

Stories: Jesus is Lord

Matthew 16:1-28

MPS Jesus is Lord; the life lived by this faith confession is surrendered to glorify Him in every way.

OBJ Every person should believe that Jesus is worthy of all our life as Lord by five moves of faith.

INTRO True Grit, a movie released in 2010, was the remake of an old western starring John Wayne. The newer movie had a host of big-name stars, including, Jeff Bridges, Matt Damon, and Josh Brolin. **[Start Here]** Set in the late 19th Century in the mountains of West-Central Arkansas, the story follows a teenage girl, Mattie Ross, who hires a famous U.S. Marshall, Rooster Cogburn, to track down and arrest the man, Tom Chaney, for the murder of her father. When she finally locates Cogburn, he is sleeping off a drunken stupor. She tells Rooster that she wants to hire him because she's heard he has true grit. He wants nothing to do with young Mattie, but she will not accept "no" for an answer. What the story reveals is Mattie is the one with true grit, that resolve and perseverance to see something finished. The brilliance of the movie is due to two factors. The first brilliant quality of the movie is that every character speaks with a poetic cadence. The second factor is one of the most masterful cinematic uses of music. The entire movie is underscored by one major, musical theme, the hymn, Leaning on the Everlasting Arms. There are moments the theme is so powerful you can feel it moving you through the story. Imagine that; ONE theme that underscores the whole story and masterfully captures maximizes the impact of each moment. **What if there were one theme that underscored your whole life; a foundation and all-consuming theme that marked you?**

TRANS This is the way of the Christ-followers life, and what we shall see today by,

Jesus is Lord; the life lived by this faith confession is surrendered to glorify Him in every way.

READ Matthew 16:1-4

*And the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and to test him they asked him to show them a sign from heaven. ²He answered them, "When it is evening, you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.' ³And in the morning, 'It will be stormy today, for the sky is red and threatening.' You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times. ⁴An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah." So he left them and departed. **Matt 16:1-4***

The religious elitists confront Jesus, again, to test him. Jesus shows little patience for the repeated misrepresentation of their motives. He responds that they know how to read the skies to predict the weather, but they do not know how to read the signs of the times to believe what God prophesied. He repeats what He told them before, that the only "sign" they will be given is that of Jonah. ^{Matthew 12:39} **Jesus then predicts His crucifixion, burial, and resurrection that will confront the idolatry of their dead religion with true, wonder-working power, the very "sign" they have missed because they have no faith in God.**

Jesus is no "Netflix god" where one scrolls a menu to conjure up a "miracle-on-demand". He is not interested in, and is in fact irritated by, the incessant demand to be entertained by religious idolatry. **Asking for a sign with no desire to glorify Jesus reveals a lack of, not an abundance of, faith.**

OBJ Today I labor for every person to see **Five moves of faith** that reveal how Jesus moves one from spiritual deadness to eternal life under His Lordship as real Christ-followers.

Move #1 shows us the **Reality** of faithlessness, and people who ultimately reject Jesus: **a lack of faith doesn't mean you have nothing to do with Jesus; it just means you allow Jesus to have little to do with you.** And there is always a good reason in your mind for it.

TRANS But lest you think Jesus is being too harsh, watch what happens when His own disciples do not yet understand.

READ Matthew 16:5-12

⁵When the disciples reached the other side, they had forgotten to bring any bread. ⁶Jesus said to them, "Watch and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees."⁷And they began discussing it among themselves, saying, "We brought no bread."⁸But Jesus, aware of this, said, "O you of little faith, why are you discussing among yourselves the fact that you have no bread?"



⁹Do you not yet perceive? Do you not remember the five loaves for the five thousand, and how many baskets you gathered?
¹⁰Or the seven loaves for the four thousand, and how many baskets you gathered? ¹¹How is it that you fail to understand that I did not speak about bread? Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” ¹²Then they understood that he did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees. **Matt 16:5-12**

Jesus and His disciples move on to seek rest from the crowds. Jesus used this time away to teach deeper truths or provide greater explanation for the disciples. This time was no different. Matthew reveals what the disciples were thinking, they had forgotten the bread. I wish this were because they wanted to feed a great mass of people again, but I imagine it was just because they were hungry. So when Jesus tells them, “Watch and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”, their immediate discussion is “Why didn’t we remember to bring bread?!” Of course, their reaction was driven not by what Jesus said but by the thoughts that consumed their mind. How often our thoughts, even our understanding of God’s Word, is driven not by what is said, but what has consumed our mind and heart. **Do you ever evaluate your response to see what’s consuming you?**

Jesus immediately recognizes this because he knows their thoughts. Spoiler Alert: not even your thoughts are hidden from God. Jesus calls their faith “little” because of the self-centered, shallow content that consumed their conversation. He asks them, “Have you not paid attention to all that you have experienced recently to discern what I’m talking about?” When he repeats his warning to beware the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees, then they understand.

The disciples are consumed by that which gets us all, me-focused and self needs. Faith has not taken hold in them so that they readily engage their mind and heart in the teaching of God’s Word. Remember what they have recently experienced; a Canaanite woman Jesus credited with great faith because she believed a “crumb of Jesus’ power is greater than a feast of the world’s”, a crowd of unbelievers who glorified God because of what they saw Jesus do, and a repeat of feeding thousands with only a few loaves and fish. Yes, they were present for the miracles and heard Jesus teach, but they had not intentionally engaged in what was really going on. Jesus calls out their little faith and asks them why they are discussing the fact that they have no bread. **Jesus knows but points it out so that they can learn and understand.**

I wonder how true this is of so many today. We mostly stay distracted by our devices so that we are present but not intentionally engaged and miss the point. We have enough faith that gets us to church, but not enough for our life to be significantly affected or even radically changed by what Jesus is saying and doing through it. **Move #2 shows how Jesus identified the problem for His disciples; when we live distracted by the things of this world, even good things, it divides our priorities to deter faith that brings real life change. Friend, what’s distracting and dividing you, deterring you from a real, vibrant faith in Jesus today?**

READ Matthew 16:13-20

¹³Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” ¹⁴And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” ¹⁵He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” ¹⁶Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” ¹⁷And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. ¹⁸And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. ¹⁹I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” ²⁰Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ. **Matt 16:13-20**

Jesus and the disciples come to Caesarea Philippi. He asks the disciples who people are saying “the Son of Man” is, Jesus’ favorite title for Himself from the prophet Daniel^{7:13}. The disciples state that some say John the Baptist, Elijah, and Jeremiah or a prophet. Every answer cited is of an impressive religious figure. We don’t know if they were just trying. To be nice or impress Jesus, but it seems that this is how most people thought of Jesus, as a great religious figure.

Why is it so important that Matthew mention Caesarea Philippi? Caesarea Philippi was formerly known as Paneas and was the center of worship for the Greek god Pan. Phillip the tetrarch renamed it Caesarea Philippi in honor of himself and Caesar Augustus. **ILLUS Gates of Hell-pic 1** As a center of worship for the god Pan, the location was a place of extensive idol sacrifice which became known as the “gates of hell”. The gates of hell was a sacred idol site because the river came out



of the mountain from underground. ILLUS Gates of Hell-pic 2 The “gates of hell” was the location for one of the largest idol worship altars where endless goat sacrifices made the mountain flow red with blood and was decorated with their idols.

Against this backdrop, Jesus asks his disciples who they believe He is. Peter states, “*You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.*” Jesus says that he is blessed because God has revealed this to him. He then states that on the confession Peter made He will build His church. His response to this confession is the promise of His provision in answering the prayer of supplication He taught His disciples to pray in Matthew 6:10, “*Your Kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*” This is one of the most important statements in understanding the church in all the Bible, specifically to understand that Jesus promises that the church will be victorious over Satan and hell. **Jesus promises victory for His church, those who live by the faith confession “Jesus is Lord!”**

Let’s remember all we have covered so far in this story. We first encountered the unbelief of the religious leaders who didn’t recognize Jesus as the Messiah sent from God, though they had extensively studied the Scriptures that prophesied of Him. Then Jesus called out the little faith of distracted and divided priorities from His own disciples. Now we are confronted by the idolatry of the world in morbid, mutilating fashion. Matthew 16 shows us the full spectrum of every form of unbelief. Jesus gets to the heart of the matter with His disciples. He not only instructs His disciples but equips them to understand that the only true solution to all they have encountered is a confession. **Move #3 reveals the answer to all idolatry and sinful distraction is only found in one Solution: in the presence of every unbelief and worldly idolatry, faith produces the confession “Jesus is Lord!”**

TRANS Matthew then records that Jesus dial in His teaching to show reveal the truth of this confession.

READ Matthew 16:21-23

²¹From 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 on the third day be raised. ²²And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, “Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you.” ²³But he turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.” **Matt 16:21-23**

Matthew records that from then on Jesus began to teach the disciples about his death and resurrection, the gospel. Jesus’ deepest insight and greatest teaching to the disciples forms the fundamentals of the gospel; He would be killed, buried and raised on the third day. And Jesus anchored everything to this revelation. Paul repeats this practice.

For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁴that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, **1 Corinthians 15:3-4.**

Faith that brings new life from God is NOT merely believing what Jesus did do, in what He can do, nor even wanting Him to do, but placing your trust in His work on the cross to forgive your sin and live in obedience to Him as Lord. **Move #4 leads us to the gospel as the center of true faith that brings salvation and produces a faithful confession: Jesus was crucified, buried, and resurrected to atone for sin that by faith in Him we are made right and have peace with God.**

TRANS And the life under Jesus’ Lordship is lived to distinctively give Him glory.

READ Matthew 16:24-28

²⁴Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. ²⁵For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. ²⁶For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul? ²⁷For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done. ²⁸Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.” **Matt 16:24-28**

Jesus explains the kind of life that faith in Him motivates and empowers. Paul’s words in Philippians help us.

But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸ Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ ⁹and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith— ¹⁰that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, ¹¹that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead. **Philippians 3:7-11**



Move #5 reveals what the **new life** of a real Christ-follower means: **forsaking all, I follow Jesus as Lord**. Friend, is this true of you? Do you know this new life by faith in Jesus? God waits to give new life to you today by His Holy Spirit, to all who will believe.

Jesus is Lord; the life lived by this faith confession is surrendered to glorify Him in every way.

CLOSE Fives moves lead one from death to new life by faith under Jesus' Lordship. There is no half-way with Jesus' Lordship; He is either Lord of all, or He is not Lord at all. I heard a sermon a few weeks ago that stated how conversion always leads to devotion. But we live in a time where typical Christianity wants conversion without devotion, the promise of pleasure without sacrifice and perseverance. And the pastor simply stated, "There is no conversion that is absent of devotion. But where devotion is absent, conversion is likely missing." Faith is not a theory or concept in which emotions alone are stirred, but that commands every faculty of life to attend to the One who is Lord of life. **Have you settled this in your heart?** Today I invite you to settle in your heart so that your heart becomes settled in this confession, "Jesus is Lord, and my life is lived by this confession in full surrender to glorify Jesus in every way."

