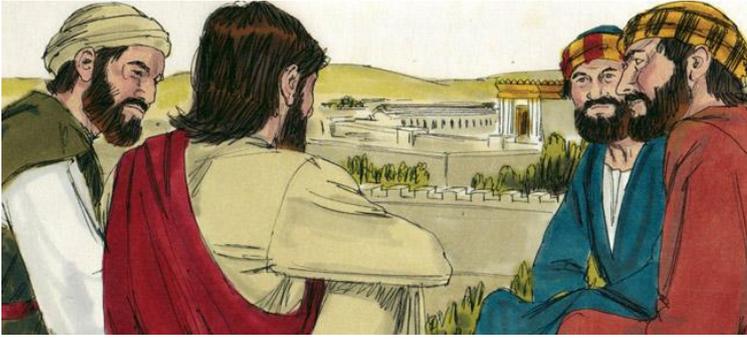


Church at Home for Abridge

23rd August 2020

Matthew 16:13-20

Further resources
for worship and reflection



We are at a turning point in Matthew's story of Jesus. Within a week or two Jesus will be setting his face towards Jerusalem and his slow journey south to the cross. He needs to prepare his disciples for what is to come, because the rescue he is going to bring will be a complete upside-down surprise to them; and what is more, that rescue won't just be for the Jews but for the whole world. His perplexing parables about the Kingdom of God had already paved the way for this, as had his encounter last week with the Canaanite mother in whom Jesus had found remarkable faith. In today's conversation at Caesarea Philippi Jesus lovingly begins to challenge their thinking still further.

Read through the Bible passage again, and slowly, pausing after each verse, giving yourself space to imagine being there, listening in on this memorable exchange between Christ and Peter. What new questions, doubts, insights and surprises come to you?

[Here is today's gospel](#) from Bible Gateway.

I wonder how much Peter understood the title he gave to Jesus? Does it matter?

I wonder what Jesus meant by 'my church'? It's the only time he is quoted as using this word.

I wonder why Jesus nicknamed Simon 'the rock'? Had he earned that description; do you think?

I wonder what Jesus meant by the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven? And what exactly was Peter meant to do with them?

I wonder what new name Jesus would give you?

Here is a **reflective song** that is prayer based on today's Bible passage: [Lord build your church](#)

Activity

Perhaps you have some different stones at home? Maybe you collected some on a holiday?

And/or have you got various bunches of keys?

Spend some time holding and feeling the stones and/or the keys. Prayerfully consider what God might be saying to you through these everyday objects. Or perhaps God wants you to pass on a word of encouragement to someone else through these 3D visuals?

More thoughts:

Peter was inspired by the Holy Spirit. He didn't have it all worked out, but just had very simple faith. Jesus didn't need perfect people for his church, just ones who believed in him. He knew Peter was the wobbliest rock around, but used that weakness to make a humble leader for his Church, who was very aware of his own failings; but with Jesus' affirmation, he had the confidence to live and die for Christ. Of course, Peter gets it wrong straight away (next week's story): he messes up over and over again, but that means the Church is based on someone's understanding of forgiveness, rather than on an arrogant know-it-all!



Detail from Raphael's painting of this story also referencing John 21