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Matthew 16

Matthew 16 v 1-12

The Pharisees and Sadducees came up, and testing Jesus, they asked Him to show them a sign from heaven. 2 But He replied to them, "When it is evening, you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.' 3 And in the morning, 'There will be a storm today, for the sky is red and threatening.' Do you know how to discern the appearance of the sky, but cannot discern the signs of the times? 4 An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign; and a sign will not be given it, except the sign of Jonah." And He left them and went away. 5 And the disciples came to the other side of the sea, but they had forgotten to bring any bread. 6 And Jesus said to them, "Watch out and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." 7 They began to discuss this among themselves, saying, "He said that because we did not bring any bread." 8 But Jesus, aware of this, said, "You men of little faith, why do you discuss among yourselves that you have no bread? 9 Do you not yet understand or remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets full you picked up? 10 Or the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many large baskets full you picked up? 11 How is it that you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread? But beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." 12 Then they understood that He did not say to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

The confrontation continues; the Pharisees and the Sadducees ask Jesus for an indication from heaven. Jesus is that sign, but they reject Him and He confounds them and goes away to warn the disciples about the heretical teaching of the Religious leaders. It is like yeast affecting all those who do not discern the signs and the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Matthew 16 v 13-20

13 Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" 14 And they said, "Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets." 15 He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" 16 Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." 17 And Jesus said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. 18 I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. 19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven." 20 Then He warned the disciples that they should tell no one that He was the Christ.

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Jesus asks His disciples who they think the Son of Man is, the replies are interesting. They accepted the dead Prophets now that they were not able to prophesy. But Jesus presses them for an answer. Simon Peter knew who Jesus was. We can easily lose sight of Him in one another if we only observe the outward person.

2 Corinthians 5 v 16-17

16 Therefore from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him in this way no longer. 17 Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

This leaves me with a question, what are my eyes focussed on as I look at my brother and my sister? We may find this a difficult thing to do if we only look at the outward person.

Remember Samuel's mistake?

1 Samuel 16 v 6-7

6 When they entered, he looked at Eliab and thought, "Surely the Lord's anointed is before Him." 7 But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."

Jesus then makes a statement of the coming battle that we are to win in Christ:

I also say to you that you are Peter, (Petros means rock) and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.

Hades is a Greek word that is the place for departed spirits. The Hebrew word for the same place is Sheol. Nobody living can give us any details, though!

Ephesians 2 v 19-22

19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, 20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, 21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, 22 in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

The establishment of the church is based on the apostles and the prophets, but Christ is the foundation and He has given the keys to the kingdom of heaven to the church. We are to know the mysteries of each and every step, we can bind and lose things, the things that Jesus did and heaven will back us up from heaven, praise the Lord, what a wonderful promise!

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Matthew 16 v 21-28

21 From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day. 22 Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "God forbid it, Lord! This shall 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 not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's." 24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. 25 For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. 26 For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? 27 For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and will then repay every man according to his deeds. 28 "Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom."

Jesus now tells the disciples of the need for Him to go to the cross and to be killed and raised on the third day. Peter disagrees with God's plan of and is reproached sharply by Jesus. What Peter said came from his human understanding, he had been commended in the earlier verses for hearing God's voice, now he had listened to satan's and was rebuked. The final part of this passage speaks of the cost of following Jesus. Denying self and taking up our cross. It is true that Christians have a cross to bear, a life to surrender, to lose it is to gain a greater life of eternal abundance. Jesus paid the price for my sin; I must give my life for my friend Jesus in return for His sacrificial love for me.

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*SCF- Stevenage Christian Fellowship where Dennis Marshall was Pastor