

February 11

Scriptures: Matthew 16 & 17

Key Verse: “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” (Matthew 16:16)

Overview

In chapter 16, Jesus asks His disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?” And the answers were predictable. “Some say John the Baptist, others said, Elijah, some said Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” “But what about you, who do you say that I am?” And it’s good old Simon Peter who answers, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” This is a great confession of faith, and Jesus replies, “Blessed are you Simon,” and He comments that this was not revealed by man, but by God the Father in heaven. It’s at this point Jesus says He’ll build His church on the rock, on this confession of faith; and as long as the church believes that Jesus is the Son of the living God, then that church will be well-founded and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.

In that context, those who are a part of the church, especially of its leadership, will have authority on earth and in heaven, in terms of fellowshiping with, or disfellowshipping, individuals who may or may not be a part of the kingdom of heaven in that church on earth. But then Jesus does something very strange. He warns His disciples not to tell anyone that He is the Christ. The only thing that comes to mind here is that it wasn’t time yet for the general populace to hear about this. He then talks to the disciples about what He’s going to face before it’s finally revealed who He is. And as Jesus talks about His trials, His sufferings, His death and resurrection, Peter says, “Never Lord, this shall never happen to You.” Jesus turns on Peter, just after commending him, and rebukes him, “Out of My sight, Satan, you’re a stumbling block to Me.”

Why this strong reaction? Maybe it’s because this was almost like a fourth temptation to Jesus. And so Peter is almost like Satan here in terms of his tempting Jesus to avoid the issue and find some other way to establish His Christness in the public domain. It’s just another indication again of the remarkable hybrid that is man. We’re very much part of the earth, and at the same time the image of God which is in us has such heavenly potential. On the one hand, we can make great confessions of faith, and on the other hand, act as agents of the devil.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, we too can exclaim with the same zeal as Peter, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God!” May we have similar zeal in telling others.