

Matthew 21-05-02b

I want to thank Dan and Anna and Lori for that wonderful reminder that everything we do should be to the glory of God and have an awareness of God's glory as we approach Him in prayer and in our intercession for one another, our petitions and our thanksgiving. All of those being essential parts of our prayer to the Father in the name of the Son and in the power of the Spirit. And it should give us at least a bit of a sense of sobriety when we decide to address God on His throne, to be thinking clearly and be prepared and be sanctified and be ready to exercise that wonderful privilege.

Let's resume our study now in Matthew 16. We saw that men say that Jesus is maybe John the Baptist, maybe Elijah, maybe Jeremiah or one of the prophets. And the differences in opinion are due to different impressions of what the focus and the purpose and the effect of Jesus' ministry has been.

Is it primarily agitating the government? This would be more Elijah and John the Baptist as the latter day Elijah. Is it a call out of the spiritual malaise and traditionalism and legalism and convenience religion of the day that John the Baptist and Elijah represent? Is it Jeremiah or one of the other prophets, the latter prophets of the Old Testament who address the spiritual condition of the heart? And some of our ladies during the break made an excellent point that it required some knowledge of the Old Testament to form one or another of these opinions. You would need to know that Jeremiah's emphasis was you've got to mend your ways because judgment is about to come.

John the Baptist's message was mend your ways because the kingdom is about to come. So are you needing to prepare in the positive sense and be ready for residence and function in the kingdom? Or do you need to mend your ways because your ways are so bad that it's going to end up in captivity and judgment? So these were people who had knowledge of the ministry of John the Baptist. They had some current events knowledge.

They had knowledge of the Old Testament and knew the book of Kings. It's one book in the Hebrew Bible with the ministry of Elijah. And of course, you can't know about Elijah without knowing about Elisha and Jeremiah and lamentations and the ministry that God sent through him just before the captivity of Judah in Babylon.

Jeremiah, the weeping prophet, don't you understand that judgment is coming? Do you not see the need to heed all of the previous warnings really beginning in the days of Elijah and extending all the way through from the Northern kingdom and its demise to the Southern kingdom and its demise? So the point being, these people had some Bible knowledge and were invoking it to draw their conclusion about Jesus. And they all got it wrong. Notice the disciples did not say, well, some say you're John the Baptist.

Some say you're Elijah. Some say you're Jeremiah or one of the prophets. And some say you're the Christ, the son of the living God.

That's the one conclusion men are not drawing. And it's the only right answer. And this should be a sobering observation for us that knowledgeable people invoking their understanding of the Bible and of current events, got it wrong.

Got the most important fact of history wrong. Despite knowing Elijah, knowing Jeremiah, knowing the prophets, having heard and perhaps been baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan, the most important conclusion, the most important observation, the most important application, they got it wrong. Just because we study the Bible doesn't make us right.

It doesn't make us functioning properly in the things that count. What ensures that we get it right? Well, let's look at somebody that got it right. Let's look at Peter.

Peter got it right. How did he get it right? I want to do what Peter did and not what the people did in misconstruing their biblical knowledge. All of these conclusions are based on Bible, aren't they? John the Baptist did nothing but preach the Old Testament scriptures and try to level the mountains and fill in the valleys and make straight the path of the Lord for his glory to come in.

So some people felt they were kingdom bound. Some people felt they were judgment bound, and this was prophetic mourning, but they didn't understand the much higher and greater issue of salvation in the person of Jesus Christ, God with us, the presence of God, not limited to a geographical spot in the temple, but embodied in the Lord Jesus and soon to be scattered across the earth, embodied in the church. So Peter got it right.

Simon Peter answered and said in Matthew 16, 16, you are the Christ, the son of the living God. Jesus answered and said to him, blessed are you Simon, son of Jonah. Now, why didn't he just say, blessed are you, Peter? Blessed are you, Cephas? Or blessed are you, Simon? Why does he say Simon bar Jonah? You know, bar is Aramaic.

And by the way, this tells us that this was originally spoken in Aramaic, which has great consequence as we'll note here in a moment for the language. But he says, blessed are you, Simon, son of Jonah. Justifies Peter's father's entire life that he was named Jonah and had his son Shimon.

And by the way, another son, Andrew, right? Not sure what Andrew's Aramaic name was. Andrew seems to come from a Greek source, but Shimon bar Jonah, who is Jonah. What did Jesus just say earlier? You can flip one page back.

What did Jesus just get through saying? A wicked and perverse generation seeks a sign. Verse four of this chapter, no sign shall be given to it except the sign of Jonah. Blessed are you, Simon, son of Jonah.

Not an accident. What is the sign of Jonah? The son of man is going to be in the heart of the earth and be raised from the dead. Just like Jonah emerged from what seemed to be

certain death.

What does Paul say in Romans 10, 9 and 10 again? A little pop quiz here. Quoted it in the first session. What is it you need to confess with your mouth to be saved? If you confess, this is the great confession, right? This is what the church has called this for 2000 years.

So what is it you confess? If you confess with your mouth, the Lord Jesus, and believe in your heart, what? Romans 10, 9 and 10, right in the margin, Simon, son of Jonah. When you say you are the Christ, the son of the living God. Now, Peter doesn't understand the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus yet.

And I can prove it. Just keep reading this chapter. But he does understand that Jesus is the Christ, the son of the living God.

He says in John six, to whom should we go? If we leave you, you have the words of life. Peter doesn't understand the death and resurrection yet, but he does understand the life. Jesus will announce publicly.

I am the resurrection and the life. He that comes to me will never hunger. He that believes in me will never thirst, right? Hunger and thirst, food and water, life.

So Peter recognizes that Jesus is the only true source of life. He has seen him raise the dead and he's going to see it again. He has seen him restore not just life itself, but quality of life.

Hundreds, if not thousands of healings, restoration of life. I'm come that they might have life and have it more abundantly. And it's represented in the healing miracles, the compassion of the Lord Jesus to not just be alive, but to be able to raise a glass and say, to life, right? So Jesus says, you are a son of Jonah.

You are a son of the change of mind. Nineveh repented at the preaching of Jonah. They changed their minds when they got a warning.

They didn't just say, well, that guy must be a prophet with a warning. They believed and acted on the warning. Unlike men who say, well, he's John the Baptist.

But I didn't pay attention when John the Baptist said, look over there, that's the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. That's what John the Baptist message was. And the people that think Jesus is John, they've identified a messenger, but they haven't heard and responded to the message.

Read John's message, bear fruit in keeping with repentance. The ax is laid at the root of the tree. He's going to burn the chaff with unquenchable fire, gather the wheat into his barn.

Oh, that guy's John. Well, okay. But what about the message? You're looking at the

container.

You're looking at the vessel. It's like picking up the telephone and setting it on the table. And someone says, I heard the telephone ring.

What was that? Oh, that was the telephone. Well, who's on it and what are they saying? Oh, I don't know. That's the telephone.

That's not the radio. That's not my internet connection. That's not a CD.

That's not a movie on TV. That's the telephone. Who is it? And what message do they bring? Oh, well, that's my daughter on the phone.

Why did she call? What's she saying? Well, I don't know. As soon as I heard her voice, I just set the phone down. And I don't know why she called.

I don't know what she's saying. She's John the Baptist. She's Elijah.

She's one of the prophets. She's Jeremiah. Okay.

And what is the message? Well, I think it's warning about judgment, or I think it's get ready because the kingdom is coming. And that would be great, but I'm not doing anything about it. My daughter calls and say, hey, I've got a flat.

I'm by the side of the road on the turnpike. Oh, okay. And then I set the phone back down.

So I've identified the caller and I've heard the message. And it's a distress call. Patty comes in.

Oh, who's on the phone? What's Elizabeth? She's got a flat by the side of the road. Oh, okay. Going to do anything? Going to offer any advice? Get in the truck and go call the insurance company and get a tow truck on the way.

Well, I heard the message. I know who brought it. And I know what kind of message it is.

I just haven't done anything about it. I have knowledge, but it does not result in response, in change of mind, in obedience. This is the fatal mistake.

So why is Peter commended? Blessed are you, Simon, son of Jonah. Nineveh repented at the preaching of Jonah. They just didn't say, oh, look, there's that belly acid, white eaten guy.

Look at his skin sloughing off from the stomach acid of the great fish. He's that famous guy that got swallowed by the fish. Oh, what's he saying? Oh, he's saying we ought to repent or we're going to be destroyed in 40 days.

Oh, okay. Thanks. Just curious.

What did Nineveh do? Changed their ways. Repented in sackcloth and ashes. That doesn't have anything to do with eternal salvation, but it has to do with looking around and making a change.

And this was a message to Israel. The Gentiles pay more attention to the word of God and are more willing to act on it than you are. Simon, son of Jonah, changing mind at the hearing of the message.

What did Peter and Andrew and James and John and the others down at the Jordan do? When John said, look over there, that's the Lamb of God. They left John and followed him. They took action.

They made a change. This is the key for the things to be true that Jesus is about to say. You have to understand the contrast with men who have heard and identified and invoked biblical knowledge and not acted on it versus Peter, representative of that handful of the 12 who got it.

In whose lives there was change wrought by the word of God, the presence of God, the power of God. It made a difference. This is why Simon is blessed.

It is also why this next thing is true. Read it. Blessed are you, Shimon bar Yonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed to you.

Notice this is in italics. Flesh and blood is not what reveals, what speaks truth to you. My father in heaven is the one who is giving you revelation that you act on.

You're not acting on what men say. When's the last time we saw a reference to flesh and blood? Go back to verse 13 and circle men, draw a line down and circle flesh and blood. You're not going with the popular trends of the day.

You're not going with what's trending on Twitter or Facebook. You're not going with one of the groups in which you can enfold yourself and feel comfortable and say, well, look, there's a lot of other people that believe this. So when I believe it, I'm in, I'm in good company.

You didn't settle for believing I'm John the Baptist. Be kind of tough because Peter saw both of them all on the same day at the same time. And they were in two different places and one baptized the other and Peter saw it.

Why? How does Peter know that Jesus is not John the Baptist? Stop and think about this now. This is really an important point. Flesh and blood hasn't revealed it, but my father.

So one of the things that Peter can reject in terms of what flesh and blood wants to say is, well, flesh and blood people say Jesus is John the Baptist. How is it that Peter knows

this is not true? Did God give him a vision in the night and say, behold, Jesus is not John. How does Peter know this? He is an eyewitness to the two of them as distinct individuals, one baptizing the other, and he has followed Jesus and knows for a fact that he's not John.

And he knows that John eventually got arrested and went to prison and got beheaded. Peter knows all of this. How does he know it? Why does he know it? God, the father revealed it to him.

How? This is my actual question. Jesus says, this has been revealed to you by the father. How did the father reveal it to him? Did the father reveal it to him in a dream, a vision or an impression or a gut instinct? How did the father reveal this fact of who Jesus is to Peter? Simon, you're blessed because my father revealed this to you.

How did the father do it? You know the answer to this question. How did the father do it? Peter was in the right place at the right time on the right day to see John point into the crowd and say, that guy is the lamb of God. How did Peter get there? God, the father appointed him to be there.

Why? Because he was asking and seeking and knocking. When Peter heard, when Andrew heard, when James and John, professional fishermen with a busy home life, busy family lives, parents to support, Peter's got a mother-in-law, Mr. And Mrs. Zebedee are up there, James and John, they've got a busy life as fishermen, blue collar workers. You've got to be there all the time.

Fish, if you're not there and somebody else starts selling to your customers, they left those businesses and went down to the Jordan because they heard that there was a message being preached. And when they identified the messenger and when they heard the message, they stuck around. And when the message said, that guy is the lamb of God, they stopped listening to John and followed the lamb.

And because they did that, God was able to reveal to them because they were already looking, they were already rearranging their lives to prioritize spiritual things. They didn't let business or family get ahead of, can this be the announcement? This man is this crazy guy wearing funny clothes, is shouting to the hilltops, eating bugs and saying the kingdom is at hand. There's something about that message.

I need to go see him in person. I need to get down there. And so these four men, two pairs of brothers go down there because they go, God reveals.

They're there on the day that John says, there's the lamb. They're there on the day that John is baptized by Jesus. It's only one time, one day.

What are the odds? That they would happen to be there at that time. Well, there's no happenstance to it. God revealed it because they were seeking.

Seek him early while he may yet be found. Call upon him while he is near. You will seek me and find me when you search for me with all your heart, right? So when Jesus, that people want to come to this and you know, the various categories and thought systems of theology that come to this verse and say, well, God supernaturally elected Peter and supernaturally put this knowledge in his heart.

This was revealed to Shimon by the father because Shimon was asking and seeking and knocking and rearranged his life to prioritize spiritual things. He's going to make a lot of mistakes. He's going to have some cataclysmic failures, but the one thing that doesn't change about Peter is he is seeking.

And when he gets the message, he acts on it. He's going to get rebuked by the Lord. He's going to get rebuked by a fellow apostle.

And he responds. He listens to the message. He is Simon, son of Jonah, son of that messenger who brings a message that produces a response.

It's all wrapped up in Jonah. So message in our first session this morning is don't succumb to superficial, shallow, mystical thinking, even if you invoke the Bible to do it. Whatever you ask in my name, I will do.

My father will do it for you. Okay. New dishwasher, Lord, better car, higher paying job, romance, shallow thinking, even invoking scripture.

Got to know who Jeremiah is. Got to know who Elijah is. Got to know who John the Baptist was, what their message was.

How does it comport with scripture? Headed for the kingdom, heading for judgment, heading for the threshing floor. Am I going to be wheat in the barn? Am I going to be chaff in the fire? People know these things and they all got it wrong. Why did Peter get it right? The father revealed it to him.

How and why? Because Peter was looking. This has to be us. We have to be humble enough to learn.

We have to be susceptible enough and seeking enough to recognize our own inadequacy and the sufficiency of God in Christ. Everything we need for faith and obedience, everything we need for life in this world and life in the next is provided, but it's not enough to know that and then lay the phone on the table. Heeding the message, responding to the message, making changes in our life.

Do we value the presence? Peter and his brother and James and John and those other disciples valued the presence of Christ enough to change their lives, to secure that presence and enjoy that presence and learn in that presence for several years. You are blessed because you're not listening to flesh and blood and superficial reasonings and

rationalizations. You're not listening to mystical theories.

You're getting your revelation from my father who is in heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter. Now this is Petras in Greek.

And on this Petra, I will build my church. You know, there's been much made of the difference there that Peter is not the rock. The great confession is the rock.

You are Petras, just like you are son of Jonah. We're not talking about your dad, Jonah. And we're not talking about the prophet Jonah.

We're talking about what that name represents in terms of messenger bringing a message that results in change. In the same way, the rock isn't about stone and it's not about Peter. It's about a message that produces change.

And that confession, that understanding, that recognition of who Jesus is, even though Peter hasn't fleshed it out yet, with the resurrection from the dead and the atonement and propitiation and all the rest of the theological truths that are going to come from Christ's work on the cross, he knows who Jesus is. And everything else will follow. You confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, believe in your heart that God's raised him from the dead, that he is truly the son of God and the source of our salvation.

You are saved. All the rest of your theological understanding will flow out of that great essential recognition of who Jesus is. He is Emmanuel.

He is God with us. It's the presence. And from our Thursday night study, you know that being qualified, being sanctified and being built up as a place for the presence is the message of the book of Haggai to us and is all important.

Nothing else matters. If we don't have the presence, we're done. If we do not recognize who that presence is and the change in our lives that that understanding should bring should change our prayer life.

It should change our conversation. It should change our priorities in terms of manifesting love, the mind that was in Christ Jesus, Philippians chapter two. We ought to be changed and invoke and pursue that change to produce the fruit of the spirit.

I'd love to go to Galatians six and talk about this impact of the great confession and the fruit of the spirit. You go to Galatians five and six. All of that hinges on understanding.

Paul is haranguing the people in Galatia. Do you not understand? And we'll probably look at that next time when we get to binding and loosing. Oh my goodness, has this been misunderstood and misconstrued? You are Kephas.

Jesus was speaking Aramaic and we know this because he says Shimon Bar Yonah. Bar is Aramaic. This whole thing was in Aramaic.

And so when he said, you're not Shimon, you are Kephas, K-E-P-H-A-S. K-E-P-H-A-S, which is the Aramaic word for a stone that you can pick up and throw. Not a giant boulder.

Kephas. And on this rock, I will build my Ecclesia. This is not church, capital C. This is not Catholic church.

This is not, nobody knows anything about a church at this point. Nobody knows about body of Christ with the Lord as the head and the parts fitly joined together by that which every joint supplies. Nobody knows any of that.

The disciples certainly do not know it. And this is not a mystical saying. This is understandable to the disciples in the moment and at the time.

When Jesus says Ecclesia, in the same way that we said, if your brother has ought against you, go and be reconciled. And if he won't, then take one or two others with you. And if he still won't, then bring it to the Ecclesia.

There is no church, church steeple parking lot, baptistry and education building in those days. There is no pastor and elders and women praying with their heads covered and the rest of it. There's no church in any way, shape or form as we understand it today.

No Holy Spirit unified, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and father of us all. That's all after Pentecost. When Jesus uses Ecclesia here, he is not talking about church per se.

And it's really hard to get past that because you look at your Bible and it says on this rock, I will build my church. And you think, Oh, that's us. That's the pastor driven elders and people with gifts and all of the things that we understand as church.

No, no, no, no. That's not what he's saying here. It will include it, but it is not limited to it.

On this rock, flesh and blood has not revealed to you, but my father who is in heaven. They drank from that spiritual rock that followed them. The author of Hebrews says, and that rock was Christ, their old Testament.

And there is no Christ. So how can they be drinking from that spiritual rock that followed them? And that rock was Christ. What on earth is Paul talking about when he says that in Hebrews, they drank from that spiritual rock that followed them.

And that rock was Christ. Are we talking about literal water? Can't be. It's a spiritual rock.

Right? Spiritual rock. And the rock followed them. The rock that Moses struck with a rod one time and the rock that he struck the second time when he was supposed to speak to didn't follow anybody.

It's a rock. And water came up out of the ground and slaked the thirst of the Israelites

and all of their animals, right? They drank from that spiritual rock that followed them, which was Christ. So what does rock mean? Spiritually speaking, what sustained Israel in the wilderness and in the land? My father who is in heaven reveals.

It is the revelation from God, the father in heaven, that sustains the people of God on the earth. They drink from that spiritual rock. It is the water of life.

It is the word of God in the hands of the spirit of God. That's what sustains us spiritually. It's a metaphor, right? The recognition that the Lord Jesus is the Christ, the son of the living God is revelation from God given to those who are asking and seeking and knocking, looking, following, doing what Peter did.

And on that revelation from heaven, Christ is going to build his ecclesia. Ec is out from, clesia comes from kaleo, which means to call. So out called.

This was used in the secular Greek world for a group of people that was assembled. It was an assembly, but not just any old assembly. You could go to the marketplace and say, look, there's an assembly of people here buying groceries.

This was a group called together for a purpose. The closest analogy I can think of is if you've ever been tagged, most of us have for jury duty, and you've got to go down and sit in a room and wait until you are divided up and sent to one or another courtroom and then further divided to be in the voir dire process. Are you qualified? Are you going to actually sit on a jury? Or you say, I'm a Marine, and they say goodbye.

You know, you're too hardheaded and you're not going to be sympathetic to our defendant. So adios. That's what usually happens to me.

I just mentioned, well, I'm a Marine, and well, out you go. But that group of people that is called together by a summons, a jury summons, that's an ecclesia, a group called together for a specific purpose. Without the purpose, there is no ecclesia.

It's called out. Those are the masses. And this subset is called out for a purpose.

Now you can be called and not go. You can be called and go and choose not to participate. Another quick example, I just went to my ham club meeting Friday night.

And there are lots of people that have gone and gotten a license from the FCC to talk on ham radio. A lot of them in this area. Some of us choose to be more active and to join a local club and confederate with other club members on things and talk to each other on the radio on a regular basis.

There's a weekly net or a daily net. And you participate in that. People say, well, all you're doing is saying, well, hi there, this is Sam and the weather's great outside and I'm kind of busy and I'll talk to you later.

And it's just chit chat. Why are you even doing that? It is practice. It makes sure your radio connections are working and that your equipment is in good shape, that people can hear you.

How far away can they hear you? It associates you in a kind of fellowship and familiarity and other people know who you are and you know who they are and you associate names with call signs. You go to meetings and you see faces that go with those names and call signs. And as time passes, that called out group, when the club says, let's have a meeting, you can choose whether or not to go.

Many are called, but not nearly as many come. And the ones who come, you stick around after. We had a meeting after the meeting this past Friday that lasted longer than the meeting itself in the parking lot and had got to exchange ideas and it is a wonderful form of fellowship with some really good people.

But that's an ecclesia. So when Jesus says, I am going to build my called out group on this essential recognition, Jesus isn't just anybody and he doesn't have just any message. He's not just one of the prophets.

He's not even a specific prophet or a specific recent figure. He is unique and who he is and what he says matters to me in a way that when there's a called out group, I'm there. When there's a club meeting, I'm going.

When church is in session, I'm there. When the message is being delivered, I'm going to hear it and I am going to change my mind. I am going to be Bar Yonah.

I'm going to be a son of Jonah. I am going to act on that information. Jesus says, that's the group called out that I'm going to build.

And it's built on that active faith, that active pursuit of life and relationship with God that is centered in Jesus Christ. And it's not talking about structure, not talking about pastors and elders and deacons and buildings or confederations or meetings or getting together or Bible classes or Bible studies. What is it talking about? God with us, Emmanuel, the point of contact, the way of entry through the veil into the Holy of Holies is the Lord Jesus.

Not only do I know that, but I am going to avail myself of the opportunity to walk through the veil. And when I get to the other side, I am going to use what I know to represent myself and those for whom I pray effectively. My actions are going to be consistent with what I know.

And what I know is going to be that which is revealed by God, not by man. It's so important to understand what this great confession actually is and what it isn't. It's not mystical thinking.

It's not Jesus handing Peter some kind of special power. It is Peter representative of all of those who are going to be able to bind and loose on earth, consistent with what has been bound and loosed in heaven. That's going to be our subject next Sunday.

And that is a humdinger. You really are going to enjoy what scripture has to tell us about binding and loosing. And as you already know, it's got nothing to do with Satan and demons.

It has everything to do with the meaning of bid and forbid. I bid you good day. I bid you welcome.

I bid you come or I forbid. It's bid and forbid, bind and loose, permit and deny, allow and disallow. And that single clue, if you look at it in the coming week, you'll be able to preach my message next Sunday.

But plenty for us to think about in what we've seen this morning. And we'll commit that to the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts and in our midst. And look forward to getting together this Thursday to continue our study in the book of Haggai.

But we'll close for now with a word of prayer. Father, thank you for the truth of your word. Thank you that our life is not lived in our own strength or by our own means and talent, but by your revelation, your provision, your grace, your faithfulness, your might and your power through your spirit.

We thank you for the Lord Jesus, for the power of his words and his example, and for the power of this written narrative that informs us and reveals to us your truth. We pray that as we reflect on it, that we will not only understand it and see its pertinence and application, but we will invoke and act on these truths in our lives in the hours and days ahead. We pray it in Jesus' name, Amen.