

Matthew 16:13-23
Feilding Baptist
24.5.26

[Call to Worship](#)

Welcome to worship with Feilding Baptist Church, on this 2000th anniversary of the Holy Spirit being poured out – Pentecost. A service tonight at St Johns to celebrate this, with the head of New Wine speaking. It should be good.

Acts 1:6-7 New Living Translation
The Ascension of Jesus

4 Once when he was eating with them, he commanded them, “Do not leave Jerusalem until the Father sends you the gift he promised, as I told you before. 5 John baptized with water, but in just a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”

6 So when the apostles were with Jesus, they kept asking him, “Lord, has the time come for you to free Israel and restore our kingdom?”

7 He replied, “The Father alone has the authority to set those dates and times, and they are not for you to know. 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

And from Acts 2
Acts 2:1-11 New Living Translation
The Holy Spirit Comes

1 On the day of Pentecost all the believers were meeting together in one place. 2 Suddenly, there was a sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty windstorm, and it filled the house where they were sitting. 3 Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them. 4 And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability.

5 At that time there were devout Jews from every nation living in Jerusalem. 6 When they heard the loud noise, everyone came running, and they were bewildered to hear their own languages being spoken by the believers.

7 They were completely amazed. “How can this be?” they exclaimed. “These people are all from Galilee, 8 and yet we hear them speaking in our own native languages! 9 Here we are—Parthians, Medes, Elamites, people from Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, the province of Asia, 10 Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, and the areas of Libya around Cyrene, visitors from Rome 11 (both Jews and converts to Judaism), Cretans, and Arabs. And we all hear these people speaking in our own languages about the wonderful things God has done!”

[Message – Building Churches](#)

God’s plans are multi layered, and always good.

Occasionally I have the misfortune of cooking. The other night the recipe I found was for a chicken and sweetcorn pie. But the pastry that I was required to get was filo. I’ve never used it before, so had no idea what I was in for. Even at the supermarket, where do you find this? Not in the frozen with all the other types of pastry. It only needs refrigerating.

For those who don’t know, or have never used it, it comes in a long box, rolled up. When you open it, you will find multiple layers of tissue thin pastry. I can not imagine how you would make this yourself, how could it be home made I do not know? It is so thin. Anyway, I needed eight sheets, with some melted butter put between them, four layers on the bottom, cooked, then four on top. And it worked! All the layers worked together. It was absolutely delicious!

And that’s the case with today’s passage, there are so many layers. And yes, you can take one verse and head from there. But there is a bit more to it if we add the verses around.

It’s a really interesting setting. Up north, away from Galilee and Judea. With the worship of local gods around there, you could say that it was a pretty Godless place. Yet, there in the spring, the source of the Jordan River, was the source of life. It’s a really interesting place for Jesus to be asking what he asks. Let’s read;

13 When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, 'Who do people say the Son of Man is?'

14 They replied, 'Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.'

15 'But what about you?' he asked. 'Who do you say I am?'

16 Simon Peter answered, 'You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.'

17 Jesus replied, 'Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. 18 And I tell you that you are Peter,[a] and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades[b] will not overcome it. 19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be[c] bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be[d] loosed in heaven.' 20 Then he ordered his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah. [It was something to be revealed by the Father]

Jesus predicts his death

21 From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

22 Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. 'Never, Lord!' he said. 'This shall never happen to you!'

23 Jesus turned and said to Peter, 'Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling-block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.'

Footnotes

Matthew 16:18 The Greek word for Peter means rock.

Matthew 16:18 That is, the realm of the dead

Matthew 16:19 Or will have been

Matthew 16:19 Or will have been

The passage really stops at v20, but we've gone on an extra couple of verses. For a good reason, as you will see. Jesus asks a question, who do they say I am? And the disciples provide a range of answers.

v14 Q1. Who do people say that the Son of Man is?

- a) John the Baptist
- b) Elijah
- c) Jeremiah
- d) one of the prophets

To us, they're strange answers. The people are imagining that in Jesus, someone has come back to life. And that's a point to keep in mind. They were happy in that knowledge, that people come back to life. To have Jesus come back after just three days was still not expected.

Anyway, they think Jesus might be the recently executed John, or Elijah, or Jeremiah, or Matthew adds, one of the prophets? Any one will do. They're recognising that Jesus is someone significant, but bizarrely for us, they don't, or can't see, that Jesus is the Messiah.

It seems that that understanding could only come from God. Simon Peter answers what God has prompted. Simon, a fisherman, an ordinary working bloke. Now a disciple of Jesus. God spoke. God revealed something to him. It wasn't from his studies, or from any human teacher. But from God. And that's got to be encouraging for us?!

For we would have expected that God's word, God's revelation would come through those in v21, the elders, chief priests, and teachers of the law. These guys were the people of the temple. These guys knew all the things of God. If anyone would know who the Messiah was, rather who Jesus was, it was these guys. Which is why we've gone the extra three verses. Because we see here that they didn't know who Jesus was.

And this links back to Jesus' question, who do people say the Son of Man is? And what do the temple teachers and lawyers say? Have a look at v21. Jesus was going to suffer at the hands of these people, and be killed.

Q1. Who do people say that the Son of Man is?

- a) John the Baptist
- b) Elijah
- c) Jeremiah
- d) one of the prophets
- e) nobody

This is what they thought – Jesus was nobody. They would never have put Jeremiah or Elijah or even John the Baptist on the cross. They see Jesus as nobody. What about us?

We would have thought that these temple experts would have heard from God. But no! They have their hearts set, not on God's purposes, verse 23, but man's, their own. Before we point the finger, and marvel at their stupidity, I wonder where that is happening for us?

Are our hearts set on God's purposes or our own?

Are we modelling Jesus, or are we allowing our own preferences and beliefs to rule our lives?

May God speak to us about that. May we be bold enough to talk to God about this. For this is important. Let's pray that we hear from God about who Jesus is.

Revealing Jesus is how the church grows. And the church grows when it's based on Jesus. Oh, but the passage says that the church will be based on Peter. A mere human?! Surely not? Jesus is Impressed with Peter's answer, that He is the Messiah, the Son of the living God. And then Jesus says the most surprising thing, that the church will be built, not on himself, but Peter. How can that be?

Oh, maybe the church is built not on Peter, but on Peter's answer, on Peter's understanding, that Jesus is the Messiah.

Peter never thought that the church was built on him. He unpacks what he believes in his letter.

1 Peter 2:4-10 (NIV – UK)

The living Stone and a chosen people

4 As you come to him [Jesus], the living Stone – rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him – 5 you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house[a] to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 6 For in Scripture it says:

'See, I lay a stone in Zion,
a chosen and precious cornerstone,
and the one who trusts in him
will never be put to shame.'^[b]

7 Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe,

'The stone the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone,'^[c]

8 and,

'A stone that causes people to stumble
and a rock that makes them fall.'^[d]

They stumble because they disobey the message – which is also what they were destined for.

9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Footnotes

1 Peter 2:5 Or into a temple of the Spirit

1 Peter 2:6 Isaiah 28:16

1 Peter 2:7 Psalm 118:22

1 Peter 2:8 Isaiah 8:14

Jesus is the cornerstone of the church, not the capstone, that's different, but the cornerstone, the 1st stone placed in a new building. All the walls of the whole building are lined up from this stone. All the other stones are oriented to this one single first stone.

This single stone that was killed, and died, but rose again, breaking the power of death, and of darkness, and of Satan. What difference does that make for us?

Mike Warring, our region's Baptist leader wrote about that this week. He's walking the Camino, in Spain, the 800 kilometre walk that Diane and I did ten years ago. He's writing a blog each day. Anyway, he's had a rough last six years. His wife developed bowel cancer, went through treatment that appeared to be successful, then it came back, and took her life. Mike has soldiered on, but his time of sabbatical came up, and he felt prompted to go to Spain, to do the walk.

It is a very cleansing walk, like a detox. But it is also immensely challenging, physically, mentally, and emotionally. This week Mike made it to the highest point. And at this highest point is a huge cross, where people are encouraged to leave something, to start afresh for the downhill. Some people take rocks from their home area, sometimes little toys, a memento. Mike took a stone from Bell Block's beach, and had around it the bracelet that was handed out at Fiona's funeral. It had a sentence on it that said, this is not the end of my story. On his blog for that day, Mike wrote;

God the Father we acknowledge that death was never part of your plan. We acknowledge through brokenness we have contributed to the sin which has marred your creation. But we acknowledge ... your love and desire for us to be made right with you. You sent your Son, Jesus you came perfect, holy, without sin. You laid your life down as a living sacrifice, so that you could restore all that is broken and wrong with this world.

Thank you Jesus that because of your death on the cross and your resurrection after 3 days in the tomb, that you have given us the gift of life abundantly both here and now and eternally. Which means we will be reunited with the ones we love who have been taken to soon, [those] who knew life abundantly in and through you Jesus. Holy Spirit thank you for your grace, peace and comfort in our grief, but thank you even more for your presence you never leave us or forsake us. You carry us in those darkest hours, give us strength for the journey ahead and point us towards Jesus. Bless this time of remembrance and thank you for the gift of this journey together, in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Amen.

Pray that God would reveal the reality of Jesus for you. Don't be content with what you think you know. For you might end up with second best pastry when what you really need is filo. Let's keep learning. Let's keep being teachable. Let's keep Jesus as our reference point. And don't worry about the future of the church. Jesus made it quite clear that Satan and death will not overpower it.

This idea of the church is God's. The church is God's way of continuing the work of Jesus in the world. Jesus makes the average exceptional. It's Jesus who makes what is human, beyond simply human, Christlike.

We've been praying for our church, in fact, for our character. We've been praying, without perhaps realising it, that we've been praying that we together become more like Jesus. May it be.

Week 3 | Renew Together 2026

God,

The one who laid the foundations,

And upon all is built,

You are our cornerstone.

You called Peter by name and said, "Follow me".

This call is for each of us too.

Teach us to bring our full selves,

As we learn to walk in your way.

As we follow, may your church be built:

to serve and to care for your creation,

to go where it is costly,

and to be stretched beyond our walls

and imaginations.

Teach us your grace,

and restore us when we fail.

Send us to care for your sheep,

to tend to the broken,

and to carry your hope to all corners of the earth.

Make us your living stones,

shaped by your hand,

so that your Spirit may be known

in all places and to all people.

Amen