

Who Do You Say Jesus Is?

Second Sunday in Lent - Series B

Based on: Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16; Romans 5:1-11; and Mark 8:27-38.

Bible Story: Peter's Confession - Matthew 16:13-20

The Objective of this Lesson is to:

Help generations confess Jesus to lead others to Him for faith that produces patience and endurance and salvation.

Opening Song: "Jesus is the Christ, Our Savior"

Sung to the tune of "Come to Calvary's Holy Mountain" LSB 435/ TLH 149/ LW 96 *Tune: Public Domain*

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1. Jesus is the Christ, our Savior, the Son of the Living God,
Sent to us to save us ever; We confess His Name out loud,
So the world will hear of Him And people are saved from sin.
2. As more souls come to our Savior, He brings them to faith in Him.
Those with faith confess Him ever And grow strong in faith within,
Receive God's strength through and through, Patience and endurance too.

Opening: "Our Only Hope"

Too many people living today are impatient and that often includes us. Generations, who are becoming more and more separated from God, lack the endurance that comes from faith in Christ. That's why this lesson is dedicated to helping us confess who Jesus is so others can be led to Him for faith that produces patience and endurance. A growing lack of patience and endurance and the problems that surround it are why our Spring SS Series has been created to help build patience and endurance in people around us and in the world for generations.

Reminder: This week and every few weeks, thereafter, take time to look at the UIM theme for this year, the theme for UIM SS Series, and the Bible verse that goes with it, found in the instructions to this Leader's Guide in a separate file on your CD.

God's Word For Us Today

**But God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
Romans 5:8**

GOD'S WORD APPLICATION

It is hard to love people who constantly hurt us and we constantly hurt God with our sins. Yet, He sent His Son whom He loved to save us while we continue to sin and hurt Him. This means God's love for us is not just any kind of love it is great love. *Discuss how sharing God's great love for us and all sinners can lead people to Christ for faith that produces patience and endurance.*

An Interactive Bible Story for every Generation:

We can feel afraid or embarrassed or like we simply don't know what to say to confess Christ. The truth is that because we are sinners, we can fail miserably at confessing Christ. That is exactly why we need to hear and read and study our Bible Story and all of God's Word. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, God's Word strengthens us to believe in our hearts that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. And, faith to believe is all we need to both confess Christ just like Peter in our story and receive the patience and endurance of Christ to continue His ministry on earth.

Peter's Confession

Based on: Matthew 16:13-20

The Bible Story is printed below FYI only. For Adult Bible Study, read or ask volunteers to read these verses directly from the Bible 13 Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” 14 And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” 15 He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” 16 Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” 17 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. 18 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. 19 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.” 20 Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ.

1. **Who asked His disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?”** Matthew 16:13. Answer: Jesus. The vision in Daniel 7:13 about the Messiah foretold the coming of “one like the son of man.” The disciples or others present may or may not have caught it, but when Jesus said the words ‘The Son of Man,’ He was referring to Himself, proclaiming Himself to be the Messiah. Jesus was constantly teaching His disciples with every word He said. Here Jesus went straight to the point because confessing who Christ is was critical to the ministry His disciples would perform after His death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven. There had been signs of the disciples wavering faith. Jesus had to rebuke them for not letting the little children come to Him (Mark 10:13-16), for their fear during the calming of the sea (Matthew 8: 23-27), and for their fear of having no bread (Matthew 16:8). One disciple Jesus knew would betray Him (John 6:70). At this point, the disciples had to decide who Jesus was for themselves. *Discuss why it was critical for the disciples to decide for themselves who Jesus was.*
2. **Whom did people say Jesus was?** Matthew 16:14. Answer: John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah or one of the prophets. People knew Jesus was different even holy by everything He said and did. This is one of the very few passages that share how beliefs were shaped and floating around among the people about our Lord’s character and mission. The idea that Jesus was John the Baptist probably came from the lips of Herod the tetrarch who announced Jesus must be John the Baptist returned from the dead (Matthew 14:2; Luke 9:7).. Elijah was expected as the forerunner of the Messiah (Malachi 4:5). Jeremiah was the prophet who had foretold the new covenant and the coming of the Lord our righteousness (Jeremiah 23:6; Jeremiah 31:31). The problem was the people did not believe He was the Messiah. They needed to be convinced *Discuss why people thought Jesus was John, Elijah, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.*
3. **Who confessed Jesus to be the Christ, the Son of the Living God?** Matthew 16:16. Answer: Peter. If Jesus was only the Son of Man as He calls Himself in verse 13, He could not save us. He would be an important Man, but still only a Man. The Christ, the Son of the Living God, is the One and only Savior of the world, the only One who can save us. Peter confessed Christ because He believed Him to be the Son of the Living God. However, Peter’s confession also firmed up faith in those who heard him because Peter spoke with conviction. In John 1:42, Jesus named Simon son of John, Peter, because the name implied Peter’s stability or firmness in professing the truth. *Discuss how our believing that Jesus is the Son of the Living God and the only One who can save us helps lead others to Christ.*
4. **Who revealed the knowledge of who Jesus is to Peter?** Matthew 16:17. Answer: God, the Father. This is the first direct personal beatitude pronounced by Jesus, and it is in marked contrast to the rebukes of Jesus concerning the wavering and little faith of His disciples. Peter would proclaim Christ could not die for which Jesus would proclaim to Peter, “Get behind me Satan” (Matthew 16:23) and Peter would also deny Jesus (Matthew 26:69-75). However, in this verse Jesus words revealed that Peter was led, in the strictest sense of the words, through the veil of our Lord’s human nature to recognize the divine, a moving from the natural to the super natural. What had been and what would be did not matter. This was Peter’s defining moment. Peter’s faith would continue the ministry of Christ. Today, God through His Word reveals the knowledge of who Jesus is to us and what we believe becomes our defining moment - the wow factor in our faith and

life. *Discuss how God revealing who Jesus is in His Word is far more awesome than we understand it to be.*

5. **Who do you say Jesus is?** Allow for personal answers. If no one else does, share that our words and actions can reveal we believe Jesus is the Son of the Living God. If we do not use foul language and condemn it firmly in loving and respectful ways, but still forgive and love people who do use it, we can help them also believe Jesus is the Son of the Living God. Help everyone repeat: “Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God” to publically confess their faith. But then, make sure they remember that we have to do more than say Jesus is the Son of God, we have to believe He is the Son of the Living God in our souls so that people will believe what we say. *Discuss how having patience and endurance can tell people we know who Jesus is.*
6. **What object did Jesus use to describe the faith on which He would build His Church?** Matthew 16:18. Answer: A rock. A rock is strong. In Greek, “Peter” is *petros* and “rock” is *petra*. The rock on which the church is built could mean Peter’s confession of Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the Living God, and/or it could mean Peter, himself, because Ephesians 2:20 tells us the church is “built of the foundation of the apostles and prophets.” In any case, Jesus knew the strong faith His Church needed to be founded on. It is good to know that the gates of hell cannot prevail against the rock solid faith of His Church. We usually think Hades means Hell, but it is actually more correctly defined as death. Hades is the Greek name of the place of departed spirits. In this case the gates of Hades would refer to “the powers of death” and all forces that oppose Christ and His kingdom. *Discuss how rock solid faith helps us to have patience, endurance, confess Christ, and grow His Church.*
7. **To whom did Jesus say, “Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven?”** Matthew 16:19. Answer: Peter. In early times, stewards of great families, especially of the royal household, bore a key or keys in token of their office. It was a symbol of great authority. In this Bible Story, Jesus gives the keys of the kingdom of heaven to the servant whose very name, as an Apostle, marked him as strong - a rock. Eventually, Peter’s work, through which God “opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles” (Acts 14:27; Acts 15:7), was the proof of his faithful discharge of the office bestowed on him, and afterward on all the apostles (Matthew 18:18) to declare the laws of the gospel and the terms of salvation, as well as all those acts of discipline which Peter and his brethren performed as apostles. Today, the Office of the Keys is the special authority that Christ has given to His Church on earth: to forgive the sins of the penitent sinners, but to retain the sins of the impenitent as long as they do not repent. Through Christ, the forgiveness present in these keys opens the doors of heaven to us and all believers by forgiving us when we repent and not forgiving us if we fail to repent so that we might come to see the error of our ways and realize our need to repent to be reunited with God our Father through His Son. *Discuss how the Church on earth having the power to forgive or not forgive sins can lead people who repent and those who refuse to repent to repentance, forgiveness, and salvation.*
8. **Discuss ways of sharing who Christ is with others.** Encourage answers. You may want to share your own fears of confessing Christ to lead the way for others to share their personal fears or answers. However, it is alright to share fears people in general may have and how to get rid of them. First, share that rather than listening to fear telling you that you can't share your faith, listen to faith saying that you can - because God will help you. Prepare for sharing your faith by praying. Confess your sins, ask God for compassion and understanding, and wisdom for faith-conversations. Surrender your own will to God's will so you'll be free to serve however God wants you to serve.
9. **What can we read to confess Jesus as firmly as Peter did?** Answer: God’s Word. God teaches us who Jesus is and about His love through Bible Stories and passages like our God’s Word For Us Today passage. Cue everyone to say it: “**But God shows...**” Through His Word, God gives us and all believers both the power and words to confess Christ in impossible ways that can astound us because with God all things are possible (Matthew 18:26). There are also ways to confess Christ that do not actually require speaking like going to church, forgiving others, being honest, being kind, etc. *Review ways to confess Christ to lead others to Him for faith that produces patience and endurance.*

10. **Who strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that He was the Christ?** Matthew 16:20. Answer: Jesus. It is not that Jesus did not want people to know He was the Christ, the Son of the Living God or about the salvation from sin and in heaven He offered them. He wanted the disciples to be focused on learning and understanding all that they needed to share about Him so people would believe them. He also wanted them to wait until they would be eyewitnesses of His glory. And, Jesus also knew the zeal of the multitude to make him a king after their own fashion (John 6:15) was what He had to avoid. He knew His ardent followers would do their best to keep Him from being crucified. He knew He had to die to take away the sins that separate sinners from God the Father and keep us from faith, forgiveness, and salvation. So He charged His disciples to tell no one that He was the Christ. *Discuss why Jesus had to stop believers from preventing His crucifixion.*

As time allows: Read the accompanying study verses: Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16; Romans 5:1-11; and Mark 8:27-38. Discuss how these accompanying verses lead to Christ for faith that produces patience, endurance, and salvation. Direct participants to the "Take Home, Grow, and Share" section on the last page where these instructions are printed for them in the box for family discussion.

CONCLUSION: As we hear, read, study, and memorize God's Word, His Holy Spirit reveals to us who Jesus is and gives us the power and words we need to confess that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God, and our Savior. Through our confession, others can come to know Him and receive faith through Him. By faith, they will be able to confess Christ like Peter so others believe, and by that same faith receive patience and endurance on earth and salvation in heaven enduring.

Closing Prayer:

Dear God, strengthen our faith to desire Your Word, to read, hear, study, and memorize it so that we know it in our hearts. Then, through Your Spirit grant us the wisdom and words to confess Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God. Through our confession, cause others to come to know Christ and come to faith through Him. In the name of Jesus we ask it. Amen.

TAKE HOME, GROW, AND SHARE!

This week, if you have not already done so as part of your UIM congregational memory work program, inwardly digest the God's Word For Us Today passage for this Lesson. Read it every day. Read it to those who cannot read. Recite it to each other. Type or print it out, and place it in your purse, wallet, on your desk, kitchen table, refrigerator door, night stand, anywhere and everywhere you will see it and read it constantly. Discuss with family and friends how these words from God strengthen you in faith and help you in your everyday lives.

Read and discuss the Bible Story for this lesson personally and with your family, especially the small children. With older family members, study the biblical account of this story in Matthew 16:13-20 and read the accompanying study verses: Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16; Romans 5:1-11; and Mark 8:27-38. Discuss how these accompanying verses lead to Christ for faith that produces patience, endurance, and salvation.

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