explicitly mentions the Church (Greek *ekklesia*) (in 16:18 and 18:15-17). Why do you suppose the other gospels don't mention it, and why might Matthew include these references by Jesus to the Church?
3. Verse 21 is considered the turning point of the gospel. Matthew marks this turning point by repeating the same phrase as is in 4:17, "from that time on." But how is it a turning point in Jesus' life / ministry? Note that the words of 16:22 are repeated almost verbatim in Matthew 17:22-23 and 20:17-19 – what is the literary effect?
4. Pastor Cara suggested that we think of these scenes as Jesus Christ's marriage proposal to his Bride, the Church. (The marriage metaphor comes from the book of Hosea as well as passages such as 2 Corinthians 11:2, Ephesians 5:25-33, and the ones listed in d. below.)
 - a. What commitments does Jesus Christ make to his Church here?
 - b. What commitments does the Church (represented by spokesman Peter) make to Jesus Christ here?
 - c. What do we learn about the (marriage) relationship of Christ and Church in this passage? What implications does this learning have for how we live as church today?

- d. Optional: If this passage describes the proposal, what is the betrothal period, and when is the wedding? (Check out Matthew 25:1-13; John 14:1-4; Revelation 19:6-9.)
- e. Is representing the relationship between Christ and his Church as marriage a helpful one for you? Why or why not?
5. What do you make of the portrayal of Peter in this passage? (Especially v.16 and v.22-23.) Do you see yourself in him?
6. (Optional) There's a lot in this passage. Any else you want to talk about? 😊

Closing: This is the first Sunday of Lent, the 40-day period before Easter in which we are especially mindful of Christ's sacrifice to save sinners from death. Many Christians fast from something for Lent in order to prepare their hearts. During our service this morning, we were invited to add or give up something during this season to draw us closer to Jesus Christ, to Jesus' community, and/or to the world Jesus came to redeem. Consider sharing what you promised to our Bridegroom Christ. Remember: your Home Church is the group of people Jesus has given you as support in the discipleship journey.

Close in prayer, bringing before God your joys and concerns.

Resources

About the Gospel of Matthew: <https://thebibleproject.com/explore/matthew/>

About the 100-Day Challenge: Let's read the gospel of Matthew by Easter Sunday. Let's walk with our Teacher Jesus as disciples (a.k.a. learners) who desire to become like our Teacher in **character** and **action**. Let's ask as we read:

- **What is God saying to me?** About who Jesus (God, Holy Spirit) is? About life as Jesus' disciple? About my relationships with God, my neighbour, myself, and God's creation?
- **How will I respond?** With thanksgiving, repentance, a change of heart or a new behaviour? Reaching up to God, reaching in to your family or to Faith Church, or reaching out into your neighbourhood or third space? Other?
- **Who will I tell?** When you share your planned response with someone else, you will feel a greater sense of accountability to accomplish it.

March Reading Goal: Finish Chapter 25 by March 29.