



CHRIST'S COMMISSION FELLOWSHIP

Los Angeles

Dgroup Discussion Guide
October 4, 2014

One Defining Question

Word:

Matthew 16:13-19

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?"¹⁴ They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets."¹⁵ "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"¹⁶ Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."¹⁷ Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven."¹⁸ And I tell you that you are Peter,^[a] and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades^[b] will not overcome it.¹⁹ I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be^[c] bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be^[d] loosed in heaven."

Do you like tests? Do you like exams? Do you like questions? Rick Warren says in his book PDL 'life is a big test'. Although there are many questions that we may have about life but there is one question that will define our destiny. In the passage we find Jesus asking the disciples what other people think He is. But more than that -- the real question Jesus was asking was -- Who do you say I am? He wanted to know what His disciples think who is.

This is that one defining question -- Who is Jesus to you?

If life is one big test -- then this is the most important question that will be ever asked of us -- Who is Jesus to you? And Peter answers " You are the Messaiah. The Son of the Living God." In other words, Jesus is the One True God. It is important for us to know the answer to this question and more importantly is that we know the answer to the question since this is the purpose of our lives. This is the sole purpose of our life -- to know Him and enjoy Him for the rest of our lives. To find satisfaction in Him for the rest of our lives. This then becomes our defining pursuit in life. Psalm 27:4 **says *One thing I ask from the Lord, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple.***

Have you been praying? Have you been asking God for the impossible? What is it that you are asking from God? If God would grant you one thing -- what would that be? We want so many things in life and we choose to pursue these dreams and then we become too busy. Bill Hybels said that because the lifestyle of busyness we have chosen is no longer sustainable that it begins to rob us of intimate relationships. The problem today is that many of us are over-committed but under-connected. (Edmund Chan)

We do so many things, we say "yes" to many things, we go after so many projects . . . running after so many visions. But in terms of our relationships we are lagging behind. At this point, we should begin to ask ourselves: How is our relationship with God? How is our relationship with our family.? The psalmist says ***One thing I ask from the Lord, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple.***

Knowing God should be our one defining pursuit in life. And this starts with knowing who Jesus is.

What is the result of knowing Jesus? In verse 17 Jesus tells Simon that he is blessed.

What does blessing mean? Is it money, comfort, power, influence? Have you ever considered that knowing Jesus is the true definition of blessing. Jesus declared Peter blessed -- why? because Peter knew Jesus. As far as Jesus is concerned Peter is blessed because he knows who Jesus is.

There is something we have to understand about the nature of blessings -- we will always go after it. We will always pursue it. The thought of having that blessing will continue to motivate us to pursue it. Should we not then consider it a blessing to know Jesus and to grow more intimate with Him? God wants to make Himself known. He is not hiding somewhere, He does not conceal Himself from us. He calls us to Himself because He wants us to know Him, to grow in knowledge of Him and to grow in relationship with Him.

When we know who Jesus is there are two blessings that we can receive:

The Blessing of Knowing Jesus

2 Peter 1:3 says ***seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.***

It is only through a life of godliness that we can attain true knowledge of God. It is through this same knowledge that we can fully and truly experience God's presence, His provision and protection in our life. This is part of God's promise of a good life if we know Him and if we live a godly life. Sometimes we prefer to pursue other desires rather than pursue a relationship with Jesus. In our hearts there exists too many desires competing with one another for supremacy. The question is what desire will we pursue? Some people would even think that pursuing a relationship with Jesus is a waste of time. Putting it off until later thinking there will always be time for that. More often it is our relationship with the Lord that we put aside preferring to run after the other desires. We have to learn to cultivate a heart that yearns only for God because only Jesus can satisfy our souls.

"You are not losing time when you are feeding the soul. While by contemplation you are getting purpose strengthened and motive purified, you are rightly using time. When the man becomes intense, when he gets within him principles vital, fervent and energetic, then when the season for work comes, he will work within a POWER and a RESULT which empty people can never attain however busy they may be." --- CH. Spurgeon

This statement merely reminds us that if we know God and we know Jesus. . . if we have an intimate relationship with Him then God will provide for all our needs for life and for godliness. In fact the bible says that God provides to His beloved even in their sleep.

The key for a fruitful living is not business is knowing Jesus. Let us instead pray that God will bless us with a thirst for Him, with a hunger and passion to pursue knowing Jesus.

IN verse 18 Jesus continues ***I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.*** What Jesus is saying here -- that adding on to the blessing of knowing Him, Jesus is also telling Peter that because he knows Jesus then Jesus is also inviting Peter to partner with Him to build the church. The common mistake is to think that Peter is the rock being referred to in this verse, but what it really means is that Jesus is the rock upon which the church is to be built on. In *Ephesians 2:19-22* it says ***Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.***

This is the second blessing we will receive: **The Blessing of Partnering with Jesus.**

If a commission by an earthly king is considered an honor, how can a commission by a Heavenly King be considered a sacrifice? (David Livingstone) The King of kings and the Lord of lords is commissioning us to partner with Him -- in Matthew 28:18-20 we are given the Great Commission. Sometimes we tend to think of ministry as a sacrifice and would rather put it off than attend to it now. It becomes easy for us to put it off because we consider other things as blessings not counting that knowing Jesus is the ultimate blessing. This is an honor accorded to us. . . which we do not take seriously.

Jesus is asking us to be His representative here on earth . . . is this an honor or a sacrifice?

What are the blessings that accompany partnering with Jesus?

1. Honor of being His partner - there is an honor when we represent the King of kings and the Lord of lords.
2. Victory - when we partner with Jesus success is already guaranteed. Jesus Himself will build the church but He asks us to be faithful and available. Jesus tells us that the gates of hades will not overpower you. This verse implies that the church is not only on the offensive side but more over we are on the winning side. We are at war but when we partner with Jesus victory is guaranteed. Jesus is actually asking us to fight with Him. ***After I looked things over, I stood up and said to the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people, "Don't be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your homes." Nehemiah 4:14*** Nehemiah knew God and he was not afraid. It is not the church that is under attack -- it is our families, our marriages, our children are under attack. Jesus is asking us to fight for our families, our marriages, and our children.
3. Power - He will give us the power of His authority. Verse 19 says ***I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven.*** Being the keyholders gives us the power to choose who can enter and who cannot. Jesus is giving us the key, the power to be able to usher in as many people as we can usher in. We open the opportunity to have people come to God.

Jesus is giving us the power to make a difference in the lives of many people. This can only be done when we partner with Jesus. We can only partner with Jesus when we know Him. When we know Him, we will be called to our specific purpose. . . but we can only hear that calling if we know Jesus and we are intimate with Him.

Works: Journaling task

1. One Desire. What is that one desire we are pursuing? How are we cultivating a heart for God in a world with so many competing desires?
2. Knowledge of God. What are the evidences in our life that show that we have a true knowledge of God.
3. Partnering with Jesus. We are called to be partners of Jesus in ministry. What are the things that are holding us back from committing to be Christ's partner in the work of salvation?