

# PETER'S CONFESSION; PETER REPRIMANDED

Matthew 16:13-26; Mark 8:27-38; Luke 9:18-25

## STRUCTURE

**Key-persons:** Jesus and Peter

**Key-location:** Caesarea Philippi

### Key-repetitions:

- Different opinions of who Jesus was: John the Baptist (Mat 16:14); Elijah (Mat 16:14); one of the prophets (Mat 16:14); Christ, the son of the living God (Mat 16:15).
- Jesus' reactions to Peter: praised him (Mat 16:17-18); rebuked him (Mat 16:23).
- Cost of following Jesus: deny self (Mat 16:24); take up one's cross (Mat 16:24); follow Jesus (Mat 16:24); be unashamed of Jesus and his words (Mk 8:38).
- Disadvantages of refusing to follow Jesus: life destroyed (Mat 16:23); soul destroyed (Mat 16:24); Jesus will be ashamed of him (Mk 8:38).

### Key-attitudes:

- Jesus' approval of Peter when he affirmed that Jesus was the Christ.
- Jesus' disapproval of Peter's words when Peter tried to protect Jesus.
- Jesus' seriousness when he described the cost of following him.

### Initial-situation:

The third year of Jesus' ministry is divided into two halves. During the first half of the year, Jesus went on three retreats with his disciples. The first retreat began when Jesus received the news of John the Baptist's death. Jesus got into a boat with his disciples to go to a deserted place. A crowd went on foot around the lake. Jesus performed the miracle of feeding five thousand men. Afterwards, the people wanted to make Jesus king by force.

Jesus' refusal to lead revolutionary forces against King Herod, was the decisive point that ended his popularity and began a series of painful rejections.

On his second retreat, Pharisees and teachers of the Law of Moses argued with Jesus about human traditions. Jesus healed the demon-possessed daughter of a Syro-Phoenician woman and he fed a multitude of 4,000 men.

At the beginning of the third retreat, some Pharisees and Sadducees tested Jesus by asking him to show them a sign from heaven in order to prove himself to them. Jesus warned his disciples to guard against the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees, and he ordered people whom he healed not to tell others about it.

### Initial-problem:

Jesus asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?"

**Final-situation:**

Jesus declared that the Son of Man would come in his Father's glory with his angels to reward all people according to their deeds.

**BIBLE STORY****Peter's Confession**

Jesus was in the third year of his ministry. For the third time, Jesus withdrew from the crowds to be with his disciples. Jesus went to the region near the town of Caesarea Philippi.

Jesus asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?"

They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

Jesus asked, "What about you? Who do you say I am?"

Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Mat 16:13-16).

Jesus replied, "Simon, you're blessed! No person revealed this to you; it was revealed to you by my Father in heaven. I tell you who you are. You are Peter. (*The word Peter means 'a rock.'*) On this rock I'll build my church, and the gates of Hell won't overcome it. I'll give you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. Your 'yes' on earth will be a 'yes' in heaven, and your 'no' on earth will be a 'no' in heaven."

Then Jesus instructed his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Christ (Mat 16:17-20).

**Peter Is Reprimanded**

Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he had to go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the religious leaders, chief priests and teachers of the Law of Moses. He would be killed and on the third day be raised to life (Mat 16:21).

Peter took Jesus aside protesting, "Never, Lord! This can never happen to you!"

Jesus rebuked Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You're a stumbling block to me; you're not thinking the way God thinks; you're thinking the way people think" (Mat 16:22-23).

**Cost of Following Jesus**

Jesus told his disciples, "Anyone who would follow me must deny himself the things he wants and take up his cross and follow me. Anyone who wants to save his life will destroy it, but anyone who gives up his life for me will find it. What good is a deal where a person gains the whole world, yet destroys his soul? What exchange can a person make for his soul? (Mat 16:24-26).

"If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this unfaithful and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels (Mk 8:38).

"For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels to reward all people according to their deeds" (Mat 16:27-28).

## GENERIC DIALOGUE QUESTIONS

1. What catches your attention in the story?
2. Is there anything in the story that is hard to understand?
3. Who are the main characters in the story?
4. What problems did the characters face?
5. How did the characters face their problems?
6. How have you faced similar problems?
7. Is there someone in the story who is similar to you or who is different from you?
8. What does the story tell about God?

## SPECIFIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What happened when Jesus asked his disciples, "Who do you say I am?"
2. What was significant about Peter's confession?
3. Who do people say Jesus is today?
4. Who do you say Jesus is?
5. How did Peter become a stumbling block to Jesus?
6. What does it cost to follow Jesus?
7. How will Jesus repay the person who is ashamed of him?
8. How can we become stumbling blocks for Jesus' Kingdom?
9. What does it mean to you to: deny self, take up your cross, and follow Jesus?

## LIFE-LESSONS

1. **The Christian faith requires people to hold personal beliefs.** Faith goes beyond knowing what others believe. It is important to know what others think about Jesus, but the most important question is, "Who do you say that Jesus is?" (Mat 16:15).
2. **The church has power over the gates of two kingdoms which are in conflict: Hell, the City of Death, and the Kingdom of Heaven, the City of God.** The key that opens the door to the Kingdom of Heaven is the confession that Jesus is the Son of the Living God (Mat 16:15-19). The door to the City of Death keeps the followers of Satan from escaping Hell, while the door to the City of God prevents anyone from entering who is not saved by Jesus. The instant a person admits that Jesus is the Son of the Living God, two doors are opened. The door to Hell is knocked open to rescue that person from the City of Death, and the door to the City of God is opened for the rescued person to enter (Mat 16:15-19).
3. **The person who clearly understands the words of God, but rejects them, comes under the devil's influence and becomes a hindrance to Jesus' work.** When Peter understood Jesus' words about his suffering and death, but refused to accept the possibility, he was under the devil's influence and became a stumbling stone to Jesus (Mat 16:21-28).
4. **Preconceived notions about God can prevent a person from understanding spiritual truths.** Peter and the other disciples had preconceived notions that the Messiah would be a conquering warrior who would restore Israel to its former glory.

Peter didn't grasp the message when Jesus talked about his death and resurrection. Also, Peter wanted to protect Jesus from suffering (Mat 16:21-22).

5. **Great temptations can come from people who love us and want to protect us.** Peter loved Jesus and sought to protect him from the suffering he prophesied (Mat 17:22).
6. **There are at least three conditions that must be met by anyone who wants to follow Jesus:**
  - **Deny self:** Give up the sinful things that the person wants.
  - **Take up one's own cross:** Carry one's own cross to the place where he would be killed. Jesus meant that each of his followers had to identify completely with Christ, even if it meant death.
  - **Follow Jesus.** Permanent commitment to serve Jesus.
7. **Material possessions can never compensate for the loss of eternal life.** If this present life is more important to a person, he will do everything to protect it and not endanger his safety, health, or comfort. By contrast, if following Jesus is more important, a person may have to put himself in unsafe, unhealthy, and uncomfortable places and even risk death.

## **LEARNING ACTIVITIES**

1. **Twitter Prayers** (short, concise prayers):  
Invite listeners to pray about the story in "twitter" length prayers. Tell God:
  - How they feel about the story.
  - Who they believe Jesus to be.
  - How the story helps them understand when they become a stumbling block to Jesus.
2. **Pantomime Retelling of the Story:**  
The storyteller tells the story one time.
  - The storyteller chooses a listener to pantomime the story as he retells the story.
  - The storyteller invites another listener to retell the story.