

128. Peter's Ups and Downs (Matthew 16:13-23)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, so many people in this world say they know Jesus, but they really don't have faith. Please make us know Jesus as Your Son and trust Him as our Savior. Help us be good witnesses to other people in everything we say and do, so other people can trust Jesus also. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Matthew 16:13-14. Jesus arrived in the area named Caesarea Philippi. Jesus asked His disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" The disciples answered, "Some people say You are John the Baptist. Some people say You are Elijah. Other people say You are Jeremiah, or another prophet."

- Recently we studied a time when Jesus left the Jews and went to a place where not many Jews lived. Now Jesus does that again. Not many Jews lived in Caesarea Philippi. Why do you think Jesus went there with His disciples?
- Jesus asked the disciples to tell Him what people said about Him, who they thought Jesus was. Who did people think Jesus was?

Matthew 16:15-17. Jesus asked the disciples, "But who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "You are the Christ. You are the Son of the living God." Jesus said, "Simon, son of Jonah, you are blessed! People did not tell you this. My Father in heaven showed you that truth."

- The disciples recently finished telling Jesus all the different ideas people had about Jesus. Were any of those ideas right?
- Who is Jesus? What did Peter answer? How did Peter know that answer?
- Sometimes we see people saying many different things. People give us different advice or tell us about their different beliefs. Sometimes we feel pressure to follow them and do or think the same as them. Can so many people be wrong? Who should we pay attention to and learn from?

Matthew 16:18-19. Jesus said, “I tell you, your name is Peter (little rock). On this rock (big rock) I will build My church. The gates of hell can’t defeat My church. I will give you the keys for the kingdom of heaven. Anything you lock up on earth will be locked in heaven the same. Anything you free on earth will be free in heaven the same.”

- In the Greek language, Peter’s name means a “little rock.” Jesus said He will build His church on a big rock. What is that big rock?
- What are the “keys for the kingdom of heaven?” What can the church open and close? Who does the church lock up or make free?

Matthew 16:20-21. Then Jesus warned the disciples. Jesus said they couldn’t announce that He was the Christ. After that, Jesus began explaining that He must go to Jerusalem, the Jewish leaders would make Him suffer, He would die, and on the third day rise alive again.

- The disciples know who Jesus is. Is it enough for you to only know who Jesus is? What did Jesus tell the disciples now so their knowledge is complete?

Matthew 16:22-23. Peter pulled Jesus away and started correcting Jesus. Peter said, “God can’t let you do that! That should not happen to You!” Jesus turned around and told Peter, “Satan, go behind Me! You are trying to make Me fall. You are not thinking about what God wants. You only think about what people want.”

- Peter recently finished saying a wonderful thing about Jesus. Now what does Peter do? Does he really understand Jesus’ work?
- Before, Jesus said, “Peter, you are a rock.” Now what did Jesus name Peter?
- Jesus wants us to think about what God wants, not what people want. What does God want us to think (and believe) about who Jesus is and what He did?