

Lecture 20 – Transition to Training of Disciples (cont.); Kingdom Life

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?” Matthew 16:13 (NIV)

Key Terms

“Keys of the kingdom,” kingdom life

Objectives

- *To conclude the discussion of the training of the disciples
- *To explore Matthew’s teachings on kingdom life

Lead Questions

- *Is the disciples’ ignorance and need discouraging or encouraging? Why?
- *In what ways does the church exemplify Christ’s teachings on discipline and reconciliation?

Transition to Training of Disciples (cont.)

IV. Other Areas of Ignorance and Need

A. Peter walks on water (Matt. 14:22-33)

1. The second storm described
2. Jesus comes to them on water. Terror
3. Peter, “If it is you, order me to come.”
4. Peter reaches Jesus (!) and then sinks—“Lord save me.”
5. Peter: He is a man of a little faith and a doubter. There is some commendation in rebuke. The position of the twelve: enough faith to trust Jesus, but not enough to trust Him fully.
6. They confess, “You are the Son of God.” But do they understand it?
7. Matthew alone records this episode. Reflections on the selective reporting of the Gospels.

B. Controversy over Jewish customs (15:1-20)

1. Why do disciples ignore customs for ritual holiness?
2. Traditions that interpret the Word tend to nullify the Word
3. The heart. Traditions seem to prescribe the way of holiness, but they actually limit it.

C. Feeding of the 4000 (15:32-39)

The question: “Where shall we find food?” shows how slowly they grow.

D. Jesus refuses the Pharisees a sign (16:1-4)

1. Why Jesus does not perform a sign
2. Disciples miss Jesus’ point at first, but Jesus works with them, and they eventually see.

Where in your life do you see yourself trusting Christ but not trusting him fully?

V. Peter’s Confession and Transfiguration of Christ

A. Setting: Alone at Caesarea Philippi

B. “Who do people say the Son of Man is?”

1. Instruction begins with a Question, because “He wants witnesses, not reporters.”
2. Answer: A prophet

C. Second Question: “But what about you,” He pressed, “who do you say I am?” (16:15)

D. Peter, the spokesman for the twelve

1. “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (16:16). Both aspects essential.
2. Now Jesus approves (16:17).
3. Simon is Peter - *πέτρος* (*Petros*, “Peter”), and on this rock - *πέτρα* (*petra*, “rock”) Jesus will build his church. Meaning:

- a. Certainly Peter is not, in himself the rock; see following episode.
- b. The apostles, together, build on Christ (Matt. 18:18, 21:42, Eph. 2:19-22, 1 Cor. 3:11).

E. I will build My church and gates of hell will not prevail.

- 1. Jesus builds a church.
- 2. Meaning of gates: defensive fortifications or floodgates (cf. Rev. 12)?

F. “Keys of the kingdom”

- 1. The proclamation of Peter’s confession grants or bars entry into K (cf. Luke 11:52).
- 2. Same Gospel alienates and excludes those who reject it. See Acts 4:11-12, 8:20-23.
- 3. Note future passive participles of 16:19. “What you bind shall have been bound” means that true proclamations of Gospel merely confirm God’s decree regarding conditions for entering heaven.

G. First prophecy of Jesus’ death

Peter now rebukes Jesus. The rock of the church is now a rock for stumbling - *σκανδαλον* (*skandalon*, “stumbling stone”).

H. Exploring Peter’s confession

- 1. The disciples have heard, but not understood, the confession.
- 2. Peter’s status depends partly on what he is saying. When he confesses Christ, he is a rock. When he rebukes Jesus, he is a stumbling stone. The confessing apostles are rock of church.

IV. Discernment and Commitment, 16:16-26

- A. Jesus’ teaching is more than words. Analogy.
- B. Discernment and commitment. Discernment without commitment is cowardice and hypocrisy. Commitment without discernment is bigotry or idolatry.
- C. Jesus: “My life is a pattern for yours.” True regarding: table fellowship (Luke 14-15) and cross.
- D. This challenge is not open to verification. It is loyalty to a person.

V. Transfiguration

This is a hard teaching, so they get some help a week later

- A. Message: Jesus is the Christ, the son of God! True form shines forth (cf. Acts 9, Rev 1).
- B. His company: Moses and Elijah
 - 1. The law and the prophets. Mysterious departures, unique revelations, signs, small results.
 - 2. They discuss His exodus.
- C. The application: Listen to Him, especially when He says hard things (Acts 10:33).
- D. Down the hill: a hard case of demon possession.
- E. Again: Jesus must be killed and raised (17:22-23). But He is also the king’s son.

Kingdom Life - Matthew 18-20

I. Introduction

- A. The Gospels are a coherent narrative, telling the story of redemption.
 - 1. They constantly point to crucifixion and resurrection. Matt. 16:21, 20:17-18, Luke 9:52
 - 2. In past, critical methods tried to destroy their unity. But recent methods—composition and narrative criticism—encourage study of the theology and unified story of the Gospels.
 - 3. The journey to Jerusalem shows the meaning of Christ’s life is manifest only after the climax of the story. Then we realize why things happened (John 12:16, 2:22, 14:26).
- B. Matthew 18 in the flow of Matthew

This is fourth block of teaching. Like others, it advances story by coming at right moment.

Discourses in Matthew:

 - 1. Matthew 5-7, the Sermon on the Mount: the mind and values of a disciple
 - 2. Matthew 10, mission discourse
 - 3. Matthew 13, parables of the kingdom

4. Matthew 18, community life in the kingdom

II. Teaching Unit # 4: Community Life in the Kingdom

A. Humility as a trait of Christian community

1. Question: Who is greatest? Answer: Do you have faith at all, to ask such questions?! 18:1-4
2. To be great, welcome a child, teach a child well, 18:5-10.
3. Treatment of little ones as test of community. Don't despise them, 18:11-14.
4. So rescue a sinning brother—a necessary service the Lord will attend, 18:19-20 (James 5)

B. Sin and reconciliation: the basic plan, 18:15

“If your brother sins against you...” - εαν δε αμαρτηση [εις σε] ο αδελφος σου (*ean de hamartese [eis se] ho adelphos sou*, “if ever your brother should sin against you”). General conditional sentence (εαν + verb in the subjunctive mood). Whenever this arises, do this...

1. “Go” - υπαγε (*hypage*).
2. “Reprove him” - ελεγξον αυτον (*elegxon auton*). Compare “sharing feelings.”
3. Privately, μεταξυ σου και αυτου μονου (*metaxu sou kai autou monou*, “between you and him only”). Note Galatians 2: Public offense sometimes requires public rebuke.
4. For pastors: Catch errors before they require rebuke, through regular teaching and discipleship. Establish an atmosphere: “We are all disciples, under discipline.”
 - a. Go gently. Ask questions to establish dialogue, continue relationships,
 - b. Grant dignity.
 - c. Be sure there is a genuine offense (cf. Gal 6:1).
 - d. Note on method: Applications may be explicit and certain, or derived and less certain.

C. Obstacles and next steps, 18:16-20

1. Witnesses and excommunication are final steps.
2. The meaning of “binding and loosing”
3. 18:19-20: a general statement about prayer or a promise for an agonizing situation? The meaning of πραγματος (*pragmatos*, “a matter, an issue”)
4. Follow-up questions: What if it doesn't work? What if it does work? Will I have to forgive?

Have you experienced discipline and reconciliation in kingdom community in your church?