

Matthew 16: 21-28

The last time we were here was back at the beginning of October. Brian Hupp taught during my absence and covered chapter 15 and the first half of chapter 16. Tonight, we are going to look at the remaining portion of this chapter and see what insight the Lord has for us. Before we begin this, however, I want to remind you of where we are in our walk in Matthew. I'm not going to review everything up to this point, but I do want to remind you of the teaching outline.

The book of Matthew is commonly broken down into seven parts. (See Teaching Outline Sheet)

Tonight, we begin addressing part V of this terrific book which transitions us from the mounting rejections of Jesus to the moment where He begins explaining to the disciples what is coming on the horizon. So, part V deals with Jesus preparing His disciples.

Read 13-20

I'm sure Brian covered this, but every believer has the keys to heaven. Every Christian can get in. But what are the keys? The keys are the Scriptures, the message of the Gospel. So, the language here means that we have a responsibility to share the gospel. If we do not, then we keep it bound from people who need to hear. But when we share it, then we "loose it" on earth. Why is this important and why would Jesus teach his disciples this concept? Because the message of the gospel in cooperation with the calling and convicting power of the Holy Spirit is the only thing that can save someone.

Jump down to verse 20. Just after Peter's confession, which was really a confession for the whole group, Jesus utters these words. If they were confessing that Jesus was divine and that He indeed was the true Messiah, then why do think He instructed them to keep it quiet? Wouldn't he want them to go out and continue delivering the message? It had to do with their understanding about what kind of Messiah He was. They were new to the game and their discipleship training was not yet complete. Jesus knew that if they went into ministry unprepared, they would face major rejection and create rebellion among the people. Until they could completely understand Jesus and their role, it was better for them to remain silent.

21-23

Here, we find the first of five times Jesus announced His coming death to the disciples. This instance is about 6 months before His death, but it wasn't until after His actual crucifixion the disciples came to understand and grasp the significance of this moment. The disciples at this time did not understand why Jesus had to go to the cross. In these words, from Jesus, we find the saving message of the gospel. Christ died for our sins. He did what the scriptures said He would do, in the place they said he would. He was buried

and raised again. Do you know Him. Do you recognize what He did on your behalf? If so, through God's grace by faith, you are saved!

Look at Peter's reaction. Does anything stand out? Here is a man who moments prior confessed the divine nature of Jesus, being deceived by Satan very soon afterwards. Why did Jesus react the way He did? In Peter's attempted rebuke of God, he showed his ignorance for the ways of God. Peter was attempting to put a stop to God's plan by informing Jesus that He would not and could not ever face the things He predicted. What a human response. How quickly Peter moved from listening to the Spirit to listening to Satan. Who is always trying to get us to forget about God and leave Him out.

Finally, we come to the fourth discourse found in chapter 16 which is another familiar passage. The hardest thing we face is what Jesus says here. I can deny myself cake. Well, sometimes. But to truly deny myself, who I am, is not a natural thing. I must learn to set myself aside and put Jesus in my place. In everything. Always. Crucifixion was a very brutal death. The disciples knew this. We should know this too. So, what does this mean? It means, following Christ requires the highest commitment. Were the disciples prepared for this? Not at this point they weren't, but by the time their own ministries ended, they not only understood this, but they also embraced this.

Just think of Peter. Most scholars agree, because of historical records, he was crucified in Rome under Emperor Nero. Many believe he chose to be crucified upside down, but without any scripture evidence for this, we need to only understand that He died in the same manner as Jesus. Both Peter's life and his death brought glory to God.

It reminds of the words from 1 Corinthians 10:31, which reads, "*So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*"