

January 31, 2010  
Matthew 16:13-19  
Creekside COB

### **“The Right Stuff”**

**Who do you say that Jesus is? I want to give you a few seconds to think about the titles that you might say Jesus is. Some of the names that I came up with for my own personal self is Lord in my life and of the world, Most gracious one, Lover of my soul, best friend, reconciler of relationships and advocate.**

**Jesus asks first, “Who do people say that I am?” And they give the answers that we all have heard before, Elijah, another prophet, some say John the Baptist and even Jeremiah but then Jesus says to them, “Who do you say that I am?” And Peter steps up to the plate and says, “You are the Messiah.” If any of us who knew Peter or was sitting there at the time, may have said, “What this coming from Peter but we know him?” We know him. Jesus you can’t mean this?**

**A substitute Sunday School teacher couldn't open the combination lock on the supply cabinet. So she went to the pastor for help. The pastor started turning the dial of the combination lock, stopped after the first two numbers, looked up serenely toward heaven, began moving her lips silently, turned to the final number, and opened the lock. The teacher gasped, "I'm in awe of your faith, pastor." "Really," she said, "it's nothing. The number is on a piece of tape on the ceiling."**

**It seems that Peter has this wonderful faith but we know him. We know Peter. What did Jesus see in Him? What made Jesus know that Peter would be a great leader? Was he really leader material? And really Jesus -- the keys to the kingdom?**

**Peter had a sense of false bravado- a false sense of Who he was. He believed he had great faith but he seemed to always fall short. Remember when Jesus called him out into the water.**

***From Matthew 14:***

***28 Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." 29 He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus. 30 But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" 31 Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" 32 When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. 33 And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."***

**OK, here is Peter showing us his true self. A sense of courage and strength and then when he has to do it, he is frightened and begins to sink. So here is Peter not really any different than any of us, right? And besides the passage of scriptures says in verse 33, "and those in the boat worshiped him saying, "Truly you are the son of God." So why not the other disciples, why Peter? They just stated they believed.**

**And believe it or not in the next passage of scripture right after today's passage, Christ is talking about his trip to Jerusalem and what he had waiting there. He spoke about his death and resurrection and listen to Peter's response to him.**

***21 From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. 22 And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you." 23 But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."***

**OK, Peter puts his foot in his mouth. We get that, don't we? We don't want anyone we love to talk about their death - especially someone who is our Messiah our Savior. How does that work? But to give him the keys to the kingdom, I still don't see it.**

**How about unreliable? When he is in Gethsamane waiting for Jesus to finish praying. Jesus asks them to keep watch. Listen to what Mark**

says in Chapter 14.

***32 They went to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." 33 He took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be distressed and agitated. 34 And he said to them, "I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and keep awake." 35 And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. 36 He said, "Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want." 37 He came and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, "Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep awake one hour? 38 Keep awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."***

In this passage of scripture there are more than Peter here but Jesus directs his rebuke to Peter. "Can't you even stay awake, man?" I mean really is that asking too much? Jesus is clearly disappointed. OK, Jesus are you having second thoughts about the keys to the kingdom?

And then there was the instance of the transfiguration. Here he is again with his impulsive behavior.

### ***Matthew 17***

***1 Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. 2 And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white. 3 Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. 4 Then Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three dwellings here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."***

What kind of leader is this? He has a false bravado, foot in mouth disease, impulsive and unreliable. This guy does not have the right stuff.

Robert Fulghum tells a wonderful story about a kindergarten class that decided to perform the story of "Cinderella." There are lots of roles in

**"Cinderella," but still casting was a chore. All the girls, of course, wanted to be Cinderella. Finally all the children were assigned roles except one--a small tubby kid named Norman.**

**The teacher asked, "Norman, what are you going to be?"**

**"Well," said Norman, "I think I will be the pig."**

**The teacher said, "Norman, there is no pig in the story of Cinderella."**

**And Norman said, "Well, there is now."**

**The teacher could tell it would be senseless to argue, so she left it to Norman to decide what role a pig played in the Cinderella story. As it turned out, the pig went everywhere that Cinderella went and did whatever Cinderella did. Norman had nothing to say, but Norman's face reflected the action of the drama. When things were serious, he was serious. When things looked worrisome, he looked worried. When things were in doubt, he looked anxious. He began to fill the stage with his presence of response by simply sitting there. And at the end of the performance when the princess was carried off to live happily ever after, Norman stood on his hind legs and barked.**

**In rehearsal this had been troublesome because the teacher said, "Look, Norman, even if there is a pig in the story, pigs do not bark." And Norman said, "Well, this one does." You can imagine what happened the night of the performance. There was a standing ovation at the end for the pig. Norman, the barking pig, who was, as it turns out, the Cinderella in the story after all.**

**Word gets around, and people called up the teacher and said, "We hear you have this dynamite Cinderella thing. What is so special about it?" She said, "Well, there is a pig in it--actually, a barking pig." And the person on the other end of the telephone would say, "But there is no barking pig in Cinderella." And the teacher would say with great conviction, "Well, there is now." (1)**

**Like that teacher, we don't always see things the way they might be.**

**But a blessing for us, God does.**

**We can't see how someone who seems to lack courage, says the wrong things and speaks so quickly can be a leader of Christ's church but God sees the heart of his people.**

**Peter turns out to be the pig in this Cinderella sermon today.**

**One of the most famous passages of scriptures**

***66 While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant-girls of the high priest came by. 67 When she saw Peter warming himself, she stared at him and said, "You also were with Jesus, the man from Nazareth." 68 But he denied it, saying, "I do not know or understand what you are talking about." And he went out into the forecourt. Then the cock crowed. 69 And the servant-girl, on seeing him, began again to say to the bystanders, "This man is one of them." 70 But again he denied it. Then after a little while the bystanders again said to Peter, "Certainly you are one of them; for you are a Galilean." 71 But he began to curse, and he swore an oath, "I do not know this man you are talking about." 72 At that moment the cock crowed for the second time. Then Peter remembered that Jesus had said to him, "Before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times." And he broke down and wept.***

**Such remorse and anguish he has. "And he broke down and wept." We get that too, don't we? Something we have said or have done that may have hurt someone. What was he to do? Everything he had heard and witnessed about Jesus all seemed gone, all seemed to vanish in this one simple act.**

**Do you know it is said that it takes 20 positive messages to make up for the one negative message that is said. How could Peter ever make this up? How could he ever make it right?**

**I recently read about a man who took great pride in being a former Navy Seal. And why not? That's a very elite group of people. It takes a special sailor to qualify as a Navy Seal. This man told about sharing his military exploits with his grandson's kindergarten class. This former Seal regaled the children with his war stories. After he finished, hands**

shot up all over the classroom. The kids were eager to ask questions. He called on one little girl who asked, "So, can you balance a ball on the end of your nose?"

We don't always know the truth about who we are and who we are in Christ.

I have a clip that shows Peter and his epiphany of who He really is and the truth about Christ. This is why Peter has the Right Stuff to hold the keys to the kingdom.

This clip depicts Peter and the epiphany of the truth about Christ. In the previous chapter, Christ bestows upon them the power of the Holy Spirit.

[Show video clip - John 21]

When the group recognizes that it is Jesus standing on the shore, Peter in his nakedness (a sign of mourning) puts on joy when he clothes himself and jumps in the water and runs or swims to meet Christ. The rest come by boat. Peter wants a chance to repent. Peter wants Jesus forgiveness.

Peter had the right stuff because in all of his faults and mess ups. In his impulsive behavior and in his foot in mouth disease - in his denial, he had something that others may not have seen. He had a repentant heart and a humility that he did not possess before. If Jesus were to ask Peter again, Peter would say that Jesus is much more than he knew before. Peter knows Him. Peter knows the Truth.

Peter knows Jesus and most wonderful truth he learned was the truth about the Grace of God. At that moment, he confesses that he loves Christ. The passage of scripture says, Jesus asked him three times and when that Peter felt hurt that Jesus asked him the third time. It is in direct correlation with his denial. When we understand that we are nothing without Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit, we become the people God has called us to be.

I believe these are the keys to the kingdom of God. This is what Christ

**talks about when he says the kingdom of God is within. Our hearts grow in grace and love when we have an epiphany of who Christ is. What the grace of God truly is.**

**Aren't you excited to know this is the God we serve? I am. I get excited when I see the grace of God working in others lives. I get excited when I see someone have an epiphany and the truth of the Grace of God is revealed to them. That they begin to see the love God has for everyone, that they give grace in the midst of others mess ups.**

**I get excited to know that we serve a God who looks past our messes, who looks past our faults and says, "They are mine and they have potential." Who says, "They are mine and they are beautiful." I get excited to know that we can all hold the keys to the kingdom and have the right stuff. Because we serve a God who sees in us hearts of gold and sees in us something that we might never see ourselves.**