

Who You Say Jesus is Matters

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[0 : 00] If you have your Bibles, turn to Matthew 16. Matthew 16. And before we jump in there, I just want to say I'm grateful to be a member of this church. We just had a great kids' meeting with some of our volunteers and a lot of workers in the kids' room before this, while the kids also, the Vision Baptist Youth Chamber Orchestra was also out here practicing.

So it's just been a good Sunday. Your kids and teenagers, young people, really work with the greatest people on the planet. I believe that. And it was just so much fun talking through kids' ministry stuff, frustrations, the good, the bad, the fun, everything.

It was just such a good time. Thank you to everyone who works in kids' ministry and make it possible. Future of the church is happening because of y'all, so that's pretty exciting stuff. If you have your Bibles, turn to, we'll look at Philippians chapter 2 real fast.

But also in this room, there are a lot of people I could say thank you to. I started in Brother Steve's middle school Sunday school class. As Brother Wayne would say, right after the Civil War, I feel like.

I started in his class eighth grade year, and that was always fun. I used to get frustrated with how he would make us sing each Sunday school class, but I learned something. Worship matters, and I'm happy that he taught us how to worship.

[1 : 11] And then, Brother John, I moved up to your class freshman year of high school, and I just want to thank you for I can never repay all the grilled cheeses you bought me. I'll be forever indebted, and so will my medical bills too.

But no. Brother John spent a lot of time with me, some good conversations. Sometimes I did something not too smart, and it wasn't a good conversation. But thank you to Brother John for all the time you spent with me.

I had your Sunday school class, and there are so many little conversations that I've had with men and women in the church that have shaped and worked, and I just appreciate all of y'all. I remember Pastor Trent, I was 14, had a really bad summer, and I remember I hear, on my window at 6.30 in the morning, he was knocking on my window, woke me up, took me to McDonald's, just really helped me out there, showed me God's word.

So I love my church. Let's look at Philippians chapter 2. I met my wife in this church too, that's neat. Philippians 2. Let's look at verse number 12.

Wherefore, my beloved brethren, as ye have always obeyed, not in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. Verse 13.

[2 : 20] For it is God which works in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Aren't you thankful that God works in believers because he wants to, because he likes you, because he loves you. Verse number 14. Because of this, do all things without murmurings and disputings.

Verse 15. That you may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation among whom ye shine as lights in the world. Verse 16. Holding forth the word of life.

You know what's so neat about the Bible. It is the words of life. There is nothing, no speech, no message, nothing you can hear outside of God's word that will bring forth life. This is God's word and it is the word of life.

It works and it changes hearts and it molds and it leads and it guides and it sanctifies and does all these other long Bible words and it just works and it's incredible. And we get the privilege tonight to study the word of life.

And I just love that. There should be a picture back there. We'll only put it up for a second because I'm embarrassed. It should be called Greg China, something like that. Brother Ty, you're in the room. You're talking about this Go Forth tour coming up.

[3 : 21] I got to go on the first Go Forth tour. I was 18, I think, right out of high school. And in this picture, it's in China. And I am a fraud in this picture. I'll tell you why. And did you know the largest market for professional basketball is not the United States?

It's actually China. Like they consume more NBA basketball on a whole than all of America. And they don't know English. It was fascinating. Well, we're in this city called Qingdao. It was wonderful.

I was there with our beloved Mr. T, whose name I won't say because of Chinese government. But I was there with him and a few other missionaries. And he was showing us around, showing us the need for the gospel in China. And he said, guys, there's this mall with a basketball court in it that a road also goes through.

We're not making this up. It was huge. And we go there and see this store. And it says Dwayne Wade on the side. And I walk in. It turns out the NBA players, in order to make a little extra money, they'll tour cities in China.

So it was so cool. Like I didn't know this, but Dwayne Wade was actually in that city at that time. So there's a store that says Dwayne Wade there. And keep in mind, there's not a lot of people in China who look like me.

[4 : 26] So I'm in Qingdao, northeast China, in a store that says Dwayne Wade. And it's cheap, too, come to find out, because it's just down there from the factory. So it was pretty cool. And I brought all of this Dwayne Wade merchandise.

And I stuffed my backpack full of it. But I started to wear some of it. And we walked to this basketball court. And they give me a basketball. I don't speak Chinese. But I start hearing, blah, blah, blah, Dwayne, blah, blah, blah, Dwayne, blah, blah, blah, Dwayne.

And then I take one selfie and two selfies. And then somebody asked me to sign something. And then what ends up happening is they think that I'm with Dwayne or I am Dwayne Wade. And the problem with that is I'm not.

So we start playing basketball. And they found out very quickly, like, something's off with Dwayne's game. But what's wild about this is I don't know Chinese. So I can't communicate to them that I am not Dwayne Wade.

Austin, he's filming and taking pictures and laughing at me. And I played so much basketball and signed so much stuff with just Greg Keelan. And I took selfies. But the issue was I wasn't Dwayne Wade.

[5 : 29] I had to end up changing back into, like, my regular clothes to get out of this situation. But I'm not Dwayne Wade. And what ended up happening was these people expected something out of me because of who they believed me to be.

They expected me to do something or dunk the ball or shoot a three, which I can't really do, because they expected me to be somebody. Who they believed me to be affected their relationship with me.

Had I not put on the Dwayne Wade outfit, they would not have given me the time of day. But because they thought I was a basketball player and thought I was a pro, they wanted me to do pro things. And sometimes in our relationship with Jesus, who we think he is really affects how we deal with him.

And who we think he is affects our relationship with his word. And who we think he is affects how we carry forth the gospel and how we interact with this word of life. And in Matthew chapter 16, Jesus has come towards the end of his life in ministry.

And he's concerned about something with disciples. It's who do you think that I am? And it may seem like a very small question, or if you read it cynically, maybe like, man, he's kind of an egomaniac. Why do you care what people say you are?

[6 : 31] But who you believe Jesus to be really matters. It's very important. Who you say Jesus is has significant impact on your life, your eternity, your relationships, your goals, how you work, everything.

Who you believe Jesus to be really does matter. And if we're not careful, it's so easy to lose sight of or to forget. Or maybe we just don't know any better.

And we leave with a bad view of who Jesus is. Or we leave not being able to live up to the fullness that's in Jesus. As the Bible would say, the fullness of God dwelleth in him.

And there's so much depth and richness as to who Jesus is. But if we don't know who he is, we don't believe who he is, we can never really tap into that. And I hope from Matthew 16 we can learn that who we say Jesus is really does.

It really matters. Let's go, Lord, in prayer. Father, thank you for the opportunity to teach your word and to preach your word. Lord, I pray you help us leave here knowing and believing and trusting who you are, Lord.

[7 : 28] I pray that you grow our faith in you, Lord. I pray you help us believe your word, put it into practice. Father God, we love you so much. In your name I pray. Amen. There's an old story. Father God, we love you.

I pray over the valley and make low passes over the flames so I can get pictures of the fires on the hillside. The pilot looks at him and he looks kind of amazed. He goes, why? And he goes, because I'm a cameraman for CNN, he responded, and I need to get some close-up shots.

The pilot was strangely silent for a moment, not saying much. And finally he stammered, so you're telling me you're not my flight instructor? Because of who we thought this cameraman to be, he did something crazy.

And when we believe Jesus to be who he says he is, I believe that we would do some crazy things for him too. Who a person believes Jesus to be has significant impact and importance on their life?

Let's read our text. Matthew 16, starting at verse number 13. When Jesus came into the coast of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that the Son of Man am?

[8 : 57] So he says, hey, who do people say that I am? Guys, who do people think me to be? Verse number 14. And they said, some say that thou art John the Baptist. Others say you're Elijah. Others say you're Jeremiah.

Or one of the prophets. Verse number 15. Jesus stops and he looks at him and he says, but whom say ye that I am? And then Simon Peter, the spokesman or the first one to talk, says, thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

And notice what Jesus responds here. Verse 17. He says, blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

And I say unto thee that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loosen on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

Then charge ye his disciples that they should tell no man that he was the Christ. Let's just look at verse number 21 as well. From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples how he must go in Jerusalem and suffer many things of the elders and of the chief priests and scribes and be killed and raised again the third day.

[10:04] That just puts it into perspective as to where we're at. His time is slowly dwindling down to the point now where he can look at his disciples and say, hey guys, in the weeks and months to come, I will be killed. I will be crucified.

I will lay my life down. Time's running out. And if I'm Jesus and time's running out, I would be taking time to say, all right, Peter, here's how you're going to go to church. Paul, here's how you're going to brew church coffee or, you know, whatever.

But Jesus stops, and what is he most concerned with? Who do men say that I am? It matters to him. We want to look at who you say Jesus is matters. Jesus' biggest, and one of his final questions was, who do you say that I am?

Jesus was concerned with who those who followed him believed him to be. He asked, who do people say that I am? He's like, well, who do men believe me to be? But he stops, and he zooms in, and he pauses on, who do you say that I am?

Disciples, who do you say that I am? Notice it was a personal question. Somebody can't believe who Jesus is for you. You can't have somebody make the decision for you. You can't have somebody say, well, we believe Jesus to be this, and you just jump in on that.

[11:04] It is a personal decision, a decision that you must make in your heart between you and the Lord. The opinions of others don't really matter. He asked about the others, but when it was all said and done, it was the opinion of the individual.

May I tell you that Jesus is personal? He's personal. Isn't it so neat that we can all personally have an opinion of Jesus? We can all personally believe who Jesus is, but nobody can do it for you? It's easy to say, well, if the vision back of the church, you believe this.

Well, what matters most is what do you believe? Who do you believe Jesus to be? Not just that. It was a personal question. It was a question of who do you believe me to be? Jesus is concerned with the personal question. But also, isn't it neat that it was a spiritual question as well?

Who Jesus really is had to be revealed from God. Peter answers it right. He gets it right. He hits the nail right in the head. But notice what Jesus says about this in verse number 18. He says, It's so easy to say, well, do you know who Jesus is?

Yeah, Jesus is a historical figure from the area of Nazareth, Galilee. That's cool. But biblically, who Jesus really is must be revealed from the Father, the Son of God, the Savior of the world, the Messiah, the King of kings, Lord of lords.

[12:15] Jesus must be revealed to us from the Lord. And thankfully, he has revealed him to us in the scriptures. We can know who Jesus is. And what's amazing is God wants everybody, every boy, every man, every woman, every child to know who Jesus is.

He wants you to have a relationship with Jesus. Look at John 3, 16. We all know that verse. For God so of the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever, anybody, any person, believeth in him, should not perish that everlasting life.

We can have a real relationship with Jesus. God wants you to know who he is. Everybody. Everybody in China. Everybody in your neighborhood. Everybody in the room. Everybody in Children's Church, wherever you're at.

God wants everyone to know Jesus. And if you want to get to know Jesus, let me tell you, God's word will reveal it to you. John 5, 39 is going to tell us that. Luke 24, 27 will tell us that.

God's word will show us who Jesus is. We can go to the scriptures. We can go to the Bible. And we can find Jesus. We can find who he is, what he taught, what he did. We can learn all that from the scriptures.

[13 : 14] When Jesus needed to teach his disciples more, he needed to show them more about himself. The Bible says that he showed them things from himself, from Moses through the prophets. He didn't make up things.

He showed them from the Bible who he was. If we want to know more about who Jesus is, let it be informed by the scriptures. God's word really works. Who you say Jesus is matters. It's personal.

Who do you believe him to be? God wants you to have the right opinion. And if you're looking for it and you don't know, you can go to the scriptures. Maybe you have a friend or a loved one or a family member who doesn't know. Take him to the Bible. The Bible will give you the right answer as to who Jesus is.

But also, who Jesus is, it matters who you say he is. There are specifics one must know about Jesus. He's more than a figure of antiquity. He's more than a historical figure of somebody who existed.

He said, Jesus is a real person. He's really the son of God. He's more than just a fairy tale or made up character. Jesus here is revealed as something very important that he wants us to know.

[14 : 10] Let's look at this. This is what Peter says about him. He says, thou art the Christ. He says, thou art the Christ and the son of the living God. Out of all those things, it was important to know who Jesus is.

Absolutely. But what did Jesus want known about him? He is the Christ and the son of the living God. They're two very important descriptors here. He's more than some figure of antiquity. He is the Christ, the promised, anointed king of Israel, the Messiah, the ruler, the one who's going to set things right, who's going to rule and reign for a thousand years.

Jesus is the Christ. He is the Messiah. He is the king. He is the, when God made that promise to David, Jesus is the fulfillment of that promise to David. In him shall all nations of the earth be blessed.

He is the Christ, the one the Old Testament anticipated and looked forward to, the one who John the Baptist preached, the one who the prophets foretold of. Well, Jesus is the Christ. And he wanted Peter and the disciples and us to understand that.

He is the Christ. We see it in the Old Testament over and over and over again in Chronicles and Kings. Kings failed and failed and failed and failed and failed until eventually the kingdom was removed and brought back.

[15 : 10] And they failed again. Jesus is the right king, the right ruler, the one who's going to set things right. Jesus is that Christ. But also, he's God's perfect king as well.

But he's also the son of God too. And that's so neat. We get two very wonderful descriptions as to who Jesus is, the son of God here too, the very essence of God, God incarnate. As Matthew 3, 17, which teaches, he is the son of God.

That's neat. Jesus is the Christ, the promised king, ruler of Israel. He's also the son of God, which makes what comes in the chapters to follow this so magnificent. Because the son of God, the Christ, the king of kings, the Lord of lords, Jesus, all-powerful God almighty, would humble himself, according to Philippians 2, die on a cross for my sins and your sins, taking all the wrong we've ever done, and he would allow us to have righteousness by faith in him.

It's incredible. So that's who Jesus reveals himself here as. And it's so important to know that. People all over have a different opinion of who Jesus is. During vacation Bible school, I think Pastor Bo was preaching, and he made the statement or the question, who do you think Jesus is?

And we have a kid who comes in a church bus. His name is Jesus Santana. And Bo said, who is Jesus? And Jesus stands up. He goes, I'm Jesus. And while his name is Jesus, he's not the Jesus that we need to believe in to be saved.

[16 : 30] It's a very specific Jesus in the Bible. And we must know who that is. And that's the Lord we get to serve. I think it's so fascinating that because of this, in the months, in the years, in the decades that follow, look at the lives of the disciples.

They would go forward and lay their lives down preaching this message about Jesus. And just maybe the thing that's stopping us from taking the next step of faith, or maybe that's stopping us from sharing the gospel with that coworker or that friend or that neighbor, or doing what the Lord had to have us do, is maybe we don't believe or have the faith, or maybe we don't have confidence in who Jesus says he is.

Can I tell you that when we have a real, based, biblical confidence of who Jesus is, it makes carrying his message and living for him so much easier. It makes him worth serving. It should make you want to serve him.

It should make you want to live as though he's your Lord. If he really is the King of kings and Lord of lords, isn't he worth giving your life to? Isn't he worth trusting? Isn't he worth believing in?

Isn't he worth taking at face value? Because of who Jesus is, it matters. It has significance on every aspect of our life. And what Jesus is trying to get these disciples to see is, he's more than just a person, more than just a political figure, more than just some figure of antiquity.

[17 : 44] Jesus really is the Christ, the King of kings, the promise he to David, all of those wonderful promises, and the Son of the living God. We should know that. We should believe it. We should trust it.

What did the message that the disciples preached? When Peter preached in Acts chapter 4, he preached that Jesus is the Son of David, the King of kings, the Messiah. He says, don't you know this Christ, Jesus who you've crucified?

God has made both Lord and Christ. It is important to know who Jesus is. So who you say Jesus is matters. It matters. It's a personal decision. It has made between you and the Lord in your heart, in your mind.

You must know who Jesus is. It can't be made up for you. It can't be decided by your parents or your heritage or where you come from. You decide it in your heart. And it's a real question that matters to the Lord.

How do you know it matters? Because Jesus took the time to ask and to talk about it. If it didn't matter and it wasn't important, he wouldn't have spent some of his last conversations talking about it. But because it matters to him, that's why he spoke about it.

[18 : 42] It's a spiritual decision. It's a personal question. It's an important one. Who you say he is matters, and that is informed by the scriptures. But also, who you say Jesus is, it does matter.

It has significant impact on your life. One, he was concerned enough to ask. But two, who you believe Jesus to be has a real effect on your life and on your eternity. He's so much.

He's so worth serving. We get the privilege to serve the Lord of Lords and the King of Kings. I'm thankful to be at Vision Baptist Church. I love, I guess, yes, being employed here, but serving here, whether if I was on staff or not on staff, I would love to serve Jesus in the church because he's worth it.

I guess my story, he got a hold in my heart when I was 13, 14. Again, shout out to Pastor Trent. You know, he did a whole lot for me. But I remember at camp one year, we were at camp, and I heard that, and I said, what can I do?

And he encouraged me. He said, you should study your Bible. That was pretty good advice. Everyone know how to serve Jesus. Study your Bible. It's a really good place to start. And he encouraged me and helped me study my Bible. And as I read the Bible more and I got a better understanding of who he was, he became worth serving.

[19 : 50] And I can tell you, if you read the Bible more, you study more about him, you learn more about him, he will become worth serving. He will become captivating. He will become worth giving your life to. Who you say Jesus is matters.

And who we believe Jesus to be has real effects on our life and our eternity. First thing is, those who claim and believe Jesus' identity are his and part of his church. Look at what the Bible says in Matthew 16, 18.

And I say unto you that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I'll build my church. Upon this truth, this principle that I'm the Christ, I'm the Lord of Lords, I'm the King of Kings, I am the Son of God, I will build my church. Upon this principle, this truth, I will build my church.

Upon who Jesus is and who he claims to be. And upon believing that, that's the foundation of the church. We get the opportunity to believe this message. And we're placed in a wonderful thing called the church.

Also, those who claim and believe Jesus' identity are saved. Matthew 16, 18. We're brought into his church. And what does it say? The gates of hell shall not prevail against it. We find out from the rest of the scripture that upon putting our faith in Jesus, believing who he says he is in his death, burial, resurrection, we find deliverance from sin.

[20 : 54] We find forgiveness of our sins. We find a relationship with God in that. We find all these wonderful blessings in it. And believing in who Jesus is and trusting who he says he is, it unlocks all these privileges for us.

Salvation. Salvation. Because of his grace and faith in what he's done, we get eternity with God and all these wonderful things. We are saved because of who we believe Jesus to be.

But also, those who claim and believe Jesus' identity find purpose in identity. Notice he says, I'll build my church. Those who put their faith in him are put into the church. Purpose and identity and security.

Notice the church is not built upon sand or a weak foundation. Upon this rock. Something that is solid. Something that is firm. And because of that, we find victory as well. Hell should not prevail.

Guys, we are not on the losing side. Because we've trusted Jesus and believed in who Jesus is, we're on the winning side of things. Hell will not prevail. No matter how dark or dreary or bad the news looks, Jesus will win.

[21 : 52] Because he is who he says he is. Because he is who the Bible teaches us. Because of this truth and what it is, we can know we have victory. God is not going to lose. And that ought to change every aspect of our life.

We walk out of here and we go through a trial or a storm. Can I tell you that you can know that Jesus is worth banking on? He's worth believing when times get hard. He's worth putting your confidence and your trust in.

He's worth following. He's worth serving. As we go into our jobs and situations, whatever that might be, he's worth doing the right thing for. It's more than just showing up to church because we think it's neat.

It's because we really believe who he is. And it's so incredible to me that he took time before he left to make sure they understood who he was.

And we find purpose in that. Because of this faith in him, we're brought into the church. We get the opportunity to serve him. We get the opportunity to deliver him. We get the privilege to be the pillar and ground of truth for him.

[22 : 52] And this whole passage is wonderful for us. And let's look at verse number 21. And from that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples that he must go unto Jerusalem and suffer many things of the elders and of the chief priests and the scribes and be killed and be raised again on the third day.

And this just gives us such a wonderful insight as to who Jesus is. Yes, he's the son of God. Yes, he's the son of David. Yes, he is the Christ. Yes, he's the Messiah. And who we believe he is, who we believe him to be matters.

But look at what the Bible says in Philippians 2 where we started. It tells us this. Let this mind be in you which is also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, the Messiah, Christ Jesus, thought of not robbery equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in likeness of men and being found in the fashion of a man, humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

That's the Jesus we serve. He loves you so much. He loves the world so much. He loves us so much that although he was the King of kings, the Lord of lords, humbled himself to a cross for us, the life I couldn't live, life you couldn't live, the death we should have died.

And because of that, we can now find life in him. That's the Jesus we serve. That's the Jesus who's worth giving your life to. That's the Jesus who is worth following to the ends of the world and proclaiming and preaching.

[24 : 13] That's the Jesus who's worth putting everything into. That's the Jesus we get to serve. And it's so important. Who we believe him to be matters. To all those who serve in our church and teach in whatever areas of ministry, helping people know Jesus matters.

When we show somebody Jesus, we really are changing a destiny. We are changing an eternity. We're changing where they're going to go. They get the opportunity to hear who Jesus is. I'm closing a lot sooner than I'd like to, but who do you say Jesus is?

It matters. It's important. My challenge to you is this. Some of us in here, I know most everybody in the room, we're believers. But sometimes just because of the way life goes or issues or circumstances, we can get a little bit shaky.

Sometimes, Lord, are you really in charge of this? Lord, are we still on the winning side? Jesus, can you still do this? Saint, friend, believer, let me tell you, go to the scriptures. There are so many wonderful truths about who Jesus is.

We can count on them. Some of us in here may not be saved. We may not be believers. Let me tell you, he is worth trusting to save you. Some of us in here know who he is, and we say believe who he is.

[25 : 17] I think we should put some of that into action. Those disciples will carry this message forth all over the world. He's worth following. So if we know who he is and we believe it, let it inform our actions and what we do and how we live and how we speak and how we talk and how we view his church and how we view life.

It ought to have an impact on every area of our life. We can leave knowing that who we believe Jesus to be matters. It has significance on your life, in my life, in everyone's life.

He is so worth serving. If you would, bow with me. Father God, I thank you for the privilege to teach the word. Lord, I thank you for your goodness and your mercy to us. Lord, I pray that you would help us leave here with the right perspective of knowing who you are, Lord, believing who you are.

Lord, I pray for my friends in the room, those of us, Lord, who may be going through trials or will be entering into one soon. God, I pray that you help us keep perspective as to who you are in the trials. Lord, I pray for those of us who are going to go to work and school in the days to come.

Help us live with who you are in mind. Help us live lives submitted to you. Lord, I'm thankful that you are who you say you are. You are worth following. And Lord, I pray that you would help us leave knowing who you are and because it matters.

[26 : 29] God, we thank you. In your name I pray. If you're encouraged by that, say amen. Thank you so much. Just a couple thoughts and then men we...