

Coffee to Go | Proper 16

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

Jesus, Caesarea Philippi, God, disciples, teaching, belief

SPEAKERS

Blake Smith, Karin Peter

Karin Peter 00:27

Welcome to Coffee to Go, where we center ourselves in the seasons, scriptures, and holy days of the Christian tradition. I'm Karen Peter, and I'm here with Blake Smith. And we welcome you on this journey. So where is Jesus this week? And where are we this week of traveling with Jesus. So we are in Caesarea Philippi. I think that's the I think that's the correct way of saying that. And that is located in and this surprised me, it's located in a really lush area, there's a lot of vegetation, it's at the base of a mountain, near a major freshwater spring that fed the Jordan River. So when I think of kind of the Holy Land, I don't think of lush and green and that kind of thing. But this was that kind of an area, not the kind of dry arid images that normally come to mind. Caesarea Philippi was a city that was built by King Herod's son, Phillip, hence the name. And it was meant to be a capital or center to kind of be the place that represented the imperial power of Rome in this area. And because of that it contained multiple Roman shrines. And there were temples and all kinds of things. It was this kind of majestic ode to the power of Imperial Rome. But it was also a good place to rest if you're on a journey, the spring water, the shade all of those things. So stopping here in this restful place, you are actually in a place where the blatant power of Rome stands in stark contrast to the message of Jesus that we've been experiencing on this journey, and the peaceable reign of God that Jesus proclaims. These giant Imperial powerful images. And this, this idea of the peaceable reign of God in stark contrast, so I'm trying to wrap my brain around that at Caesarea Philippi. So like, let's, let's hear what happens here.

Blake Smith 02:36

All right, our text comes today from Matthew chapter 16, the 13th, through the 20th verses.

Now, when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?," and they said, "Some say, John the Baptist, but others say Elijah, and still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets." And he said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." 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, and I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock, I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it, 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." And he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

So here we've got Jesus, he's, he's been on this journey has been teaching and preaching and healing and feeding. And many, many of the times it's in the midst of a controversial environment. And these things are quite miraculous. And then all of a sudden, he stops and I kind of imagine a casual conversation. Hey, guys, you know, what? What are people saying about me? And they have a list because it's easy to talk about what other people think and what you're hearing and that kind of thing. And then he kind of turns it, and he says, But who do you say that I am? I find myself when I when I think about this deeply I think about where I have been often times as a minister in the church and doing teaching a class or that kind of thing is a and I try always to represent Community of Christ believes. Blah, blah, blah, you know, and here's what it says and I, I say that and then every once in a while, now, sometimes I'll offer now I would say this, but I want you to know that this is the Community of Christ. general belief here, but sometimes somebody will say Okay, that's what Community of Christ believes. But what do you believe? And, I'm like... It's not that I don't know, it's whether or not I want to speak it. Because it's, have I really thought about it because I spend so much time thinking about what I've heard and, and what you know what I'm teaching and telling. So the question this question of Who do you say that I am is one to ask ourselves, and it's important to me, I think, because what I found over the years is that it's easier to stand for something, or to work towards something that you believe in. So if you're going through the motions, and I think a lot of times, and I've even been there, we go to church, because that's what we do on Sunday mornings. We don't think about it a lot, we we hear the sermon, there might be something that really catches our attention, or there may not. We might like the hymns, but we don't really think about even the hymns that we sing. I mean, sometimes we sing hymns that are saying, God, send me where you want me to go. But do we really mean that, or are we just singing that? And so it's important for us to have this gut check. It's important for us, on occasion, at least to stop and say, what is it, who is it that you say that I am. And because on that, we can build a foundation. We can be willing to endure the persecution and the rejection and frustrations of not having enough people or the hard work that we have to do to keep the ministry growth going. So those are kind of important to me, I read this sometimes. And I know that the commentaries very clearly talked about Peter being the rock. But I also read in this because of my personal experience, that when Jesus said, and on this rock, that it has as much to do with this revelation, this understanding this coming to a realization of who God is, that gives Peter and the disciples and us that strong foundation on which to continue building our faith and offering ministry.

Karin Peter 07:20

So Blake I'm listening to how you describe that. And I'm thinking about how I've seen Jesus at different periods in my life. So as a kid, I understood Jesus very differently than I did as a young adult. And again, very differently than, than I do now. As a older adult, (a seasoned), yeah, seasoned adults. There you go. But, and so we forget that too that, that our understanding, and our relationship with, with the divine changes in our life. And so how, who we say Jesus is changes in our lives, because if you ask me, that was a kid, Jesus was a lot like Santa Claus, because that's, you know, you pray to them, you wanted something? And and so I think about that, I think about being named being taught to pray in Jesus name and what that really means. When you pray in someone's name when you take someone's name on you, so yeah, it has changed in my life. And I assume it's changed for others in their life as well.

Blake Smith 08:30

Yeah, I think that that's, that's probably the case for many. So because, you know, in this in this particular passage, right here, and Caesarea Philippi, two things are colliding, right belief, "Who do you say that I am?," and right practice, "How do you live that out?" How do you behave, in contrast to this Roman power that you talked about? So it's important for us to ask those questions. And so the questions for this week are really I mean, just carry on from that. We ask, Who is Jesus to me? And I would add the word today. Yeah. Who is Jesus to me today? How has that changed? For me, in my journey? And what does that mean? What's caused those changes to think about what's brought about those changes? And what are those changes? And what does following Jesus look like in my current understanding of who Jesus is? Because that too, might change? And then I guess we probably have to ask the question, why does this matter? Because if it doesn't matter, we don't ask the questions. Right. So why does this matter to me? How does this help me to build that firm foundation that we talked about?

Karin Peter 09:54

Yeah, that rock, have that personal experience. So This keeps revolving in my head when we talk about belief and that is, is believing things about Jesus while I believe Jesus is the Son of God, I believe in virgin birth. I believe in other things kind of here, you know barter bantered around, is that the same thing as following Jesus? is believing about Jesus the same thing as believing in Jesus. So to me, those are very different ways of looking at it.

Blake Smith 10:26

That in itself is a great question.

Karin Peter 10:29

So this week, as we think about this passage, who do you say that I am? Who is Jesus to you? So this week, as you engage with others, think back on those interactions and and think about how do your interactions align with how you understand the message and ministry of Jesus? Are you acting in the way of Jesus? Are you believing in the way of Jesus the ministry and message of Jesus? And what does that say to you about your own beliefs and your own practices? So is it one thing to say I believe in Jesus or am I actually behaving in a manner that says, I live that I believe in Jesus? So think about that, this week, and just kind of reflect on where you are and who Jesus is to you. So, a blessing Blake?

Blake Smith 11:23

Yes, I have a blessing and it is a very concise blessings. To all of our listeners. Listen carefully. Don't blink, you might miss. It comes from Meta Herrick Carlson, and it's this...

"Remember that the world needs you to be honest and brave. Not right. Right, is overrated."

All right, so another great time of conversation. Karin, thanks for that. And thank you to all of our listeners for joining us here today on Coffee to Go. We invite you to join us here again for the next episode of Coffee to Go, where we explore the next part of our journey through the liturgical seasons and holy days of the Christian tradition.