I Believe; Help My Belief!

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Date: 08 May 2022 Preacher: BK Smith

[0:00] Good morning, everyone. Welcome to our Life of Christ study.

So please turn in your Bibles to the book of Matthew. We are going to be in the book of Matthew. But before we get into the depths of the study, I just want to make a quick announcement to you guys.

So I'm going to be having Ryan show a few pictures. I don't know if you guys remember, but previous to heading out to COVID, I was supposed to go to the Philippines to teach at a pastor's conference.

But as we all know, Dave actually went on vacation, came back, brought COVID with him. And, you know, the world's been in this descent of madness ever since. Anyway, so apparently COVID restrictions have lifted the Philippines.

So they have asked me to come back and teach. So one of the subjects that they've asked is to preach on the life of Christ. So they've asked me to put together a, originally it was a 10-part series, but it's reduced to seven-part series because of the day.

[1:10] So I'll just show you another picture. So this is last time that I spoke, which was in 2016. It was on the subject of discipleship. So a couple of things that I wanted to do.

A, I wanted to ask you guys to partner with me. What we'd like to do is raise about \$10,000. And what that \$10,000 does is it provides for these pastors.

Over 250 of them will be there. So we actually pay their entrance fee for them to come. They come from all over the Philippines for this. The second thing that I would like to do, and I've just begun negotiations, is you guys know that book that I've been talking about, The One Perfect Life?

I'm hoping that we as a church can gift them each The One Perfect Life Bible. So what that does, it allows me to prepare a teaching curriculum for them to go through and understand and go back so that they will be able to teach this to their churches as well.

A lot of these men do not have formal education, seminary, that type of thing. A lot of them are educated, but they do not have seminaries. And some of the seminaries they do have tend to be on the liberal side.

So it's a wonderful opportunity to minister to them. And the rest of the finances that we raise is to flight me over there. So we're hoping to buy around 300 of the books.

We're trying to get a discount. And a couple of things I want you to pray for is pray that we do are able to track down the 300 copies of the books, but we have to send them in June for the hope of them being available in October.

So that's the one thing we're kind of working with the publisher to accomplish. So the other thing is just when it finally gets around. Last time I got wickedly ill. I was actually on an IV between my preaching sessions.

It was just BK didn't adapt too well to Filipino lifestyle over there. Anyway, so this time I got my doctor ready.

He's already got a whole concoction of drugs for me to go over. And hopefully we'll be able to last all three days and be able to meet all seven sessions. So if you guys could continue to pray about that, we'd like to.

[3:29] The church, obviously, leadership is in partnership with us. But I'd love to have you guys partner with me as well so that we would be able to gift them the Bible, that One Perfect Life that would help them in their studies.

Sound all right? So please pray to that end with me. Like I said, we're in Matthew 16 right now. So let's pray before we get in here. Dear Lord, Holy Heavenly Father, we just thank you for this power of your word and that it reaches everywhere.

It transforms our hearts. It changes lives. It changes families. It has the, it's changed cultures. It has changed countries, oh Father.

Lord, there is a war that is going on in our world. Lord, Satan fights against you at every opportunity. But Lord, we know you are greater than he who is in the world and of the world.

And we know that victory ultimately belongs to you. Just as we study your life as you lived it 2,000 years ago in preparation for the cross, I pray that just your example along with your teaching would convict us, would change us, would mold us.

But not only that, may we come to a greater love, worship, and adoration of you. So we ask these things in your most holy and precious name.

Amen. So before, last time we were in back, last time we were here in the life of Christ was previous to Easter. And if you remember, it was a scene where Jesus Christ worked very hard to get some time with the apostles.

Remember that? So there's this switch. And we've divided the life of Christ is basically into three components. The first component is the Galilean ministry.

It's actually the first year of his ministry when he gets baptized and he prepares. He's in Judea. So that's kind of the precursor to the Galilean ministry, which is a one-and-a-half-year timeline where Jesus spends his time bringing in the disciples, preaching to the crowds, doing miracles.

And he's basically announcing to the whole world, he is the Messiah. The kingdom is coming. Follow me. Right? So he's blanketing his time. But sadly, after one-and-a-half years, the people don't seem to get Jesus very well.

[6:03] Maybe that is the wrong term. Understand Jesus. The crowds seem to adore Jesus at every turn.

Everywhere he goes, there's crowds, tens of thousands of people. But they call him a prophet.

They refuse to call him the Messiah. Then we have the rulers, the religious elite. Those that were schooled in the Old Testament who were supposed to be able to recognize Jesus for who he was.

They're not going to be able to deny his powers. Yet, even though they were unable to deny his powers, they simply said, he must be in league with the devil.

At that point, we begin to see Jesus speaking in parables. The first parable was the parable of the seed. That if you understand the kingdom of God, you will understand the parables of Jesus.

[7:10] Likewise, if you do not accept the kingdom of God, the parables will be a mystery to you. John 6, 66 seems to mark a turning point in the ministry of Jesus Christ.

It simply says, when confronted with the truth of Jesus, many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him.

So Jesus began a new type of ministry, which we've called the private preparation. This is the time where Jesus Christ knows he's about a year away from the cross.

He's going to spend a concentrated amount of time building into the apostles. And if you're familiar with your Bibles, Matthew 28, 19 is kind of the apostles' charge, right?

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the sons and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

[8:15] That is going to be the ultimate message that he's going to hand over his disciples. Now he needs to prepare them to be able to give that message.

And as we looked at last week, Jesus seemed to go through a painful amount of time to get along with the disciples. Remember, he goes up to Sire and Tyre. Sire, Tyre, and Sidon.

Sire, Tyre, and Sidon, which is in the upper northwest. It's actually in a Gentile country. But he gets there and a woman approaches him and says, hey, please help my daughter.

He heals her. What happens? Crowds come. So he's got no time to spend time with the disciples. So a couple of weeks it takes him. He gets down to the Decapolis, which is in the southwest region, southeast region, sorry.

What happens? Someone's waiting for him. They know who Jesus is. This is Gentile territory. He heals. And his healing ministry spread so much that he's there for three days, and he eventually feeds close to 20,000 people because they're hungry, and they want to be blessed by Jesus Christ.

[9:25] But his main goal at that point isn't to preach to the crowd or to feed the crowd. It's to train the disciples. And this is where we find him now. Jesus elected to use what I call the nuclear option.

He goes to Caesarea Philippi, which, as I told you last week, is kind of like the Vegas version of the Roman Empire.

It was a decrepit, horrible, sinful place. It's where the Romans went for their vacation time and to get away from it all.

And historians tell us not only was there a temple to the emperor, but there was also all sorts of horrible, wicked sin in that area.

So if Jesus wanted to secure a time where he was going to spend with the disciples away from the crowds, this was it. There was going to be no Jews hanging out there. There was going to be no crowds following him out there.

[10:30] So here he is. He's ministering. And if you remember, he asked them a simple question. Who do people say that I am? Who do people say that I am?

Now, Jesus needs to accomplish two things here. And for the next two sermons, we're going to cover an entire year of the life of Jesus. All right? And so on the third week, we're going to be starting moving into the Passion Week.

But there's two things that are going to happen. The first one, he needs to tell them that he's going to die. Up to this point in the ministry of Jesus Christ, he has never once announced that he will die.

Never. Never told them that this was his destiny. And the other thing that he needs to teach them is that their version of what the Messiah is, is not who he is in his version of the Messiah.

And that's going to become very clear. So there's a couple things that I want to do for you today. One, I want to give you the structure to understand the next three chapters of Matthew.

[11:39] 16, 17, 18, 19. I guess that's four. But more importantly, I want you to get a glimpse of who Jesus is in this fascinating story that I want to unfold for you from the pages of Scripture.

So turn with me to Matthew 16. We're going to begin in verse 13, chapter 16, verse 13. So remember, Jesus Christ says, who do people say that the Son of Man is?

Their answer. Some say John the Baptist. Others say Elijah. And others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets. Now, he gets to the big million-dollar question.

If there was a question that could be considered a one-question oral comprehensive exam on whether or not they were going to make it or break it as apostles, this is it, right?

Who do you say that I am? Have you ever thought about that question? Everything is absolutely riding on the ministry of Jesus Christ if these guys are going to be able to do what Jesus Christ has called them to do.

[12:59] Imagine if they answer this wrong, they've missed the whole two and a half years of Jesus' teaching. If those that were the closest to Jesus, who've walked with Jesus, who experienced life with Jesus, who heard all his sermons, seen the miracles, if they get this wrong, what comes next?

Take a look at verse 16. Simon Peter, who we all understand is kind of the spokesperson for the disciples, replied, you are the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Right? The crowds missed it. The leaders missed it. Even the family of Jesus Christ missed it.

But here, verse 17, blessed are you, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.

All right, you've got me. You understand who I am. Now the next couple of verses are very interesting because Jesus tells them exactly what's going to happen next.

[14:21] 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.

Up to this time, Jesus has never mentioned church. But what he's essentially telling Peter is, on your testimony, which is based on me, Jesus Christ, who I am, and my teachings, you are going to build my church, which, praise God, we're here today.

Amen. They were faithful to it. But at that time, we're going to see there's a little bit of a struggle. And he says, 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 on heaven.

You guys are going to have powers beyond your understanding. In fact, what Jesus is doing is, you guys are going to be my special forces evangelists for the whole world.

That is what's going to happen. So that's what that 18 and 19 tell us. But Jesus does something very interesting in verse 20.

[15:27] He says, then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ. Why?

Why would he do that? Haven't they just identified him properly? Isn't that what he had been hoping for, planning for, training them for?

Well, the rest of the text tells us that Jesus had great wisdom in doing this. You see, up to this time, Jesus always told the people not to tell them about what he had done or his messiahship.

Why? Because they would go and preach in political terms. They would teach a Jesus that would overthrow Rome and restore Israel.

to its rightful center of the eye of God, for lack of a better word. If the disciples had gone out proclaiming that Jesus was Messiah, they would expect a glorious conquering Messiah.

[16:37] They would have looked for armies and bloodshed and victories. You see, to know that Jesus was the Messiah was one thing, to understand what that messiahship meant was quite another.

Let's take a look at verse 21. Jesus introduced a new teaching that they had never heard before. From that time, Jesus began to show his disciples.

And when it says show his disciples, what that means is he's going back into the Old Testament. He's going through the text to demonstrate to them 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.

You see, when the disciples heard that Jesus was the Messiah, this isn't the Messiah that they were expecting. You see, at this point, the disciples are really no different than the crowds.

They're really no different from the leaders. They're really no different from his family. But the way they differ is they still stick with Jesus, even when they do not understand.

[18:08] And their response, look at verse 22. And Peter took Jesus aside and began to rebuke him, saying, far be it from you, Lord, this shall never happen to you.

If you were arguing your head against me that they did in fact understand what Jesus was claiming to be the Messiah, this verse trumps any argument against what I just said.

Notice what it said. Peter took him aside. We almost have this kind of thought. Peter kind of goes over and he puts his arm around Jesus and, hey, let's go walk over here.

I want to share with you. That's not going to happen, right? No, no. That's like almost a fanatical response of grabbing Jesus by the cuff. That's not going to happen. Right?

This is a guy who loves Jesus, been with Jesus, and all of a sudden Jesus tells him he's going to die. And notice that word, he rebukes Jesus.

[19:23] He rebukes him, argues against him, fights his words. Peter's response is complete mortification.

No way, no how. Jesus, you've got it wrong. Your Messiahship is based on what I think, not what you think.

How does Jesus respond to Peter? And 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. Let me ask you a question.

Have you guys ever had an up and down day? Really? A really up and down day? It's nothing compared to what happened on this day for Peter. All right? The first thing he testifies that he is the Messiah.

[20:32] What does he say? My father God gave you. So Peter, hey, I spoke the words of God. God gave me this message that you are the Messiah. A couple of minutes later, get thee behind me, Satan.

Highest heights, right? lowest lows. He thought he was rebuking Jesus. Yet he, in the end, is rebuked.

One moment you're speaking the sweet words of God, the next you're speaking the lies of the devil. What do you think Jesus is thinking at this time?

Man, of all the guys in Israel, I get these fishermen. All right? Is Jesus then taken off in the wilderness by himself, saying, Lord, I think we need to postpone this whole cross thing.

All right? I know it's a year away, but I don't think I got enough time with these guys. Lord, they're really dull, and they don't listen to a word I say.

[21:51] Does that remind you of anybody? No matter how many storms I calm, how many people I feed, how many diseased people I heal, how many demons I have power over, these men still don't trust a single word that I say.

have you guys ever not been trusted? Like I mean, right?

You're telling something truthful to someone, and they don't trust you. You ever been there? It hurts, right?

There's something that you are telling somebody the truth that is meant to help them, and they don't trust you. I think this is something every parent goes through at some point with their kids, right?

You're trying to tell them something is good for them, but they're at that age where, Dad, I don't trust you. I trust Mom. It's Mom's Day. But Dad, but I wonder how Jesus felt, who's done nothing but live His life in perfect, sinless perfection.

[23:15] He's let these men in on everything. And here, they don't trust Him. Take a look at verse 24.

And here, Jesus sums it up, what it means to be a follower of Christ. Then Jesus told His disciples, no one's told. I'm going to tell you something here, boys.

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.

Then He will repay each person according to what He has done. Truly, I say to you, there's some standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.

[24:26] What's Jesus supposed to do now? Now, the men He knows the most don't trust Him. They're not listening to Him. They're showing a complete lack of belief.

These are the men that heard the John the Baptist crying out in the wilderness, this is the Messiah. These are the ones who had already left their lives.

They saw the miracles, heard all the teachings, experienced every wonderful blessing that came with Jesus Christ. And when finally Jesus tells them, I am the Messiah, I must die and raise again, and they don't get it, what would He be thinking?

Well, just in case you think these guys are dense here, I'm going to read you the passage out of Luke 18. And what I'm trying to tell you is, the disciples never got Jesus.

Notice what Luke's word says in Luke 18, 31. It says, In taking the twelve, Jesus said to them, See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished.

[25:45] For He will be delivered over to the Gentiles, He will be mocked and shamefully treated and spit upon. And after flogging Him, they will kill Him, and on the third day He will rise.

What's interesting, every time Jesus tells them He's going to die, He tells them He's going to rise again, right? So you'd think there'd be some kind of hope in there. Verse 34, They don't.

They don't. You'd think at least one of them, after Jesus had died, would have hung out by the tomb waiting, right? They don't.

In fact, it's the women that kind of are the first to approach. The disciples, the ones who were closest, didn't do so. Let me ask you a question.

How about you? Is there a time when, maybe it's now that you don't get Jesus? You don't get what He's doing, whether it be in your life in this world, in the life of your children, in the life of your parents?

[27:03] And I mean, you say you believe, but inside, you struggle with this faith. Some of you are even pretty open with your struggles of your faith.

You know you're not perfect. Sometimes we even make excuses about your imperfections. when you know you're not following Jesus, you feel shame, embarrassment.

Sometimes you may be even too embarrassed to pray. You might be even too embarrassed to share about Jesus. Maybe you're even too afraid to be honest with anyone because you fear of being thought less of.

Can anyone relate to any of that? Well, if you do, let me share with you how wonderful Jesus works in our life.

You see, the disciples, they're struggling. They've been with this man for two and a half years and he announces he's going to die. And their faith, all their faith that they have been putting in him is now shattered.

[28:24] And they're asking the question, he isn't the Messiah that he thinks he is or he isn't the Messiah.

How does Jesus respond? And these are the three marvelous truths that I want to show with you today how wonderful our Savior Jesus is. Take a look at Matthew 17.1.

You guys will know this as the great transfiguration. Jesus takes James, Peter, and John and he takes them up to the mount and God reveals himself to them and Moses and Elijah show up.

So I'll just read it quickly here. And after six days, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John his brother led them up a high mountain by themselves 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.

Verse five. 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.

[29:33] And what does he say next? Listen to him. Hey, you dense disciples. Maybe you need a voice of heaven to tell you something.

Guess what? They got it. You know what happens here? It says, when the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified. But Jesus came and touched them saying, rise and have no fear.

And they lifted up the rise. They saw no one but Jesus. You see, their face is so rocky. It's so unsure. And people don't talk a lot about this.

It may be the first time you've ever heard this. But Jesus Christ is giving them a down payment about what heaven's going to look like. You get me? He's giving them a down payment of what the resurrected Jesus is going to look like.

This is the Jesus that sits in the wells and talks to Samaritans and heals the crowds. We studied Revelation earlier this year. How is Jesus coming back next time?

[30:47] Right? He's coming back with his full glory. No one's killing him. No one's going to lay a hand on him. He's coming in total victory.

And here, he gives them this slice of what it's going to be like that. And he's saying, I know you're having a tough time accepting that I'm not the Messiah who will overthrow Rome.

But you know what I am? I'm the Messiah who's going to overthrow the world. Rome, that's small potatoes. What I'm coming for is the whole universe.

Amen? There is not a person, tongue, country, nation that will not bow the knee to Jesus Christ. Amen? And just in this little split second, he shares this marvelous truth with these three men.

And just to reinforce it, Jesus has his dad say, listen to him. Right? Right? Now, here's the second thing that Jesus does for his disciples in his great love for them.

[31:59] He comes down with a mountain from Peter, James, and John, and he finds the other nine apostles surrounded by a great crowd around them. And there's this boy who is demon-possessed, and they are unable to cast the demon out.

So let's take a look at verse 14 of Matthew 17. And it said, and when they came to the crowd, a man came up to him and kneeling before him, said, Lord, have mercy on my son, for he has seizures and he suffers terribly.

For often he falls into the fire and often into the water, and I brought him to your disciples, and they could not heal him. This man is so desperate for the healing of his son, he brings him to the most wretched place up north.

Then the disciples came to Jesus in verse 19. He's healed and said, why could we not cast it out?

And he said to them, because of your little faith. For truly I say to you, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, move from here to there, and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you.

[33:12] Are you catching the theme here? You didn't believe, I showed you on the Mounts of Transfiguration. He comes down and there's this scenario that is brewing beside him.

And let me read to you what Mark says. And Mark says, how long has this been happening to him? He's asking the father, and the father says, from childhood.

And he tells him how horrible it's been. Then Jesus said to him, if you can, all things are possible for one who believes.

Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, I believe. Help my unbelief. You guys seen that theme unfold there?

Tell me that's not a cry that we have. Is that not the cry that David just read in the Psalms? My friends, there's going to be these moments we are going to be challenged by things in this life that are going to challenge our unbelief, our perception of things.

[34:19] And here, Jesus Christ does this amazing thing and he declares to them, because of your little faith. Take a look at Matthew 7.22.

This is the third event. The first one's the Mount of Transfiguration. The second one, he does this incredible healing and he makes this and this father exhibits authentic faith.

Isn't that right? I believe, help my unbelief. Matthew 17.22, as they were gathering in Galilee, Jesus said to them, the Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men and they will kill him and he will be raised on the third day.

Notice what the text says, and they were greatly distressed. All right? Here we go again, right? We just had this incredible scene in the Mount of Transfiguration.

We've just had this incredible healing talking about faith and he's telling them the same message and they were distressed. Mark 9.32, same conversation.

[35:30] But they did not understand the saying and were afraid to ask him. Luke 9.44 says, but they did not understand the saying and it was concealed from them so that they might not perceive it and they were afraid to ask him about this saying.

It's kind of sad when you read about it that they were afraid to ask Jesus something. How would you feel just even as parents, mothers, fathers, if your child was afraid to ask you a question?

But here God is patient unlike any earthly father we can imagine. And the text tells us in Luke 9.46 that an argument broke out amongst the disciples arguing which one of them was the greatest.

It's hilarious if it wasn't for so absurd. They've demonstrated all along that they aren't getting Jesus.

Their faith is weak but yet they are arguing amongst themselves who is the greatest. But Jesus being Jesus simply said in Luke 9.47, but Jesus knowing the reasoning of their hearts took a child and put him by his side and said to them, whoever receives this child in my name receives me and whoever receives me receives him who sent me.

[37:17] For he who is least among you all is the one who is great. And what did Jesus tell him over and over in those six months?

I will give up my life for you. I will go to Jerusalem into the Roman authorities and they will kill me and I will rise again.

There's a patience here in Jesus Christ that I think is beyond our understanding. but I believe it's something that we need to hold to.

This morning we are celebrating communion and we celebrate communion not only because we are commanded to but we believe that it is significant.

We believe that Jesus Christ did exactly as he said that he gave himself willingly for our sins so that our relationship might be made right with God the Father.

[38:46] When we take this communion it says something. What's interesting it says something even in our faithlessness.

It says something even in our doubts in our cares in our fears in our distresses but it tells us that Jesus did exactly what he said he was going to do.

And you know what else he said he's going to do? he's coming back for us. He's coming to take us away and to usher us into the kingdom of his Father.

The Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians said for I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread and when he had given thanks he broke it and he simply said this is my body which is for you.

Do this in memory of me. In the same way also he took the cup after supper saying this cup is the new covenant in my blood.

[40:12] Do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup you proclaim the Lord death until he what?

Comes. You know what? He's coming. Regardless of our broken hesitant faith our struggles to hold true to his commands God still continues to redeem us day by day.

Amen? So we say yes to him and no to ourselves. That's why he simply told the apostles to follow me is to give up your life.

So this morning we invite you to partake in this. If you have followed Jesus, you have said no to the world and yes to Jesus. You don't have to have a perfect faith but you have to have a faith in the perfect Savior.

Amen? And that is only Jesus Christ. Nobody is Jesus Christ. So what we'll ask you to do if you'd like to participate in this, we'd ask you to come in the middle.

[41:31] Still kind of doing the whole COVID thing but just take your cup and bread and then go back and then I'll pray, give thanks and then we'll take it at once and then our worship team will come and lead us in song.

Is that alright? But let's before, let me just pray for us. Dear Holy Heavenly Father, sometimes when we look at these texts, sometimes we see them so small we just take the little stories and look at them and try to understand them without seeing the big picture behind them.

that there's this motivation by you to encourage your disciples who I'm sure had disappointed you to such a degree.

But you stuck with them and you kept bringing them truth, truth, truth to the point as we all know, they went out and died for your message.

So Father, as we come before you this day, we ask you to forgive us our sins. We ask you to forgive us of our foolishness which is born in our sins.

[42:53] We ask you to forgive our careless minds for not meditating on you. We ask you to forgive us for worshiping our ways and not your ways.

You said you are faithful and just to cleanse us of our sins and we ask you to do that. We also know that those who take the cup and eat the bread in an worthy manner will be held accountable for that.

So we ask that anybody who is not following you may they take time away from the table to not come but just to observe. we ask you to protect each and every one of us oh Lord.

We ask these things in your most gracious and holy name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[44:06] Amen. Amen