

Who do you say I am?

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Preacher: Dave Bott

[0 : 00] Thanks, Bo. We're going to read from Matthew chapter 16, starting at verse 13, and we're going to read all the way through to chapter 17, verse 8. 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. 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 loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ. From that time, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.

[1 : 32] And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, far be it from you, Lord, this shall never happen to you. But he turned and said to Peter, get behind me, Satan.

You are a hindrance to me, for you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man. Then Jesus told his disciples, if anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul?

Or what shall a man give in return for his soul? For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done.

Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom. And after six days, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John his brother and led them up a high mountain by themselves.

[2 : 59] And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light. And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah talking with him.

And Peter said to Jesus, Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah.

He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.

Listen to him. When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, Rise, have no fear.

And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only. It's the word of God. Well, good morning, everyone.

[4 : 07] If you're visiting today, my name is David. I'm the pastor here. We're getting back into Matthew's gospel today. I was tempted to try and summarize all the way up to chapter 1 to 18, but I thought that would be so confusing if I tried to do that.

In the bulletin, on the front page, there's some links to YouTube, something called the Bible Project, where it goes for about eight minutes each, and you've got these illustrations.

It's really handy. If you haven't heard of it before, check it out. Like, I'd really encourage us to, I don't know if you've ever done this before, but have you read through a whole gospel in one or two or a few sittings?

Because we often, in church, we break it up into these little bits, and we can just lose the progression and the themes and the picture of Jesus that builds up. So I'd really, as we get into Matthew again, can I encourage us to, I don't know, audio book, however you want to do it, let's sit in Matthew's gospel.

But however, we pray, and then we'll get into God's word. Father, as we just sang about, I ask that through your word, you would help us see your glory and your wonder, so that you might move our hearts to praise you even more.

[5 : 38] So I pray this for all of us in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, I want to start by saying something that I struggle to believe on a daily basis.

Whatever situation you're in, I'm in, the thing you and I need more than anything else to live well isn't steps to follow or techniques.

It isn't power. It isn't some outcome. It's to know, and by know I mean really, personally, internally, till it gets to our emotions and our imaginations, know who Jesus is in any situation.

I'm about to go on holidays, and I want to do lots of things, spending time with family. I want to sleep. I want to paint our front door and finish that up.

There's lots of things I'm like, I really want this. But actually, the thing I need to rest is to know this Jesus afresh.

[6 : 55] Any situation. You're fearful for your children. Who is Jesus to you when you're fearful for your children?

Who is Jesus to you when you're anxious about tomorrow, about next month or next year? Who is Jesus to you when you have experienced, or someone you love has experienced, a massive injustice?

Who is he to you when you can't break free of that addiction? Who is he to you when you start to get disillusioned with this church, or maybe the leadership?

Who is he to you? Who is he to you when you're just utterly overwhelmed, either mentally or just... Because the life Jesus calls us to, he just inserts himself so deeply into our life.

He lays claims on our life that is radical. It covers every situation. In our text today, here's his description of a Christian.

[8 : 21] If you're following along in your Bibles, chapter 16, verse 24. If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

To deny yourself is not simply don't be selfish. It's not there's a last piece of pizza and the Christian thing to do is deny yourself.

That's not what he's saying here. If you remember a number of years ago, there was this political crisis where members of parliament were found to have dual citizenship.

And the high court said, you can't be a politician in Australia and represent this government if you've got an allegiance to another country.

They had to renounce their other citizenship if they're going to be in parliament. Deny here is renounce. If you're going to follow Jesus, you need to renounce that allegiance to self, that self-rule.

[9 : 36] The Bible says all of us naturally think we have the right to sit on the throne of our lives. And the Bible says, no, no, God created us.

That is a delusion. We need to renounce self if we're going to follow Jesus. And he says, take up your cross. That is more than just saying you need to endure hardship if you're going to be a Christian.

Unbelievers get cancer as well. It's not just saying endure hardship. To any Jew or Roman of the time, crucifixion was not just painful, it was the world publicly rejecting you.

The world saying you are not worthy of life, you are not worthy of any dignity, even clothing. To carry your cross is to not belong.

You don't belong to this world. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a movie came out about him last year.

[10 : 48] I haven't seen it. I cannot recommend it either. I have no idea. But just trying to help you understand who I'm talking about. Christian in World War II, executed days before the end of the war.

He famously put this verse, when Christ calls a man or woman, he bids him come and die. Come and die to self-rule.

Come and die to this world. And find your life in me. It's radical stuff.

Now, what I love about Jesus is he motivates us through choice.

The verbs in here, in verse 24, you and I are the ones doing the verbs. He doesn't crush yourself, crush your sense of self.

[11 : 53] You're the one who is to renounce. Self. He doesn't place the cross on you. He says, you take it up willingly.

A Christian is motivated by choice. And then he gives reasons. He could have just said that, but he's trying to motivate our hearts in the following verses.

He's trying to give us positive reasons, not fearful reasons, to choose this. that you really will find your life if you do this.

It will feel like dying, but you will find your life. Verse 25, for, here's the reason. Here's why you should choose to die.

Whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. The most selfish thing you and I can do in any situation is to renounce self and not cling to this world and try and find your life in him.

[13 : 05] It's the most, he's appealing to our desire for life. You want to find your life? Find it in me. Verse 26, we love pros and cons lists, don't we?

Here's a pros and cons list. If you could have it all, I don't know what you're dreaming about, if you could have it, you think your heart will be settled and your life would have meaning and joy and you're flourishing if you could have it in this world.

Well, what will you gain if you're denying Jesus in pursuing that?

It comes at the cost of your life. A man, I heard just, it was an article, ABC, I don't know if you saw it this past week, a man was sending that final transaction, he was buying a house, it was settlement day, he thought he was about to get the keys to his house.

The email looked so legit and all they did is change the bank details and he sent it to the wrong, it was a scam. His life savings, no how, like the bank can't, couldn't fix it.

[14 : 30] Jesus is saying, what you think, what you and I think we're going to find life in this world is transferring to the wrong account.

It is a scam. Giving all our soul, all our life to the wrong account. You'd be devastated if you transferred that bank account.

I don't think we think it's a scam because we're all, we're all doing it. We keep thinking the next thing is going to satisfy my heart.

The prophet Jeremiah in chapter 9, 23 puts it really poetically, powerfully. Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom.

Let not the mighty man boast in his might. Let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me.

[15 : 39] He's saying we will find our life in knowing him more and more.

Now I don't think, I'm sure, you and I can't do this. He's not calling for us to self-discipline. He's not saying try harder to do this.

Our hearts, for us to willingly renounce self and die to the world and look for life in Jesus, that is more than trying harder.

We need to be convinced of two things. Who is he? Who is this guy who says your soul will be satisfied in him?

And what did he come to do to give us life? They are the two questions that Matthew's gospel is framed on. Up to chapter 16 is about who he is, especially.

[16 : 40] And then from then on it's about what he came to do to give us this life. And chapter 16 here is a turning point. We get both of these truths. In the previous section, verses 13 to 17, we have a summary of some people's conclusions of Jesus up to this point.

People who met Jesus, they saw his miracles. miracles. The Pharisees, the religious leaders, they've come to their conclusion already months ago. Yes, he does miracles, but he's a liar. It's by the power of Satan. They've already decided he's got to go. He's got to get him out of their lives. The crowds are closer.

They're closer to the truth. They're much more respectful. He's somebody. He's a prophet. He points to God. He speaks on behalf of God. But whether you're drowning 100 kilometres out from shore in the ocean or you're 100 metres, if you're drowning, you are still in grave danger.

Peter represents the only conclusion that can save, and he's representing the 12 apostles here. You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.

[18 : 10] This conclusion is, we're coming to a climax in this section of Matthew. It's teaching us how to read the stories of Jesus.

I think we can often read these stories as my life feels like I'm in a boat and there's a storm. If only I look to Jesus and he can calm that storm.

These aren't self-help stories of what we should do. We're meant to have the questions of the apostles on our mind. When they're in that boat and Jesus calms the storm, they're like, what sort of man is this?

And then when he walks on water, they come to the conclusion, truly you are the Son of God and they worship him. That's how we're meant to be reading Matthew's Gospel.

Matthew has a particular focus on fulfillment of the Old Testament compared to Mark or Luke. We think a sermon on the mount is in Matthew's Gospel.

[19 : 19] He's up a mountain and he's a new Moses. Who is this guy who says of the law of God, you heard that it was said don't commit murder and all those things, but I say to you.

Who dares speak about the law of God like that? I say to you. He's a new Moses. He's a greater Moses.

He's a greater David. He's not just conquering human armies, he's conquering Satan's armies. He's a greater Solomon.

No one can match his wisdom. They try and trip him up. No one can match his wisdom. He's a greater Israel.

Israel failed that testing in the wilderness whereas this son obeys. He's a greater temple when he forgives the paralyzed man and he forgives his sin if you remember that story.

[20 : 22] It's not the temple you find forgiveness, it's in this man that you find forgiveness. All of it is building this picture of who this Jesus is.

Now Simon Peter he's told that when he when he makes this confession you are the son of the living God he said bless you Simon for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you but my father who is in heaven.

if you can see who Jesus is I think this verse is telling us don't credit your own knowledge don't credit your own wisdom don't credit your own humility if you and I can see who Jesus is it's because the father has given us eyes to see the sun can shine in the sky but if you don't have eyes to see you won't see it.

God has to both reveal the sun his sun through his word but he also needs to give us eyes to see him if you can see him praise his grace if you are struggling to see him ask him ask him the father loves to answer that prayer now Jesus goes on to say that on Peter he's going to build his church for today I just I'm not going to go into the detail of why I do not think that is going down the Catholic claim of a Pope I feel like I need to say more talk to me later if you want to know more about that but it's it's on the basis of these apostles who saw Jesus and heard Jesus it's their confession that he is the son of

God that you and I can make that same confession you won't come to the conclusion that Jesus is the son of God without the apostles it's on that foundation that you and I can make the same confession you are the Christ and be saved it's their faith that builds our faith and Satan attacks this faith he attacks this church that Jesus is building the gates of hell will not prevail against his church that picture of gates it's a metaphor for all the armies all the fortifications all the evil forces are against coming to this conclusion that Jesus is the Messiah but Jesus says no one's gonna all the armies are not going to destroy the faith of my people it's a beautiful promise so that's how we can know who this

[23 : 57] Jesus is a friend once asked me what my favorite song about heaven was and the song that came to my mind was by King's Kaleidoscope If you don't know them look them up if it's not your taste that's okay but one of their songs is called I Know I have been given a taste for something that nothing in this world can satisfy but I know that a time is coming when I will be in glorious delight I know I will run through heaven streets of gold shouting hallelujah Christ alone I know I will dance and sing and bow before the throne yeah this I know!

Oh! But how do I know? How do you know? How can you know?

Six days after making this confession we're given this gracious wonderful confirmation to see who it is who promises you'll find life find glory in him so Peter James and John are up a mountain this is better than if you got a dream tonight of a revelation of Jesus this is better you couldn't be sure

about that dream whereas here we've got three people three witnesses!
who testify to the same phenomenon for a brief moment we get a glimpse into who this guy is before he came into the world we get a glimpse into who he is right now who is in this room with us by his spirit we get a glimpse!
of who it is who's coming back at the end of history he was transfigured before them and his face shone like the sun and his clothes became white as light how does that go in your noggin how does that fit in the categories of your beings that are in reality some people brush this aside and go who does his laundry don't make a joke a joke is trying to deflect how confronting this is there is a threat here who is this guy there's so much Old Testament imagery in this account we've got this bright glory cloud up a mountain and when the

[27 : 04] Israelites were freed from Egypt the Shekinah I can't even say the word Shekinah thank you Shekinah glory a pillar of cloud by day and fire by night destroyed Pharaoh's armies and protected the people and up Mount Sinai turned that mountain into a volcano basically Moses experienced this glory up a mountain and Elijah experienced this same glory a voice up a mountain and here we are up a mountain again but there's something different here there's something very different the divine manifestation splendor is coming out of a person he is not like

Moses and Elijah who point to glory he he is the glory at the heart of the universe is a person N.T. Wright says an author UK Christian author N.T. Wright says how can you live with the terrifying thought that the hurricane has become human that fire has become flesh that capital L life itself became life and warped in our midst Christianity either means that or it means nothing it is either the most devastating disclosure of the deepest reality of the world or it is a sham and nonsense a bit of deceitful play acting most of us unable to cope with saying either of those things condemn ourselves to live in the shadow world in between Peter's error let's make three tenths I want to stay here with you guys he puts Jesus on the same level as Moses and Elijah they're just the support acts they're the backup dancers I'm not sure if that's a disrespectful way to talk about Moses and Elijah the main act all the Old Testament was pointing! to this person this radiating the glory of God son it's as soon as the disciples confess that Jesus is this son they get this beautiful confirmation but it's at this point that Jesus starts to say why he came his mission chapter 16 verse 21 from that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed I know if you've gone to church for a while we've heard this so many times but I lingered on that word this week that radiating face killed and on the third day be raised in the screenplay

Jesus Christ Superstar Pilate says in the play when Jesus comes in who is this broken man cluttering up my hallways so this is Jesus Christ I'm really quite surprised you look so small not a king at all most people today back then still today can't see his glory that he would go to the cross for a brief moment up this mountain we're given this glimpse to the divine light that he would become so small not a king at all that he would go to that cross who do you see professor brian cox you might have seen youtube and things he says there's 200 billion stars in the milky way galaxy each with their own planets two trillion galaxies and he says

[32 : 16] I challenge anyone to be able to picture that you can't picture it can you anyone raise your hand if you can picture that you can't you can't picture it and all that was made through this sun you do not treat someone like that as your NRMA roadside assistance you just ignore until you're in trouble and give them a call you do not treat someone like that who do you see who do you see who went to the cross for you he this radiating light face went to that cross to die for your allegiance to self my allegiance to self he chose to die for your love for this world for my love for this world we get we get a little taste of of his grace

Peter James and John they're in the presence of the glory of God and they are on their face terrified and at his touch he says rise have no fear that's why he went to the cross so that when we know his glory is coming got no fear we're just looking forward to it because of the forgiveness he has given us what you and I need the most in any situation is to know him I'm still struggling to believe that but that's what we need the most in any situation whatever you're going through right now we need to know him more afresh again if you really want to find life picture world war two concentration camps if cory ten boom you've probably heard her name before picture flea infested beds an overcrowded dorm of women and many of them gathered around this little bible that they've snuck in most of them sick some of them starving to death but through the light of the moon they're gathered around this little bible reading

Romans 8 who shall separate us from the love of Christ shall tribulation or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword no in all these things in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us there are so many things Corey could have been looking to for more life that's I'm I don't think I'm ever going to go through something as hard as that at least get rid of the fleas out of the bed set us free from these captors and the injustice of it but here's what Corey writes I would look about as her sister Betsy read Romans 8 and watching the light leap from face to face of the women more than conquerors it was not a wish it was a fact we knew it we experienced it minute by minute poor hated hungry we are more than conquerors not we shall be we are life in

Ravensbrook took place on two separate levels mutually impossible one the observable external life grew every day more horrible the other the life we lived with God grew daily better truth upon truth glory upon glory better whatever situation you're in the most important question to ask your heart is who is Jesus to you what sense of worth or belonging have you really lost if people cut you out of their life if the one who owns the angels knows you by name who is Jesus to you what injustice have you really suffered in the end if you forgo vengeance and this king puts everything right in the end who is this Jesus to you what pleasure what experience have you really missed out on if he purchased glory forever for you at his right hand are pleasures forever more you haven't missed out on a thing overseas trip no come on I'm sure we can travel in the newer the most important question in any situation we're going through is who is this Jesus to you finish with Jesus words whoever loses their life for my sake will find it!