

Sermon – Blessed with Knowledge from Above

Matthew 16

¹³ When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, “Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?”

¹⁴ So they said, “Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”

¹⁵ He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?”

¹⁶ Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

¹⁷ Jesus answered and said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven. ¹⁸ And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. ¹⁹ And 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.”

²⁰ Then He commanded His disciples that they should tell no one that He was Jesus the Christ.

²¹ From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.

Jesus asks his disciples a question. He already knows who he is, he is interested in whether they have figured out who he is, so he asks two questions.

Who do men say the Son of Man is? What others have said and understand has an element of truth. He is not John the Baptist but certainly his ministry included what John did and preached. He is not Elijah or Jeremiah or one of the prophets, but he is a prophet and the fulfillment of prophesy.

These are honorable comparisons. One may even say they are very complementary opinions. But they are inaccurate and fall short of who Jesus really is. So he asks them the second question....who do they think he is?

Peter's response is accurate and goes beyond Jesus as the Son of Man, he declares him the Christ or Messiah, the Son of God.

Jesus calls Peter blessed for the following reasons.

- Men didn't reveal this truth to him.
- God reveals this truth to him. He gets this greater revelation from Heaven.
- Receiving revelation from Heaven is better than just getting it from men.



My observation is Jesus doesn't say the revelations from men was bad, but that the revelation from God is better.

What is the application for us today?

In preparing Bible lessons, sermons, and in my own personal study, I will often refer to commentaries, online resources, and other opinions from men. They didn't have these resources of course during Jesus' time on earth. But today, these resources reflect revelations from men.

Certainly, some of the content from these sources may be Spirit led since they often are from the Spiritual revelations they have learned and now share with us today.

Again, I don't see Jesus condemning the use of these resources or understanding revelations from man. Today for me, this includes AI.

AI is truly a sound resource and an aid to arrive at answers quickly. If you want to get a quick answer, AI is a very good resource. AI programming and data often comes from the opinions of men. Generative AI tools have access to data from myriad places. Data collection is both automated and from manual efforts. Data collection may also include web scraping, public data sets (Wikipedia, etc.).

While all of these tools have been quite helpful to me, it doesn't replace, nor is it superior to the knowledge and revelation that comes from the Holy Spirit. This is what AI doesn't bring to the table for me. If the spiritual component is missing, you may get good answers but not the complete spiritual truth for proper application.

Peter's revelation comes from his personal relationship and walk with Jesus and God helps him to see the truth behind his experiences with Christ.

Even today, many people would not deny the existence of Jesus. They still see him as a great prophet and hold him in high esteem, but they have not all seen him or believe in his role as the Christ and Son of God. Until one sees and experiences the spiritual revelation, you are in danger of missing the complete truth.

I like what one of my commentaries Matthew Henry stated, "The Christian religion is a revealed religion, has its rise in heaven; it is a religion from above, given by inspiration of God, not the learning of philosophers, nor the politics of statesmen."

Let's take an example. I want to know the answer to a problem. Let's say it is how as a Christian I should deal with a difficult relationship. AI might generate the following answers.

How do I reconcile a difficult relationship?

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Reconciling a difficult relationship, especially from a Christian perspective, involves humility, forgiveness, and a willingness to work towards healing and restoration. Here are steps you can take:

1. **Self-Reflection:** Take some time to reflect on your own actions, attitudes, and contributions to the difficulties in the relationship. Acknowledge any mistakes or shortcomings on your part.
2. **Prayer:** Turn to prayer for guidance, wisdom, and strength. Ask God to help you see the situation clearly, to grant you patience and understanding, and to soften the hearts of both parties involved.
3. **Initiate Communication:** If possible and appropriate, initiate a respectful and honest conversation with the other person. Express your desire to reconcile and your willingness to listen and understand their perspective.
4. **Listen with Empathy:** Practice active listening and seek to understand the other person's feelings, concerns, and experiences. Validate their emotions even if you disagree with their perspective.
5. **Apologize and Seek Forgiveness:** Take responsibility for your part in the conflict and sincerely apologize for any hurt you may have caused. Be genuine in your apology and ask for forgiveness.
6. **Offer Forgiveness:** Be willing to forgive the other person for any wrongs they have committed against you. Forgiveness doesn't mean excusing their behavior but rather releasing yourself from bitterness and resentment.
7. **Set Boundaries:** Establish healthy boundaries to protect yourself from further harm or manipulation in the relationship. Boundaries are important for maintaining your own well-being while still being open to reconciliation.
8. **Seek Mediation or Counseling:** If necessary, consider involving a trusted third party, such as a pastor, counselor, or mediator, to facilitate communication and resolution in the relationship.
9. **Practice Patience and Persistence:** Reconciliation takes time, and progress may be slow. Be patient and persistent in your efforts to rebuild trust and repair the relationship.
10. **Focus on Love and Grace:** Keep in mind the biblical principles of love, grace, and forgiveness as you navigate the process of reconciliation. Remember that God's love and grace are available to both you and the other person.

Remember that reconciliation may not always be possible or advisable in every situation, especially if the relationship is toxic or abusive. In such cases, prioritizing your own safety and well-being is paramount.

This is great stuff, but it doesn't clearly tell me how to do these actions in a spiritual application. It has to be more than a series of instructions, it is understanding the spirit and intent and being able to understand spiritual principles and live in that revelation.



AI can tell me that the Messiah, the Christ in prophesy is the savior, liberator, and King who is to rule during the Messianic Age. That the Christ is from the line of David. That he is the anointed one.

But it cannot fully show me how to apply and experience the resurrection in my life today. It doesn't tell me how I can live today with confidence and blessed assurance. It is much more than waiting to die, it is living today. It is much more than waiting for Jesus Christ to rule on the earth in the future, it is about believing that he rules in your heart today if you believe.

This kind of revelation comes from the Holy Spirit revealing the scriptures in such a way that it changes your relationship and hope. It outlines spiritual principles that AI will not be able to convey because a computer cannot have an intimate relationship with God.....but you can.

Summary:

- We need to know who Jesus really is in his role as the Christ. He is the beginning and the end.
- AI and the resources of men can be a great tool and inspiration. You can use it, but don't lean only on the wisdom and revelation of men.
- There is great happiness and blessings when God reveals greater truths to you through the Holy Spirit.
- He wants to give you this kind of revelation; be watchful to receive it. Ask God for it by following the spiritual principles.
- I want to know him like Paul, in the fellowship of his resurrection.

Phil 3:10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;