

Weekly Sermon Discussion Guide

August 4, 2019

Sin Boldly

How to Be Yourself

Matthew 16:13-23

EXPLORING THE SERMON

- What did you hear?
- What did you think or feel about what you heard?
- What is one thing you can take away from the sermon this week?

KEY VERSES

¹⁵ He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" ¹⁶ Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, ^[a] the Son of the living God." ¹⁷ And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. ¹⁸ And I tell you, you are Peter, ^[b] and on this rock ^[c] I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. ¹⁹ I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." 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." **Matthew 16:15-23**

DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION

This week, the myth that we consider is: *I am nothing less than my best moment*. The myths of what we do, what we have, and what others say about us tempt us into believing that reaching certain benchmarks will secure our worthiness and acceptance in Christ. Claiming our identity in Christ is a struggle for all of us, and we can learn through Peter's example of how wrestling with our own humanity can help us find clarity in our identity.

No sooner does Peter experience the best moment of life when Christ promises to build the church upon his foundation, than he questions God's sacred plan for the world and is rebuked by Jesus. We prefer to think of ourselves only in our best moments, though we, too, are capable of one minute getting it right to the next minute, getting it so wrong. ***Is this a familiar experience for you? How do you relate to these words of Paul from Romans 7:15, and how do they reassure you: "I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate."?***

Sin is bigger than just our individual acts of sin; rather, it describes a fundamental flaw in each of our wills. Even when we know wrong from right, it is still difficult to stop sinning. We continue to miss the fact that we are loved by God not for the things we do, but for who we are. ***Beginning with "I am...", what are five phrases you would use to describe yourself?***

God saves actual sinners out of His deep love and mercy for us. It is not until we accept ourselves as sinners that we can begin to see ourselves with the same love and grace through which God sees us. ***What does "sin boldly but believe boldly" mean to you? How can your faith grow to be stronger than the power of your sin?***

Heavenly Father, the weight of our sins burdens us with guilt and shame. Help us to see ourselves with the same love and grace as You see us, Lord, and help us learn to claim our identity as your beloved child, and not by the things we do, what we have, or how others see us. Amen.