



SERMON DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Speaker: Chris Royalty // Sunday: July 16, 2023

- 1) Begin your time by briefly praying and asking the Holy Spirit to help you as you discuss and study.
- 2) Read Matthew 16:13-28 together.
- 3) What stuck out to you as you read? Is there anything you don't understand? Is there anything you'd like to discuss?
- 4) How does self-righteousness blind us to Christ?
- 5) If Jesus performed signs in His ministry, why was it wrong for the Pharisees and Sadducees to request signs?
- 6) How is self-denial different from works-righteousness?
- 7) Define the church.
- 8) If a true understanding of Christ is God's work, how should that affect our evangelism? How should it affect your pride in receiving the gospel?
- 9) Explain why Christ's identity is foundational for the church.
- 10) How do you think your unbelieving neighbors and coworkers would answer Jesus' question, "Who do you say that I am?" How could you work a similar question into an evangelistic conversation?
- 11) How would you respond to a Catholic neighbor who asked, "Why don't you recognize the Pope as legitimate?" (See commentary on next page)

Commentary from Leon Morris:

“*On this rock I will build my church*” is a saying that has caused endless controversy in the church’s history. The big question is the meaning of *this rock*. Does it mean the man Peter? Or the faith Peter has just professed? Or is it the teaching of Jesus (as in 7:24)? Or Jesus himself? Each of the views has been argued passionately by some exegetes, often maintaining at the same time that other views can be espoused only by people who refuse to accept the plain meaning of the Greek. Clearly this is a place where we must tread carefully and keep in mind the possibility of interpreting the passage in ways other than the one that appeals to us.

Some scholars, especially from among the Roman Catholics, have insisted that Jesus is saying that Peter is the rock on which the whole church is to be built, and accordingly that only the church that can claim to be built on the apostle is the true church. But it is not easy to establish that the whole of the early church was built on the foundation of Peter, and what are we to say of the descendants of the non-Petrine churches? And so in later times with, for example, the churches of the Reformation that separated from the churches that professed a connection with Peter. Are we to say that because they understand this passage in a different way they are no part of the true church? Moreover, the statement that the rock is Peter is true only as we keep in mind what that apostle has just said; it is not Peter simply as Peter but Peter who has confessed Jesus as the Messiah who is the church’s foundation on whom the church is to be built. We must not separate the man from the words he has just spoken. From the earliest times it has been recognized that Peter’s faith is important for an understanding of the passage. Thus Chrysostom cites the words “upon this rock will I build my Church” and immediately goes on, “that is, on the faith of his confession” (p. 333). Any interpretation that minimizes the importance of the faith that found expression in Peter’s words is to be rejected. Barclay puts it this way: Jesus “did not mean that the Church *depended* on Peter, as it depended on Himself, and on God the Rock, alone. He did mean that the Church *began* with Peter; in that sense Peter is the foundation of the Church” (II, p. 141).¹

- 12) What does Jesus' rebuke to Peter in verse 23 say about the place of the cross in God's plan?
- 13) What does it mean for someone to "take up his cross" (v. 24)?
- 14) End your time in prayer. Ask God to help you apply the things you've discussed and learned during this time of study.²

¹ Leon Morris, [*The Gospel according to Matthew*](#), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press, 1992), 422–423.

² Some of these questions taken from: David Platt, [*Exalting Jesus in Matthew*](#), ed. Daniel L. Akin, David Platt, and Tony Merida, Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2013), 221.