

A note from Kathy

In Matthew 16 Jesus asked his disciples two very stirring questions, questions we must ask ourselves today, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" and "Who do you say I am?" Our response to the second question will determine how we deal with our past regrets, our present decisions, and more importantly, our future destiny: "Who do you say I am?"

Observation

1. Pharisees and Sadducees were generally not known to be friends. Most of the time they were opposing one another, arguing over details they did not agree on. Pharisees followed their religious rules and traditions strictly. They believed this was the way to be right with God. The Sadducees only accepted the written books of Moses as Scripture and did not believe in the resurrection or life after death (resurrection), but in their jealousy for and hatred of Jesus, they found common ground. They were a constant problem throughout Jesus' ministry. Matthew 16:1 says they came to Jesus to test him. What did they want Jesus to do? What do you believe their intent was in this testing?

Many years ago a friend shared with me something that would help me remember one of the main differences between the Pharisees and the Sadducees. He said, "The Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection, and that is why they are so Sad-You-See. Yes it's kind of corny, but I never forgot it.



2. What did Jesus compliment them on being able to do? Sadly for them, what did Jesus say they were unable to do?
3. When Jesus was asked to show them a sign, what was the sign of Jonah that Jesus referred to (Matthew 12:39 and Matthew 16:4)?

If you are unfamiliar with this story, turn to Old Testament book by that name. The book of Jonah is a small book, only four chapters, and one of the last few books in the Old Testament. This book is full of various treasures, they are easy

to find and apply to our life. It only takes a few minutes to listen to it read aloud on YouVersion app.

4. Jesus warned the disciples to be careful, to be on guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees. What was Jesus trying to warn them about? What word picture is Jesus painting for them?
5. The disciples were confused by Jesus warning; what did they think he was referring to?
6. What had they forgotten? What two events had recently happened to them that should have made a lasting impression on their hearts?
7. What is the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees that Jesus was referring to?
8. As they came into the area of Caesarea Philippi (verse 13), Jesus asked his disciples a very important question. This is a question that we must settle in our hearts as well. What did Jesus ask his disciples in verse 15? What is your answer?
9. Through the years there has been much debate as to exactly what Jesus was saying in verses 17-18. I believe if we approach these verses with care and ask God to speak to us through his word, he will reveal their meaning. Remember context is always king; keep the scripture in context of what is being said so that you do not merely pluck out a verse and try to make it say something it does not. Briefly state what you believe Jesus is saying to the disciples here.

10. Jesus told his disciples that he was giving them the keys to the kingdom of heaven. If someone has the keys, what does that say about them?
11. Jesus began to share with his disciples some sad news concerning the future. What did Jesus reveal to them in verse 21?
- a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
12. This had to be a terrible shock to Peter. How did he respond to the news Jesus shared in verse 21? What aspect of Peter's personality is seen here? Peter was also the one who got out of the boat and began walking on the water in the midst of a storm; Matthew 14. What character qualities do we see in this disciple?
13. After taking Jesus aside, Peter tried to reassure Jesus that no harm would come to him on his watch. Nothing like this would happen as long as I'm with you, Jesus. What did Jesus say to him? Why do you believe he said it this way?
14. After reading the rest of Matthew 16, what do you believe Jesus is preparing these men to face?

Application

1. The Pharisees and Sadducees came to Jesus to test him and to try to trip him up. Jesus had performed many amazing miracles, and even if they had not personally seen him doing so, they had heard all about them. Why do you believe that after all they had seen and heard, it was not enough to convince them that Jesus is the Son of God?
2. Have you ever met someone whose attitude was like that of the Pharisees and Sadducees? I would believe in God if he _____. They come up with some sign they wanted God to show them in order for them to believe. Would that be faith or are they trying to control and manipulate things to their own plan?
Ephesians 2:8-9 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--not by works, so that no one can boast.
3. Is God still working in amazing ways today? Think back on the last time you prayed for something that only God could answer. Did you find it difficult not to worry or fret over the situation? How did you handle it? When we pray and then turn around and worry and fret and continue to try to come up with a plan; what are we really saying?
4. The disciples needed to be very cautious and careful of the teachings of the Pharisees and Sadducees. What do we need to be careful of today? How will we know if someone is speaking the truth or if they are manipulating things? Read Psalms 119:1-12 then write out your answer.

5. Pretend for just a moment that it is Jesus asking you, "Who do you say I am?"
What would your answer be?

6. Jesus knew before he came what death he would die, but he came anyway.
Not only did Jesus know he would die, but he knew he would be resurrected.
Without the resurrection we would have no hope. Use the truth you find in the
verses below to finish the sentence. If Jesus has not been resurrected
then I

1 Corinthians 15: 17-19 *...if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is useless, and you are still under condemnation for your sins. In that case, all who have died believing in Christ have perished! And if we have hope in Christ only for this life, we are the most miserable people in the world.*