The Son of the Immortal God and His Invincible Church

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Date: 11 January 2026

Preacher: Shawn Woo

[0:00] Good morning, everyone. For those of you who don't know me, my name is Sean.

! I'm one of the pastors of Trinity Cambridge Church. I love that I get to pastor a church where you offer a book giveaway, and then people go, ooh, that's amazing. But we are people of the book, but the most important book is the Bible.
So let's open that Bible. That's the one book that we stake our lives on. If you don't have a Bible, please raise your hand. We'd love to give you a copy of the Bible that you can use and you can take home with you.
We're in Matthew chapter 16. Let me pray for the reading and preaching of God's Word.
Heavenly Father, I come to this pulpit this morning with a gaping hole, a sense of impotence.
[1:21] because I realize that unless you open the eyes of the blind, unless you illuminate the eyes of people's hearts, they cannot see you in your glory.

So, Lord, I plead that we begin with prayer, that you would, by your Holy Spirit, open the eyes of our hearts to behold the glory and the grace of Jesus Christ, your Son.
Fill us with faith and hope and love as we cling to your Word. Lord, speak to us from your Word as you always do. They might be built up as the people of God, the invincible church of Christ against which the gates of Hades cannot prevail.
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Please stand if you are able to honor God together as we read from His Word. Matthew chapter 16, verses 1 to 20.
And the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and to test Him, they asked Him to show them a sign from heaven. He answered them, When it is evening, you say, it will be fair weather, for the sky is red.
[2:48] And in the morning, it will be stormy today, for the sky is red and threatening. You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times. An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah.

So He left them and departed. When the disciples reached the other side, they had forgotten to bring any bread. Jesus said to them, Watch and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.
And they began discussing it among themselves, saying, We brought no bread. But Jesus, aware of this, said, O you of little faith, why are you discussing among yourselves the fact that you have no bread?
Do you not yet perceive? Do you not remember the five loaves for the 5,000 and how many baskets you gathered? Or the seven loaves for the 4,000 and how many baskets you gathered?
How is it that you failed to understand that I did not speak about bread? Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Then they understood that He did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.
[4:05] Now, when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, Who do people say that the Son of Man is? And they said, Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.

He said to them, But who do you say that I am? Simon Peter replied, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.
And Jesus answered him, Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

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I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you lose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Then He strictly charged the disciples, tell no one that He was the Christ.
This is God's holy and authoritative word. Please be seated. Throughout the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, Jesus asks many questions.
[5:20] In fact, He asks over 300 questions throughout the course of the Gospels. Far more frequently than the times that other people ask Him questions. This was Jesus' way of engaging people and of teaching people, of asking thought-provoking questions and challenging their assumptions and shedding light and exposing people's hearts and revealing the eternal truths of God.

But of all the questions that Jesus asked, the one that He asks in this passage, Matthew 16, 15, is the most significant one. Who do you say that I am?
Life or death? Heaven or hell? Our eternal destiny hangs on in the balance of the way we respond to that one question.
Jesus has been called many things throughout the Gospel of Matthew. People have addressed Him with the Messianic title of Son of David. The demons have called out saying, Son of God.
Even the disciples themselves, in days' confusion, after seeing Jesus walk on the water, have declared, You are truly the Son of God. And here in this passage, once and for all, Jesus settles all the questions, all the debate, and declares who He is.
[6:44] Who is Jesus? And His answer is this, He is the Son of the immortal God who builds His invincible church. Jesus is the Son of the immortal God who builds His invincible church.

And we're going to first talk about how Jesus warns us, Beware of the leaven of the false teaching of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. And secondly, we're going to talk about how we ought to share the bread of life, which is Jesus Christ.
After a powerful ministry among the Gentiles, at the end of chapter 15, Jesus crossed back over to the Jewish territory of Magadan. And then immediately, He is met with skeptical Jewish leaders, the antagonistic Sadducees and the Pharisees.
He says that they came, and to test Him, they asked Him to show them a sign from heaven. The Pharisees and the Sadducees were the two dominant ideological groups in the first century Judaism.
They together made up the Sanhedrin, which is the highest ruling body in the Jewish community. It's the highest ruling religious body and political body as well.
[7:54] And the Sanhedrin was in cahoots with the Romans. They argue, the Sadducees in particular, argue that there's no resurrection, nor angel, nor spirit, while the Pharisees believed in all those things.

So the Sadducees and Pharisees, actually on many counts, were at odds with each other. The Pharisees were like the religious conservatives, the constitutional originalists who wanted the people to return to the Bible.
The Sadducees were kind of the liberals of their day. However, in this instance, these two rival factions make common cause to oppose a single foe in Jesus Christ.
So it's not good news that the Pharisees and the Sadducees have joined up here to test Jesus. We know that they're not trying to ask a sincere question. They're trying to trip Him up because that's the way the word test is used whenever the Jewish leaders come to test Him.
This is a bipartisan inquisition into Jesus' teaching and ministry. And they demand from Him that Jesus show them a sign from heaven. If this were the first time that these Jewish leaders encountered Jesus or heard of Jesus, maybe we'll think that that's a genuine request.
[9:08] But the request rings hollow in light of what we've observed so far in the previous two chapters. In Matthew 14, 9, Jesus specifically looks up to heaven, he says, and then prays over the five loaves of bread.

And then he goes on to feed 5,000 men besides women and children on top of that with that five loaves of bread. Is that not a sign from heaven?
And then in Matthew 15, Jesus repeats that miracle among the Gentiles, the 4,000 Gentiles. And then sandwiched between those two multiplication miracles are two summary statements of Jesus' ministry among the Jews first and then Jesus' ministry among the Gentiles, both of which tell us that they brought all kinds of sick and ill and demonized people and at the touch of His hand, they were

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all healed.
People came and they wanted to just touch the fringe of Jesus' garment knowing that they would be healed and they were. And in the summary of Jesus' ministry among the Gentiles in Matthew 15, he says that the mute speak, the crippled are healthy, the lame walk in the blind see.
Are these not signs from heaven? And yet Pharisees and Sadducees ask for another sign. And Jesus perceptively and rightly refuses.
[10:23] The scribes and the Pharisees in previous chapters had asked for a sign also and Jesus responded to them in a very similar way. Here there's a little bit of a meteorological metaphor here.

When it is evening, you say, it will be fair weather for the sky is red. And in the morning, it will be stormy today for the sky is red and threatening. You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times.
There's a rhyme that ancient mariners used often. It goes like this. Red sky at night, sailors delight. Red sky at morning, sailors warning.
I'm no weather scientist, but I know how to search for things on Google. And when the air is highly, highly pressured, and it traps dust and particles, and that filters apparently, that filters out blue light so that all you see is the red and the orange hues of a red sky.
And that kind of high-pressured air apparently is good. It creates fair weather because as the dense, dense, stable air sinks down, it traps moisture. It dissipates clouds. It inhibits cloud formation.
[11:36] And because weather systems, and I just learned this, that generally they move from west to east, if a red sunset means that where the sun is setting in the west, there is good weather.

And because weather systems travel from west to east, that means the weather, good weather, is coming toward you. It's ahead. However, if you, if you, a red sunrise is what you see, then that means where the sun is rising in the east is already behind you.
It's past you. That good weather system has passed you, so that means there's likely bad weather coming. It's interesting that the same red sky, depending on your orientation toward it, which direction you are facing it, could mean fair weather or foul weather.
Likewise, it is your orientation toward Jesus Christ, the Son of God, whether you come to Him in faith or unbelief that determines whether you have peace with God or wrath.
You face the wrath of God. As it says in Matthew 3, 11 to 12, those who turn to Jesus in faith are baptized with the Holy Spirit and fire. That represents God's gracious, powerful presence indwelling His people, the Holy Spirit and fire.
[12:52] But those who reject Jesus, it says, will be burned with unquenchable fire. fire. It's the same fire of God, but it could mean God's gracious presence with His people or the fiery wrath, unquenchable flames of judgment.

These Pharisees and Sadducees knew how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but they could not interpret the signs of the times. They didn't know how to interpret and understand what Jesus was doing and who He was.
They did not understand that He was the Messiah, the Christ, the Son of the living God. And that's the question that Jesus poses to us this morning. Who do you say that I am?
Jesus says in verse 4, an evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah. Jesus did, as I mentioned in the previous weeks, perform signs, sometimes to help people, to prove His messianic identity.
And He did that for those who genuinely sought Him and wanted to humbly put their trust in Him. But He consistently refuses to indulge the testing of people who question Him out of pride and unbelief and evil and adulterous generation.
[14:09] To such people, there is no sign that will suffice because their questions do not stem from a heart of faith that's seeking understanding, but rather from an evil and adulterous heart.

So even though throughout the Gospels Jesus performs many spectacular miracles that defy the laws of nature, there are people who always stubbornly persist in their unbelief. And this is why, in this case, Jesus refuses their demand for a sign.
Instead, Jesus points to a singular, decisive sign that should be sufficient for all of us, and that's the sign of Jonah that Andrew preached on some weeks ago. Matthew 12, 40-41, for just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

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The sign of Jonah is the death and resurrection of Jesus, that Jesus died for the sins of his people, he was buried in the heart of the earth, and on the third day he was raised to new life for our justification.
That's the sign that God has provided, and no more will be given. That's the sign that you must reckon with and believe. He says in verse 4, so he left them and departed.
[15:24] Because these Jewish leaders persist in their unbelief, this is the end of Jesus' mission in Galilee. Now he will resolutely set his direction toward Jerusalem and toward his crucifixion and resurrection, after which he will resume his ministry to the Galileans.

After their departure, Jesus says to his disciples in verse 6, watch and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees. They had just had a confrontation with the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and Jesus is clearly warning them about them and their teaching, as Matthew explains in verse 12.
But Jesus' disciples are kind of clueless at this moment. They don't understand. They had forgotten to pack bread for their journey. And so they think Jesus is talking about that.
Oh, I think Jesus knows that we forgot bread. We need to go get bread somewhere. But he says, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.
I don't know, maybe they have a bakery somewhere? Be careful. Let's not make sure to get the wrong leavened bread. Honestly, it's a little hard to see how they could possibly misunderstand this.
[16:42] And Jesus shares my disbelief in verse 11. How is it that you fail to understand that I did not speak about bread? Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

Both the word understand and the word bread have been recurring themes in the preceding chapters. The word understand, if you might recall, if you're with us in the parables of the kingdom in chapter 13, in the parables of the sower, it contrasts the seeds that bear fruit versus the seeds that do not bear fruit.
The seeds that do not bear fruit are those who hear the word but do not understand. But the seeds that bear fruit are those who hear the word and understand and bear fruit up to a hundredfold.
Jesus twice says in this passage that his disciples did not understand. The word perceive in verse 9 is the same word just translated differently, understand as in verse 11.
Do you not yet perceive? Even the 12 disciples do not understand apart from Jesus' kind explanations but with some help from Jesus, it says in verse 12 that they finally understood that Jesus was not talking about bread but of the teaching of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.
[17:53] Jesus reminds them of the multiplication of bread and the miraculous feeding of the 5,000 Jews with five loaves of bread and 4,000 Gentiles with seven loaves of bread that Jesus is the bread of life sent by God from heaven to nourish the people of God both Jews and Gentiles unto eternal life.

They've seen all that. The disciples have been witnesses to all that. The history making, the world changing, people saving, and kingdom coming event is unfolding right in front of their eyes and yet they worry about bread.
Do you see the absurdity of that? Even at a basic logical level not understanding all that about who Jesus is like Jesus just fed 5,000 people with five loaves of bread.
Do you think that you forgot bread and now Jesus is like oh no. You forgot bread and now we're not going to have anything to eat. How could you? Come on. Of course not.
Jesus chides the disciples in verse 8. Oh you of little faith. Why are you discussing among yourselves the fact that you don't have no bread? This admonition oh you of little faith is one we've seen earlier in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 6 25 to 34 and I think Jesus is intentionally invoking what he taught.
[19:24] There he says in there do not worry about your life what you will eat or drink or what you will wear. Do not worry because he says look at the birds of the air. Do not sow or reap or store away in barns and yet your heavenly father feeds them.

Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? And why do you worry about clothes? Look at the lilies of the field and how they grow.
Not even Solomon king of Israel. Not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire.

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Will he not much more clothe you? You of little faith? That's the exact same phrase. Oh you of little faith. So do not worry. Saying what shall we eat or what shall we drink or what shall we wear for the Gentiles run after all these things.
And your heavenly father knows that you need them. But instead seek first his kingdom and its righteousness and all these things will be added to you as well. How often even though our heavenly father has promised to provide for all of our needs do we worry about what we will eat? [20:40] and no matter how much we worry and no matter how much we plan our days and plan our budgets we cannot extend the length of our lives by a single hour.

We will die exactly when God appointed for us to die. But why does this happen to us? Why do we worry? Why do the disworldly and temporal concerns of money and things and food and drink and clothes, why do they feel so real and so imminent and urgent that we forget and lose sight of these spiritual eternal realities?
Two failures Jesus says account for this in verse 9. One a failure to remember. Two a failure to perceive. First we fixate on what we do not have and we worry because we do not remember the five loaves for the 5,000.
So if you're worried about something in your life today then take time to remember how God has provided for you. How God has come through for you time and time again.
And secondly there's a failure to perceive. We get tunnel vision because if we fail to perceive that God is who he says he is we're so fixated on the bread that we forgot to pack the bread that we're worried we might not have that we forget that Jesus is the bread of life who gives eternal life and that he is with us and indwells us by his spirit.
[22:13] We do not perceive that the creator of the heavens and the earth is our heavenly father who provides for us. So let me ask you has your life recently been consumed by your earning and spending and saving the food you eat and the clothes you wear.

Have the mundane realities of life taken up the entirety of your vision so that you are losing sight of eternal realities, of your heavenly perspective, of seeking first the kingdom of God and its righteousness?
Are you aware today of what God is doing in and through you and in and through your neighbors and your friends? what God is doing in and through your children? Are you aware of these realities?
The bread that the disciples forgot to pack was the last thing on Jesus' mind. Instead he was warning them about the leaven of the false teaching of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. Leaven sometimes is used in a positive metaphor throughout the gospel.
We saw that in chapter 13 but here it's clearly being used in a negative way. Leaven is fermented dough from an old batch of fermented bread like the way people in our church make sourdough bread.
[23:31] You combine that leftover batch that you've set aside with the new batch and then it leavens the entire batch of new bread. However, this is an ingenious way to save and to continue the process especially when you don't have yeast.

But if the leaven that you're using is contaminated it will also spread contamination through the entire batch of bread. The Pharisees and the Sadducees settled skepticism.
Their rejection of Jesus as the Christ, the son of the living God is like leaven contaminated with bad bacteria that spreads through the entire bread.
Jesus' warning about leaven gets picked up later by Apostle Paul in two separate occasions in the New Testament and these passages helpfully illustrate the two ways that leaven can taint the bread of Jesus Christ, the gospel of Jesus Christ.
The first kind of leaven is lawlessness. When writing to the Corinthian church that's tolerating sexual immorality among their own members, Paul commands them in 1 Corinthians 5, 6-9, do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?
[24:53] Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. Do not associate with sexually immoral people.

Sin is like an infectious disease. It never stays put. It always spreads. It grows worse if you leave it unattended, if you do not repent of it and turn from it.
This is why we must decisively remove everything that caused us to sin. That's why Jesus is so emphatic in the Sermon on the Mount. If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. He's not saying literally gouge out your eye.

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He's saying remove decisively the cause of sin in your life. This is why we cannot tolerate unrepentant sin within the church of Christ.
As A.W. Tozer once wrote, the vague and tenuous hope that God is too kind to punish the ungodly has become a deadly opiate for the consciences of millions.
[25:58] Tolerating unrepentant sin out of so-called kindness is a denial of the gospel of Jesus Christ. God took sin so seriously he didn't just say, oh, that's fine, forget about it.

He sent his own son, his only son Jesus Christ to die to pay the penalty for our sins. That's how seriously God took sin and who are we to look at sin and just wink the eye and say, no big deal. No need for repentance. That's a dangerous leaven that contaminates the gospel of Jesus Christ which does not give life. The second kind of leaven is legalism.
Writing to the Galatian church who had been deceived by the Judaizers into thinking that Gentile converts to Christianity must get circumcised and keep the Old Testament law in order to be saved. Paul says in Galatians 5, for freedom Christ has set us free. Therefore do not let yourself do not submit again to the yoke of slavery. If you accept circumcision this is what Paul says Christ will be of no advantage to you.
[27:19] I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision that he is obligated to keep the whole law. You are severed from Christ. You who would be justified by the law!

You have fallen away from grace. Our little leaven leavens the whole lump he says. Anyone who suggests that faith in Jesus Christ alone is insufficient for our salvation.
Anyone who denies what we were just singing earlier of the all sufficient merit of Jesus Christ applied to us. Anyone who adds to the requirements of the gospel and suggests that your standing with God does not depend solely on what Christ has accomplished for you.
No, no, no, it depends on your works, your good deeds, your performance. That is a dangerous leaven that corrupts and spoils the bread of life.
As the church of Christ we must guard against these leaven of false teaching. The church of the living God is meant to be a pillar and a buttress of the truth.
[28:33] That's one of the purposes of the church. We exist to uphold and uplift the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ and that's why we have to be vigilant and beware of the leavens of false teaching.

not because we enjoy being censorious contrarian and pointing fingers and correcting people no but because the gospel of Jesus Christ is that precious because apart from it there is no salvation we must guard it.
And that's now the point that Jesus turns to in the second half of the passage he talks about the bread of life that should be declared and should be shared he asks his disciples in verse 13 who do people say that the son of man is the son of man is Jesus his preferred way of referring to himself I think for a number of reasons two main reasons one because of it's allusion to Daniel 7 13 to 14 but secondly because it was an ambiguous enough title that was not used widely at the time so it's kind of an empty shell almost it's not theologically loaded like terms that the Jews already used like the son of David so Jesus could kind of supply the content the theological content for that phrase and define who he is and what the messianic is obviously it's not clear enough what the son of man is because people are saying and debating and speculating who do people say that the son of man is the disciples reply some say John the
Baptist others say Elijah and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets remember a few chapters ago Herod Antipas kind of fanciful speculation Jesus doing so many miracles he conjectures that oh this must be John the Baptist raised from the dead because miraculous powers I work in him Herod Antipas beheaded John and now he's afraid that Jesus is John the Baptist resurrected some people were saying that about him the disciples some people thought that he was Elijah there were messianic there were expectations of Elijah returning one not only because he was one of the most powerful prophets!
of the Old! God and so because of the prophecy of Malachi 4 5 which prophesied that God would send again the prophet Elijah before he himself comes to save his people there was this feverish expectation trying to find out who this Elijah might be and some people thought Jesus was Elijah still others thought that Jesus was Jeremiah or one of the prophets prophet Jeremiah incurred the wrath of his own people by prophesying of the downfall of Judah and the destruction of the temple of Jerusalem and Jesus does the same thing he denounces the Jewish leaders in chapters 21 to 23 and then he prophesies of the destruction of the temple of Jerusalem in chapter 24 so he fits this

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pattern of Jeremiah's ministry and because Deuteronomy 18 15 prophesied that God would raise up another end time prophet like Moses he says there were many prophetic expectations maybe it would be a
[31:59] Jeremiah maybe it will be another prophet that will come so many speculations all that to say the crowd's estimation of Jesus is not bad right these are all good people all good godly people I mean they could have compared Jesus to Janus and Jambres the court magicians of Pharaoh in Exodus no they don't compare him to Elijah Jeremiah John the Baptist whom Jesus himself said there's no one born of woman greater than John the Baptist the greatest man that lived under the old covenant this is a high estimation of Jesus but it's not high enough as we see in Jesus response and that's true in our day and age as well you are not likely to meet people throughout the world that hate Jesus and denounce

Jesus Muslims believe that Jesus was one of the highest ranked and most beloved prophets the six believe that Jesus was a high ranked holy man Jehovah's witnesses believe that Jesus is the highest of all God's creatures Christian scientists believe that Jesus was the first human to manifest fully the truth of Christian science some political theorists and sociologists believe that Jesus was a social and political genius who revolutionized and restructured society many Buddhists and atheists and secular moral theorists!
openly declare that Jesus was a great moral teacher these are wonderful lofty things to say about any person but when it comes to Jesus and your estimation of Jesus it is not good enough it's not high enough so Jesus turns to his disciples because they're the ones to whom the secrets of the kingdom have been revealed they've been privy to Jesus his work and his miracles and his private explanations and teaching so he expects their reply than the crowds and he asks them who do you say that I am not what your friends and family say about Jesus who do you say that I am have you if you do not yet follow Jesus Christ as your Lord have you open mindedly seriously and honestly considered and wrestled with that question who do you say that
I am and that question was posed to all of Jesus disciples but Peter alone answers because he's the leader and the spokesperson for the twelve apostles that's why he's always listed first in the list of apostles throughout the gospels and we've seen him speak on behalf of the apostles many times throughout the gospel of Matthew it's a consistent pattern throughout all of the gospels this is also the only instance in the gospel of Matthew where we're given Peter's full name Simon Peter so there's an added degree of solemnity and formality to this occasion Peter responds!
Christ as I think all of you know does not it's not Jesus' last name it's a title that means Messiah anointed one the Jews believe in accordance with the prophecies in the Old Testament that God would raise up a king from the line of David who would represent him and return the people of God to their glory in the presence of God and related to that concept of Christ Messiah was the idea of the son of God in the covenant that God made with King David he said in 2 Samuel 7 12 to 14 I will raise up your offspring after you who shall come from your body that's why messianic expectations didn't expect from Messiah to come from David and he continues I will establish his kingdom he shall build a house for my name and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever I will be to him a father and he shall be to me a son so that's fulfilled in the immediate sense by
[36:30] King Solomon but it waits its ultimate fulfillment in Jesus Christ that's what gets picked up in Psalm chapter 2 verse 7 to 8 where God says concerning his messianic king you are my son today I have begotten you that's why the title Christ and the title son of God are organically connected throughout the gospels Jesus disciples if you remember have already declared kind of in a startled days after seeing Jesus walk on water truly you are the son of God that's when the truth first dawned on them but since then they've had time to ponder that truth!

if that's what that means if that's really who Jesus is what are all the implications of this so they've had the time to process that startling declaration and then the truth is sinking in and now this is the formal considered answer to Jesus' question who do you say that I am and Peter as a representative of the twelve says you are the Christ the son of the living God it's an awe inspiring moment it's like a it's like a thunderclap that rips and peels open the heavens to reveal who Jesus really is to all of us and I think son of God is not merely a metaphor anymore a messianic title for for a king the king of Israel king of Judah no because Jesus said earlier in Matthew chapter 11 27 all things have been handed over to me by my father and no one knows the son except the father and no one knows the father except the son and anyone to whom the son chooses to reveal him who dares to talk like that that he has exclusive knowledge of

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God the father that he has the authority to reveal the things that have been handed over to him by his father what manner of man talks like that who dares to say all things have been handed over to me by my father what do you mean all things God the father is a sovereign ruler and creator of the heavens and the earth all authority in heaven and earth resides with him and you're saying all things have been handed over to you by your father this profession of faith is more than affirming a metaphor of Jesus being the son of God a king no he's saying you are the son of the son like an actual son the only begotten son and this profession of faith elicits an amazing commendation from Jesus in verse 17 blessed are you
Simon bar Jonah for flesh and blood is not revealed this to you but my father who is in heaven bar Jonah simply means it's aramaic for son of Jonah which is Peter's dad's name also rendered John in other places in John 142 he's called John John Jonah variations and notice that Jesus doesn't pat Peter on the back saying!
atta I knew you were the smart one of the bunch that's why I made you first one no Jesus says for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you but my father who is in heaven Jesus does not credit Peter with this realization by his own brilliant reasoning and diligent study no this truth was revealed to him by God the father it's hard to overstate the importance of this truth Christianity is is a religion founded on revelation something that God himself has disclosed and revealed to us is not a product of human research ingenuity discovery or enlightenment this is why you can find people who have [41:06] PhDs in bible and theology who have not a shred of faith in the living God you don't arrive at the knowledge of God by human effort that knowledge must be revealed by God so that we might receive it 1 Corinthians 1 14 says spiritual truths are spiritually discerned and the natural person apart from the help of the!

enabling power of the Holy Spirit cannot understand divine revelation that calls for a posture for us of humility of prayerful dependence and gratitude toward God we know God and we can call upon him as our heavenly father not because of our superior intelligence or superior diligence compared to other people who search for the truth but because God in his sovereign grace has revealed himself to us we cannot persuade a single person in the world to trust in Jesus Christ and become a follower of Christ with the sheer force of logic or eloquence not a single one only supernatural revelation makes someone born again through faith in Jesus Christ and then Jesus follows that up with this commendation up with an amazing promise in verses 18 to 19 and I tell you you are Peter and on this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it
I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven and whatever you lose on earth shall be loosed in heaven these two verses have been the subject of much debate throughout church history the Catholic church uses this verse to justify the Roman papacy the office of Pope and the argument goes like this the name that Jesus gives Simon in this passage Peter means rock immediately after renaming Peter I know you've seen the name Peter before in the gospels but he's already anticipating this event Matthew as he writes immediately after Jesus says I tell you you are Peter Jesus goes on to say and on this rock I will build my church Jesus seems to be saying that he will build the church on Peter Jesus continues in verse 19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven whatever you lose on earth shall be loosed in heaven and here that second person pronoun you is singular meaning
Jesus is speaking individually to Peter this is what we call the power of the keys the authority to include and to exclude people from church membership and by implication membership in the kingdom of heaven itself this is an allusion to Isaiah 22 20 to 22 where God declares that he will make Eliakim a steward of the kingdom of David and give him the key of the house of David so that he shall open and none shall shut and he shall shut and none shall open that prophecy is first and foremost fulfilled by Jesus himself and that's why in Revelation 3 7 to 8 Jesus says to the church in Philadelphia the words of the holy one the true one who has the key of David who opens and no one will shut and who shuts and no one opens I know your works behold I have set before you an open door which no one is able to shut so Jesus is the ultimate and first fulfillment of that prophecy he's the one who holds ultimately the key of David however here
Jesus seems to be delegating that authority to Peter now I agree with the Catholics that Jesus is speaking to Peter here and that Peter is the rock that Jesus is speaking of the name Peter I said literally means rock so it's like Jesus saying Peter sorry not Peter Simon from now on your name is Rocky and I build my church on rock on this and so like it comes the logical sequence is really hard

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to dispute and there is an unmistakable reciprocity here too Peter says you are the Christ he declares you are the Christ the son of the living God and then Jesus turns to him and says I say you are Peter you are rock based on that profession of faith that you just gave I will now build my church on you so Jesus is according prominent authority to Peter as the leader of the twelve apostles he will be the tip of the spear to use an analogy as the kingdom of heaven advances in the book of [46:01] Acts who is preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ at Pentecost when the Holy Spirit first falls upon the Jews in Acts chapter 2 Peter when the Samaritans first received the word of God whom do the apostles of Jerusalem send to them so that they might pray over them and so that they might also receive the Holy Spirit Peter and John so not just Peter when does the Holy Spirit fall upon the Gentiles when Peter goes to the house of Cornelius the centurion and ministers to them and preaches the gospel to them so I heartily affirm that Peter is prominent he's the tip of the spear he lays the foundation of the church of Christ with that said I disagree on a number of points decisively with the Catholics yes Peter does have a foundational role but this is a role that is given not exclusively to Peter but collectively to the twelve apostles of Jesus

Christ Jesus singles out Peter because he is the representative leader and the spokesperson of the twelve he's the first among equals but he's not the only one who holds this power of the key and that is precisely why the exact same power of the keys is given to all of the apostles and indeed to the whole church in Matthew 18 speaking of the process of church discipline and excommunication sorry I don't know what just happened Jesus says in Matthew 18 17 to 18 that if a person who claims to be a Christian and persists in sin and refuses to repent we must confront them one on one and if they don't listen you bring one or two others with you so that the testimony may be established on the testimony two and three witnesses and then he says if they still refuse to listen we must tell it to the church I think I have this passage to show and if he refuses to listen even to the church let him be to you as a
Gentile and a tax collector truly I but this time the second person pronoun you is plural because Jesus is speaking not only to Peter who holds exclusively the power of the key but because all twelve apostles of Jesus holds the power of the key and by extension they lay the foundation of the church and the church of Christ holds the power of the key that's why in the gathering of church we exercise church discipline together to bind and to loosen this is why Ephesians 2 20 says that the church of Christ is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets this is why in
Revelation 21 14 the heavenly Jerusalem which represents the people of God the church of Christ is included in that it says it has twelve foundations and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb the apostles of Jesus make up the foundation layer of the church of Christ and every subsequent generation builds upon that foundation and not on another foundation and that's why we speak of the apostolic deposit that we hold on to nowhere does it say in the Bible or in Matthew anywhere that Peter was the first pope or that Peter will continue to speak after his death through the bishops of Rome Peter s foundation laying work is already done he does not continue to function in that way you would think that if the bishop of
Rome was intended by Christ to occupy so prominent a role in the history of the church that you think that Paul writing 16 chapters in his letter to the Romans would have something to say about it he says nothing and when Peter himself addresses himself to the elders that he is writing to in 1 Peter 5 verse 1 he calls himself not the bishop of bishops or the universal bishop or the pope no he says I write to you as a fellow elder it was not until the 5th century when Leo I argued that the apostle Peter continues to speak through the bishops of Rome that the papacy as we know it came to exist they say that Pope the popes are the vicar of Christ the substitute of Christ until that point with
[51:11] Leo I no one ever claimed that the bishop of Rome is the bishop of bishops the universal bishop sure Rome was always a prominent city it was the former imperial capital and because of their prominence they did have some preeminence and outsized influence not unlike the ways sometimes you know large flagship churches of certain denominations have outsized influence and preeminence among the churches that they are equal to but still the bishop of Rome is still one of many bishops!

sometimes Christians find the idea of having a single leader a singular authority as the head of the church of Christ appealing they think oh then maybe we'll have more unity maybe they can ensure fidelity to biblical teaching but this is demonstrably false it's like saying that the United States of America is a very united country because we only have one president no we are as divided as ever

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ideologically and politically we're splintering in every direction governmental unity does not equal doctrinal unity or spiritual unity I can give you many examples of how this has been true to our history there's a book called Bad Popes you guys could look up and read it's a scholarly book that I think Catholics have read too so they know you know
Peter is an important figure in the history of the church and I affirm that without reservation but this passage did not begin with the question who is Peter no it began with the question who is Jesus who do you say that I am that's the more important question in verse 18 Jesus doesn't say on this rock I will build Peter's church no he says on this rock I will build my church Jesus is the builder Jesus is the owner and that's why although for the sake of convenience sometimes you and I will say things like oh yeah Trinity Cambridge Church is my church by that we simply mean that that's the church to which we belong not that the church belongs to me no pastor on earth no bishop on earth and no pope on earth can claim this is my church because Jesus declares authoritatively here this is my church the church of Christ church of course is not referring to a building it's speaking of the people of God the word church in Greek means congregation a gathering and God gives us the church a bracing assurance in verse 8 on this rock
I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it I always wince a little bit when I read this because it doesn't say hell in the original Greek if you have a footnote in your ESV Bibles you can look at the footnote and it will tell you that in the Greek it doesn't say hell it says Hades this is an important distinction there are two very different places hell is a place of final punishment what we call in the Bible the second death the lake of fire that's where Satan the great dragon and the false prophet and the beast they're all thrown into the lake of fire to hell later on at the final judgment according to Revelation 20 verses 13 to 14 it's after the millennial reign of Christ and after the final defeat of Satan that God will judge the world from the great white throne it's only at that point that death and Hades yield give up their dead and then those people are judged and they're punished in hell in the lake of fire so right now there's no occupant in hell so Jesus is not speaking of hell he's speaking of Hades the gates of Hades will not prevail against it what is
Hades that's very interesting Hades is a dark place it's the it's the it's the underworld it's described it's described as the pit sometimes the pit of darkness it is the Old Testament equivalent of the the Greek word for Hades is Sheol which I'm sure you've seen many times in the Bible Sheol is a deep place Isaiah 3810 describes the gates of Sheol as a gate from which no captive ever escapes it's like Moranon the black gates of Mordor in Lord of the Rings it says in Job 7 9 he who goes down to Sheol does not come up so how can the church of Christ prevail against the gates of Hades against the powers of death that's been the lament of the psalmists in the Old
[56:35] Testament in in in in psalm psalm 89 verses 48 to 49 there's this lament who can deliver his soul from the power of Sheol Lord where is your steadfast love of old which by your faithfulness you swore to David there's this faith this belief in the Old Testament among the Old Testament saints that only God can deliver from Sheol because God says in 1 Samuel 2 6 the Lord kills and brings to life he brings down to Sheol and he raises up and yet God was not raising up the dead from Sheol and so they lament throughout the Psalms how long oh Lord when will you finally raise the people from Sheol and from death and that's fulfilled in Jesus Christ when he comes because the wages of sin is death why does death reign why does

Hades reign because of sin and so when Jesus dies on the cross to make atonement for the sins of his people and when he does away and fulfills the punishment the penalty that is due and absorbs the wrath of God in our place Hades no longer has any claim upon the people of God and so the gates of Hades will not prevail against the church of Christ sometimes people misunderstand this they think oh like the gates of Hades are like demons you know attacking us and assailing us and surrounding us and we're like hunkered down in a bunker somewhere we're just trying to wait it out and patiently endure that's what it means you know we're not going to be broken in we're going to endure we're going to make it no that's not the image here what's the function of a gate to keep people out to protect something the kingdom of heaven is not described in defensive terms in the gospels it is described in the offensive terms
Jesus is the one who comes and binds the strong man so that he can plunder his treasure and take them away that's why he says in Genesis 22 17 to 18 and your offspring this is the promise God had given to Abraham and your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed this is fulfilled ultimately in Jesus Christ so no saints of God you are not hunkered down in the bunker just trying to weather the storm of the

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enemy's attacks we have the battering ram of the gospel we are the ones storming the gates of Hades and we batter it with the gospel and we declare the gospel of truth and when people believe in the gospel of Jesus Christ Jesus said in John 5 25 the hour is coming and is now here when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live that's what we do but as we do that as we share the gospel when we hear
Jesus warning I know the second part of my sermon I titled it sharing the bread of life and you might be wondering at the end of this passage Jesus literally says in verse 20 he strictly charges the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ so how in the world do get the idea that you're to share this with everybody well that's because of where we are in relation to the cross the disciples have not yet seen the cross the death and resurrection of Christ we live on the other side of it Jesus tells the disciples not to tell people that he is a Christ yet because it's so easy to misunderstand the role and nature of his messianic mission that Jesus came to conquer yes he did he is the king he has come to conquer!
but how does die on the cross so how do we conquer how do we prevail against the gates of Hades same thing we bear suffering witness to Jesus Christ we die as martyrs for the sake of Jesus Christ and we declare it as we suffer and as we do this as in the following in the footsteps of Jesus that's when the gates of Hades fling open and the dead hear the voice of his dear Lord Jesus Christ and come to live let's pray heavenly father grant us faith lord rally us as your troops strengthen our hands that we can boldly declare the gospel of
[61:54] Jesus Christ that makes the dead live and Lord fill us with fresh gratitude and worship oh as we remember that you've taken us from death to life we had no way of getting out of through that gate of Hades but you did it Lord Jesus you did it and for that you deserve all glory and honor and praise it is in your precious name Jesus we pray amen we are going to spend some time in prayer as we

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