“The Questions Jesus Asked” Part 1
Mount of Olives | November 1, 2026 | Matthew 16:13-20
Pastor John Steward

Prayer of the Day
Lord Jesus, on this Communion Sunday; at the start of a month of thanksgiving, we are grateful that You became a human, suffered, died, and rose again as our Savior - forgiving our sins and allowing us into the Kingdom of Heaven. Help us to be bold in declaring the truth of who You are; and enliven our ability to present to the world Your divine presence in our lives. In Your name we pray, Amen.

Scripture Reading

Matthew 16:13-20
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, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

Message Notes

Matthew 16:13
Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?"

Matthew 16:14
And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

Matthew 16:15
He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"

Matthew 16:16-17
Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven.

Matthew 16:18-20
And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth

will be loosed in heaven." Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

Study Questions – Read Matthew 16:13-20

ICEBREAKER – Getting started:
1. If someone who had never met you asked your friends to describe you, what do you think they would say about you?
2. Who has had the greatest influence on your understanding of God or your relationship with Jesus? What did that person teach you?
3. If someone asked you, “Who is Jesus to you?” how would you answer in one or two sentences?

Based on Matthew 16:13-20, answer the following questions:
OBSERVATION – What does the text say?
1. As you read Matthew 16:13-20, what comes to mind? What stands out? What is interesting to you and why?
2. In one sentence, how would you summarize this text?
3. What lesson or message do you think the author is trying to convey?
INTERPRETATION – What does the text mean?
1. In verse 13, Jesus asks His disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?” Why do you think Jesus begins by asking what other people believe about Him?
2. In verse 14, the disciples share several different answers about Jesus' identity. What do these answers reveal about how people understood Jesus during His ministry? Why might people today have different opinions about who Jesus is?
3. Jesus then asks His disciples a more personal question in verse 15: “But what about you? Who do you say I am?” Why is this question different from the first one? Why is it important for each of us to consider our own answer?
4. Peter responds in verse 16, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” What do the titles Messiah and Son of the living God tell us about Jesus' identity and mission?
5. In verse 17, Jesus tells Peter that this truth was revealed to him by the Father in heaven. What does this teach us about the role God plays in helping us recognize and believe who Jesus is?
6. Jesus gives Simon the name Peter, which means “rock,” and speaks about building His Church on this rock (verse 18). What do you think Jesus means by this statement? How does Peter's confession of faith relate to the foundation of the Church?
7. Jesus declares, “I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it” (verse 18). What encouragement does this promise offer Christians when the Church faces opposition, uncertainty, or difficult seasons?
8. In verse 19, Jesus speaks about giving Peter the keys of the kingdom of heaven. What might these keys represent? How do you understand the relationship between the authority Jesus gives His disciples and the message of the Gospel?
9. Why do you think Jesus tells His disciples not to tell anyone that He is the Messiah at that particular time (verse 20)? How might people's expectations of the Messiah have differed from the mission Jesus came to fulfill?
10. Looking at the passage as a whole, what does this conversation teach us about the relationship between knowing about Jesus and personally trusting in who He is? How should this understanding shape the way we live as His followers?
APPLICATION – How can you apply the text?

1. Personal faith: Jesus asks, “Who do you say I am?” If you were answering Him today, what would you say? How would your answer influence the way you approach your daily life?
2. Faith and grace: Peter's understanding of Jesus was revealed by the Father. How does recognizing that faith is a gift of God's grace change the way you think about your own faith? How might it affect the way you treat people who are still exploring Christianity or struggling to believe?
3. Building the Church: Jesus says, “I will build my church.” How does this promise change the way we think about our responsibilities, challenges, and successes as a congregation? What is one practical way you can help build up the Church this week?
4. Standing firm: Jesus promises that the gates of Hades will not overcome His Church. When have you faced a season of doubt, disappointment, or uncertainty in your faith? How can Jesus' promise give you hope and courage during difficult times?
5. Sharing Jesus: If someone at work, in your neighborhood, or in your family asked you who Jesus is and why He matters to you, what would you say? What is one practical way you can share the hope of Christ with someone this week?