

Dr. Craig Keener, Matthew, Lecture 13, Matthew 14-16

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This is Dr. Craig Keener in his teaching on the book of Matthew. This is session 13, Matthew 14-16.

In Matthew chapter 14, Matthew also narrates about Jesus walking on water, an account that is also in Mark's gospel.

Jesus told the disciples to go to the other side of the lake. Now, in terms of visibility, this would have been shortly before dawn. Jesus would have been coming from the east, but it would have been hard probably to see him, and so it's not surprising they didn't recognize him at first.

But the language that's used here of Jesus treading upon the waters, especially in Mark 6:48, where he was about to pass by. In Job 9:8, it speaks of Yahweh treading on the sea. In Job 9:11, just a few verses later, it speaks of Yahweh passing by, also language found in Exodus 33:19. So, this one, walking on the sea, Mark's gospel already was portraying Jesus as divine in this scene.

And Matthew continues that portrayal. Matthew 14:27, also Mark 6:50, Jesus says, I am. It's often translated, it is I. It's the same Greek wording, ego in me, it is I, can also mean I am, which was of course a divine name in the Old Testament.

And in this context of the one walking on the sea, it lets us know that really Jesus is divine. Well, as far as the disciples thinking he's a ghost, they really should have known better. I mean, already Jewish people technically, supposedly understood that the righteous were with the Lord in a good way, and the wicked might be in a place of torment.

And they believed in a future resurrection. Most people believed in a future resurrection, at least of the righteous, and many also the resurrection of the damned. After all, Daniel 12:2 did speak of both.

So, one thing that Matthew has that Mark doesn't have is Peter also walking on the water. Peter invites Jesus to invite Peter. Peter wants to make an expression, an act of faith.

We can't do miracles on our own, and Peter recognized this. It can only be at the Lord's bidding. So, he asked the Lord to enable him to do it.

But then he saw the wind, and he became afraid, and he began to sink. And he rightly cried out what he needed to cry out when he was sinking, Lord, save me. But Jesus said, you of little faith.

Now, that makes me think, where is our faith? Do we look to the wind? Do we look to the waves? Unlike Peter, I'm not sure I've actually gotten out of the boat very often. So, it does challenge my faith in this way. It challenges me to trust the Lord more.

And when the Lord calls us in the context of mission to do something, then he enables us to do that. I interviewed one person from Indonesia who told me that in the context of mission, he and the rest of his ministry team they crossed a very torrential river. The water was very high at that point.

They thought it was high, but they felt the Lord led them to cross it. They stepped in. The water didn't come up beyond their knees.

So, they went across. They thought that they felt the bottom of their feet. They thought that they were walking on the bottom of the river.

They got to the other side and found out from the villagers to whom they'd come to preach that they had just walked across the surface of the water. I would prefer if it ever happened to me it would happen that way so that I wouldn't look at the wind and the waves and say, oh no, I'd rather not know about it until afterward. But in any case, I interviewed somebody else who also told me that she needed to cross.

But the other members of the team were all men and they could lock hand in hand. And it was coming up to their chest as they crossed this body of water. And she, because locally the custom was it would have brought reproach in the Lord's name if she had locked arms with them, she was going to have to go across by herself.

She just prayed that the water would be calm. It became calm. And she walked across and she thought it was coming up to her ankles.

She thought she was touching the bottom, that the water had receded. But when she got across, they explained to her, no, you were walking on water. We could tell.

We could see it. The water didn't go down. You just walked across.

So, it has happened. But Jesus is the one who does it naturally. He doesn't need a little bit of extra supernatural help in that way.

Chapter 15, Scripture triumphs over tradition. Traditions can sometimes preserve good ideas, good scriptural ideas. But sometimes traditions are just the accumulation of what people have thought.

And what people have thought is not always the same thing as what God has revealed. In this case, there was the issue of hand washing. It may have been originally a diaspora Jewish custom, but it was now a widespread Jewish custom.

The Pharisees did it. They would have to make sure that their hands were washed before eating. That's good for hygiene purposes, but they were doing it for ritual purposes.

And they would also have other kinds of ritual washing that was just part of their ritual routine. They were extremely meticulous about tradition, including hand washing. And we know that from the rabbinic sources that are dependent on the Pharisees.

So, they criticized Jesus. Why didn't your disciples wash their hands before eating? Jesus issued a counter-challenge. Why do you ignore the principles of Scripture to uphold tradition? Hey, this one isn't even specified in Scripture.

But there are times when you use your tradition over Scripture. For example, Scripture emphasizes honoring your father and your mother. Well, remember, they would have agreed with that.

Even Gentiles agreed with that. Josephus and some rabbis said that this was the greatest commandment. There's one example of a rabbi who wanted to honor his mother so much that when she was getting ready to get into bed, and this was a bed that was up off the ground, he would lie on the ground and have her step on his back to get into the bed to be a footstool for her.

Yet there were people who were exploiting a religious loophole by dedicating money to the sanctuary that should have been used to support their aged parents. To fail to provide for aged parents, everybody recognized that was bad. Now, in this country, we have various safety nets for providing for aged people, at least at the moment, in the country in which I live, and some countries have that.

But traditionally, it was required that the children support their aged parents. And today, you know, there are people who are very religious about some things. They'll say, well, I have to pay my tithe no matter what, even if that means somebody in need goes unfed.

Well, what was the purpose of the tithe biblically? I mean, what's the purpose of biblical stewardship? It's certainly the kind of stewardship that Jesus emphasizes, but

to meet people's needs. Now, it makes sense that it could be distributed from a central some central overseers like it is in the book of Acts, that makes sense. So, you know, working through the church is a good way to do that.

But here were people, who were honoring what they considered religious devotion and not taking care of the real needs around them, which is not really being very godly. Jesus says you negate God's word for the sake of your tradition, verse 6. The Pharisees passed on the traditions of the elders. The Sadducees denied those, but they also neglected scripture and God's power, Jesus said.

In verses 8 and 9, Jesus quotes scripture to talk about how they've regarded tradition above scripture. Isaiah chapter 29, verse 13. These people honor me with their lips, but their teachings are human commandments.

Today, sometimes we read our church traditions into scripture, or we ignore scripture in favor of our culture. You have some churches that will place their tradition over scripture in practice. This is not just those who actually have beliefs about that, but churches that say, no, we hold only scripture, but they often interpret scripture in light of their traditions, even when that's not what scripture says.

We also have people today who will just go along with whatever the culture says. If the culture says certain kinds of sexual activity is acceptable, then the church goes along with it. We also have some people who just react against whatever the culture says.

If the culture says something's all right, then we are going to oppose what the culture says. Also, we have people who honor our experience above scripture. Many churches are the opposite.

They don't experience the things that scripture talks about. But sometimes we have churches that will exalt experience, whether our own experience or an experience of some preacher we hear about, will exalt that over scripture. And instead of interpreting our experience in light of scripture, and instead of living out scripture in our experience, which we do need to do, we end up reading scripture in light of our experience and conforming it to our experience.

So, there are a lot of ways that we undermine the authority of scripture today. And yet, Jesus tells us very clearly that we are to make disciples of the nations. Well, how do we do that? We're going to have to call people back to scripture.

The Pharisees were offended by what he said, 15:12. They had their traditions, and they didn't like what Jesus said. And the word for offended here isn't just an offense.

It's scandalous. It causes them to stumble. They're very upset.

This is an extreme form of offense. And the disciples warn him, the Pharisees were offended by this. It's not good to offend the powerful.

It's not good to offend those you might need as allies later. Jesus' response is, those not planted by my Father will be uprooted, verse 13. That's biblical language.

You have it, for example, in Jeremiah 31:28, what God was doing with his people. God could plant, or he could uproot. He could build, or he could tear down.

And he speaks to the Pharisees as blind guides. Blind people often had human guides. Sometimes, at least in some cultures, if people are blind, they have guide dogs that help them navigate.

But blind people back then often would have a human guide who would make sure that they went in the right way. There were many open pits meant to catch predators. Sometimes they were for storage, but especially the open pits were to catch predators.

Well, Jesus says, these are blind guides of the blind, and they will both fall into pits. Jesus went on to say, in 15:11, it's not what goes into the mouth. Another rabbi made a similar statement, but only privately, fearing that some might stop keeping the outward commandment.

Jesus values the principles of the Torah more than details. Now, Mark goes even further. When Jesus says, it's not what goes into the mouth, it's what goes into the mouth, it's what comes out, what comes from the heart that defiles, that desecrates the person.

Mark goes on and adds a comment and says, by saying this, Jesus declared all foods clean. But Mark is clear that this is his comment, not precisely what Jesus said. Well, Matthew is writing especially for Jewish Christians.

Most of them probably keep kosher. It's part of their culture. They've been doing it for a long time.

It's just the way they eat. So, Matthew doesn't need to go on to give that detail. But the principle remains.

The principles of the Torah are what matters. The details, some of the details of the Torah could only be kept in Eretz Israel. They could only be kept in the land.

Some of the details of the Torah could only be kept in an agrarian society, in the literal way that they were written. Some of them could only be kept in a certain period. In the literal way that they were written.

But the principles are transcultural. For example, the principle in Deuteronomy 22, you need to build a parapet or a fence around your roof. I ask my students, how many of you have built a fence around your roof? And usually they say, well, no, we don't have a fence around our roof.

At which point I usually say, you all do not believe the Bible. I'm through with you. I'm leaving.

No. But then they laugh when I come back. But the principle of that, of course, is that people often entertain neighbors on the roof.

You know, they had a flat roof and they did a lot of things on the roof. And it says, build this fence around your roof, lest you incur blood guilt. You don't want somebody falling off, some kids playing up if somebody falls off.

It's the issue of liability. Your property needs to be safe so nobody gets hurt. You need to care about your neighbor's safety.

Now, that may be expressed in different ways in different cultures. But in some cultures where people don't use seatbelts when they travel, even though it reduces traffic fatalities by about 50%. And so, I say, that would be good to do.

People laugh because some of their cars don't even have seatbelts. But in any case, we try to watch out for our neighbor's safety. Safety protocols are biblical.

Jesus values the principles of the Torah. And then he gives a vice list. He talks about these evil things that come from the heart.

That was a common literary and rhetorical form. You find it in the Old Testament. You find it in Greek literature.

Philo has a vice list with over 100 vices listed. So, they could sometimes get very long. But most of the vices he lists here are violations of human word commandments in the Ten Commandments.

The real sin, Jesus says, is what comes from the heart. Now, Jesus has been talking about purity and impurity. And this is very significant because of what's about to happen.

He's about to have to deal with somebody who would be regarded by his people as ritually impure. In chapter 15, verses 21 through 28, Jesus addresses the Canaanite woman's faith. The issue of what is clean came up in 15 through 20.

Well, now Jesus addresses a Canaanite woman. In Mark, she's Syrophenician in Greek. In Matthew, she's Canaanite, just like Tamar and Rahab in the genealogy at the beginning of the gospel.

And Jesus compares her with a dog. Now, lest you think the dog was a nice complement in that culture because it could vary from one culture to another, dog was actually quite a serious insult. Even Greeks, who sometimes had dogs as pets, used dogs as a serious insult.

He doesn't actually call her a dog, so he's not actually insulting her. Hey, dog doesn't do that. But he does compare her with a dog.

He presents an obstacle to her faith. She has to humble herself to get past this obstacle. And she ends up being commended for her faith.

And in her culture, among many Gentiles, they could use dogs as pets. And the dogs would come and eat up the crumbs from under the table. So, he compares her to a dog.

He says, let the children be fed first. And after that, so she says, okay, I'm not one of the children of Israel. You are the son of David.

I don't get first place. But I don't need something big from you. I know you have so much power.

All I need is a little bit of it. All I need is a crumb. And in expressing this faith, she surmounts the obstacle that Jesus makes.

You know, sometimes we give up too easily. I mean, sometimes a no is a no. But often in the Bible, you'll see that Jesus places an obstacle because he wants to challenge our faith.

He wants us to show we are determined if it's something that's really important. And so, in the case of, remember, Jesus' mother, they have no wine. Woman, what do I have to do with you? My hour has not yet come.

Well, what does she do? She goes and she says to the attendants, whatever he says, do you do it? That's the same words. Those are the same words that Pharaoh used about Joseph, instructing his servants to obey Joseph. Well, she refuses to take no for an answer.

She's got what we might call holy chutzpah, and she's intent on getting this. The same with the friends who have to get the paralytic to Jesus. The same with the woman with scandalous faith who reaches out and touches the hem of his garment.

And the same here when the woman keeps crying out after him, where blind Bartimaeus, the crowd says, be quiet in Mark chapter 10. And he just cries out all the more. They know that Jesus is the only one who can meet the need.

And they're desperate. It's so important that they keep reaching out to him. That kind of faith will be rewarded in one way or another because we're reaching out to him.

We're depending on him. Well, she's commended for her faith, just like the centurion was commended for his faith, even though he's a Gentile back in chapter 8. And they both become part of this narrative that points toward the fact that God loves everybody. He loves all people.

He wants to reach out to all people. Earlier, there was the feeding of the 5,000. Now there's the feeding of the 4,000.

He had given the children's bread to a Canaanite, but there was plenty of bread left over from the children. Even literal bread for the children. There were seven baskets left over after Jesus fed the 4,000.

Now, Matthew says that there were 4,000 besides women and children. And some people today say, Matthew, why didn't you give the full count? Why didn't you include the women and children? Do you not like women and children? This was a cultural thing. This was not Matthew's fault.

It's the way counting was done. Whoever originally counted, of course, could have been Matthew, but whoever originally counted, counted the men. That's the way it was done.

And that's the figure that Matthew had available. The Pharisees in chapter 16 ask Jesus for a sign again. They wanted a sign from heaven.

Now, maybe they mean a heavenly sign, like a sign in the heavens. Something like the star in Matthew chapter 2. Or maybe they just meant from God, because from heaven was a good Jewish way of saying from God as well. And there's a textual variance here.

Some manuscripts have it, some manuscripts don't, where people could predict the weather based on the sky. And Jesus says, you can predict weather based on the sky,

but you can't predict the times. You know, the rain would be the kind of rain that would come in from the west, if you lived in Palestine, in Judea and Galilee.

But hot air would blow in from the desert in the south and so on. So, there were certain things they knew about their climate and their topography. But in any case, Jesus says it's an evil generation that demands a sign.

He'd been giving signs, but they were demanding signs. They weren't accepting the signs that had already been given. Jewish expectation talked about an evil generation before the end.

Well, this certainly was one of them. And so, Jesus warns his disciples, guard against the yeast of the Pharisees, 16:6. Sages sometimes spoke in riddles. Jesus sometimes spoke figuratively.

Sometimes he spoke literally. Disciples are confused enough now not to know whether he's speaking literally or figuratively. They start talking among themselves.

Jesus is saying to beware of this leaven. It's because he knows we didn't bring bread. 16:7. And so, Jesus in 16:9 or 11 makes a point about the things that he's already done.

I mean, the multiplying of the food. Five loaves fed 5,000. How many baskets were left? Twelve.

Twelve big baskets. Seven loaves fed 4,000. Seven small baskets were left.

You don't understand? I'm not talking about literal bread. I could provide bread. I could multiply bread.

What I'm talking about is to beware the leaven of the Pharisees, the yeast of the Pharisees, or in Mark, the yeast of the Pharisees in Herod. Matthew prefers to emphasize the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The Herodians weren't really an issue for him in his day.

And biographers often did that. Well, Jesus arranges that Peter will confess him at Caesarea Philippi. That's where Jesus pops the question, who do people say I am? And they answer with various kinds of prophets, including Jeremiah and Matthew.

And whom do you say that I am? Well, why in this place? It was a pagan city known for witchcraft and pagan worship, especially of the god Pan, although other gods as well. Well, Matthew 16 verses 13 through 20. I'm going to digress here to compare Mark's story first because Mark pulls a lot of things together in a more concise way.

But in Mark, when Peter says, you're the Christ, you're the Messiah, Jesus says, don't tell anybody. Why? Well, we've already talked about the messianic secret. Some of it may have been crowd control.

Popularity would also lead too quickly to the cross. But there were exceptions. Notice a geographic exception in Mark.

Jesus told a former demoniac in a Gentile region to tell everybody what God had done for him. Why? Well, Gentiles would misunderstand. They already misunderstood Jesus as a magician, but they wouldn't misunderstand the concept of Messiah.

So, they needed to be warned this wasn't a magician. But he didn't do that in Jewish territory. And again, there's a chronological, a temporal difference.

Mark chapter 9 and verse 9. Don't tell anyone about this transfiguration until the Son of Man has risen from the dead. Why this temporal difference? Because they couldn't really understand his identity except in light of the cross. And they couldn't understand the cross except in light of the resurrection.

There were different levels of secrecy. Mark chapter 4 and verse 12. Jesus' opponents were blind.

Well, chapter 8 verses 11 through 15. Jesus' disciples had unbelief just like the Pharisees. So, when they say, oh, it's because we didn't bring any bread.

Jesus calls them in like about five different ways. Are you still blind? Do you still not see? Do you still not understand? Mark chapter 8 verses 17 and 18. They weren't as blind as the Pharisees.

They weren't as blind as Jesus' opponents back in chapter 4 verse 12. But they still were half blind. They still needed a second touch.

And so, in Mark, Jesus acts out a parable in front of them with the second touch. Just after Jesus reproves them in chapter 8 verses 22 and 25, there's a blind man healed by two touches. Jesus touches him the first time and he says, what do you see? And the blind man says, well, I see people, but they look kind of like trees walking around.

And then Jesus touches him a second time and he's completely healed. Probably as a way of communicating to the disciples, you still need the second touch after the Son of Man has risen from the dead. Well, Jesus tells them to be quiet in Mark chapter 8. Peter says, you're the Christ.

Jesus says, be quiet. Don't tell anybody. People aren't ready to understand this yet.

And then the next verse, he explains what it means for him to be the Christ. He's going to suffer. Well, that was contrary to the normal expectation of messiahship back then.

It was a later tradition in the second century that's different, but not yet in Jesus' day. In Jesus' day, it's like in the Psalms of Solomon 17. People were expecting a triumphant warrior messiah.

So, Peter objects. Oh, Lord, I just said you're the messiah. You're not going to suffer.

So, Jesus responds. Peter says, you're the Christ. Jesus says you're Satan.

You value human things rather than God's. 8:33. You don't want to suffer. And that's why you don't want to follow a suffering messiah.

So, Jesus says, until I'm risen, don't tell anybody, 9:9 of Mark. Jesus' secret identity would be revealed only when he arose from the dead, because only then could his disciples really understand his mission. It's nice when people believe that Jesus is a great teacher or a prophet, and even the Messiah.

Those are all good things to believe. But by themselves, none of those, even believing that he's the messiah is enough. We also have to believe that he died for us.

That's part of what it means to become his disciple and be saved. And so Jesus says, I'm going to suffer. Peter says, no, you won't.

Jesus, in Mark 8:33, calls this anti-suffering theology satanic, because Jesus goes on to say in 8:34 and 8:35, my followers must also be ready to suffer. Whoever follows must be ready to follow me to the cross. Our fate is bound up with his.

In Mark chapters 2 and 3, Jesus faces increasing opposition. The disciples remain oblivious to this. Jesus sends out the disciples to heal in Mark chapter 6, but that gets only a very little bit of coverage.

Jesus covers, well, Mark covers their healings. It's very good, but he covers it very briefly. Spends most of that section talking about John the Baptist's execution.

Jesus' forerunner was martyred. The disciples try to keep Bartimaeus and the children away from Jesus in Mark chapter 10. Jesus instead gives himself as an example, saying, I came to serve and to die.

Jesus warns of great tribulation for his followers in chapter 13 and then goes to the cross in chapters 14 and 15. Our fate is bound up with his. We need to preach the gospel straight.

True followers of Jesus share his cross. He bore God's judgment for us. We bear the world's hatred with him.

Well, Matthew has these same themes, but he also has some others. I wanted to deal with those themes together, but Matthew also has some additional material. And so now we're going to look at this additional material that Matthew has.

Peter says you are the Messiah, the son of the living God. 1616, you're the Messiah. Jesus says to Peter, verse 18, you're the rock.

But Peter, the rock, rocky, goes from rock to stumbling block. By verse 23, that is, he goes from being a good rock to being a bad rock. This was brought to my attention by John P. Meyer, a very skilled Catholic scholar, in his work on Matthew.

Peter is the rock. What does that mean? Some interpreters have contrasted Petras, Peter, and Petra, rock, saying that these are two different things. But by this period of Greek, by Koine Greek, they actually meant the same thing.

They were no longer different, the way they'd been in older Greek. Also, in Aramaic, it's one word behind them, kephas, or kepha, which was transliterated into Greek as kephas, is his name for Peter in the New Testament. The sense is probably like this, like what you have in Ephesians 2.20. I mean, what people quote against it is 1 Corinthians 3.16, Christ is the only foundation.

Well, yes, in one sense, he's the only foundation, but in the sense of Ephesians 2.20, the church is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Christ, in that image, is the chief cornerstone. So, he's the ultimate foundation, but the proclamation about him is also a foundation for the church.

Peter's role as proclaimer of Jesus as Christ is the sense in which he's the rock, he's the foundation, because he's the one who's confessing that Jesus is the Christ, and the church is built on his role as confessor. The church is built on the confession of Jesus' identity. This became disputed during the time of the Reformation.

People said, no, he's not the rock himself. Although the church historically hadn't even applied this to the pope or the papacy, it applied it to Peter. But in any case, I think it actually refers to Peter in this context, but not Peter just as Peter as a person, but it refers to his role as one who proclaims Christ, just like Peter does.

Just like Ephesians builds on the foundation of the apostles and prophets. With this language of being built, the church being built, some scholars have said, well, this is late. This was made up later.

Jesus wouldn't have said something like that. How could he talk about the church? But ekklesia, the term we have that is translated church, the Greek term, referred to public assemblies. Ekklesia does not mean, some people have said it means called out ones, ek meaning out and klesia from the word meaning called.

But words didn't mean just putting together the pieces of the word. Words don't mean just what their etymology means. I mean, for example, call me a nice person.

How dare you call me nice? The English word nice is derived from a Latin word which means ignorant. You have insulted me. In any case, not seriously, but just illustrating the point that it's not the etymology of words, but it's their usage.

It's how words are used. Ekklesia was used for public assemblies. In the Greek translation of the Old Testament, the qohol, the assembly, the community of God in the wilderness, God's people, and the covenant community was translated by a couple of different Greek words.

One was synagogue, from which we get the word synagogue. The other was ekklesia, the church. And it was a natural term to use for God's community.

Well, Jesus could have used a term like that. The Dead Sea Scrolls use a term like that for the remnant community. And Jesus also could have planned.

After all, he chose the 12. Well, there's not much dispute about that, except among people who are very, very skeptical. Because, you know, again, we have the use of the 12 in the Dead Sea Scrolls.

It made sense for a leader of a renewal movement in the Jewish community. But also, we read about the 12 in 1 Corinthians 15 in a very early tradition that virtually everybody agrees goes back very early. And that term is used even though one of the disciples fell away.

Judas fell away. And there are a number of other reasons as well to say that this is a bedrock tradition. This is a very early tradition that everybody, I should say, the vast majority of scholars agree is accurate.

Normally, teachers had disciples. Disciples would carry on teachings. So, it's not surprising that Jesus expected a community of followers to carry on his teachings.

The 12 was a remnant for Israel's restoration. So, speaking of this coming community in language for Israel's restoration, again, in shared material between Matthew and Luke, he talks about his 12 disciples sitting on 12 thrones, judging the 12 tribes of Israel. And again, with the falling away of Judas, most scholars will say, okay, this must be very early tradition, must go back to Jesus, because later they chose a replacement for Judas, but that just makes it more complicated.

They wouldn't have invented this saying later on. So also, the language of building my church, God often built his people in the Old Testament. He could build them or tear them down, Jeremiah 24.6, Jeremiah 31.28, and so forth.

Jesus says the gates of Hades will not prevail against the church. Sometimes the gates of Hades, that's the Greek wording, sometimes the gates of Hades translates the Old Testament Hebrew expression about the gates of Sheol. Sheol was the Hebrew expression for the realm of the dead.

Both expressions refer to the realm of death. The gates of Hades was an expression used among Greeks, or they often spoke of the netherworld where the dead were, they spoke of that as Hades and the kingdom of Hades, and so on. The context here, Jesus has just talked about, or Jesus is about to talk about dying, taking up your cross and following him.

And the point is that martyrdom will not stop the church, that even if they kill us, it will not stop the church. Jesus is worth any price. Indeed, Tertullian said that the blood of martyrs is the seed of the church, writing in the late second century.

Jesus speaks of the keys of the kingdom. You've got the gates of Hades, but you've also got the keys of the kingdom. Keys back then were very large.

Now, I have some small keys in my pocket here, but the keys back then were very large. And it was only one person who would have these keys. So, it was an important official who carried these keys, the keys for a kingdom.

Isaiah 22 talks about an official like that who would have the keys of the house of David. So having the keys to the kingdom is very important. But because Peter misunderstands the nature of Jesus' messiahship, Jesus says, get behind me, Satan.

And this recalls what he said in chapter 4 and verse 10 after Satan offered Jesus the kingdom without the cross. Well, now, Peter, Jesus' own star disciple, is doing the same thing. Jesus really is patient.

He really had to put up with a lot. But he also tells it like it is. He says, Peter, this is Satan speaking through you.

And it prepares for 27 verses 40 and 43 when they're saying, if you're God's son, come down from the cross. Let God save you. In other words, Satan was trying to turn Jesus from the cross, trying to turn Jesus from his mission.

That's a satanic idea, the kingdom without the cross. In verses 24 through 27, we learn more about the cost of discipleship, where Jesus says, get behind me. In verse 23, well, that was the position of disciples there to follow.

And what does it mean to follow Jesus? If you want to be my disciple, Jesus says, take up your cross and follow me. If you save your life or your soul if you really want to save it eternally, then you have to be willing to give it up in this life, he says in verses 25 and 26. And there were some other people who recognized that in antiquity.

It's recognized in a Jewish document called 2 Baruch. And philosophers often recognized it too. They said, you know, what lasts forever counts a whole lot more than what lasts for just a little while.

I remember that was one of the things that I understood right away as a Christian. I had spent all this time reading Plato, which wasn't the most useful thing for the New Testament. But one nice thing I got from Plato was things that last forever are more important than things that don't.

Nothing can compare with eternity. If we live every moment of this life in light of eternity, we will live our lives wisely. We will make our lives count in ways that matter forever.

And I remember one time I was talking to a young man. He wasn't a believer, but he had lots of friends. He really loved his friends.

But he hadn't committed his life to Christ. There were certain things he was doing in his life. And I started talking with him about this.

He had just failed his calculus test, but this was basic math. I said, you know, which is worth more, a year or eternity? Obviously, eternity. You really love your friends.

The best gift you can give them is to lead them to eternal life. You can't give them something you don't have. And tears came to his eyes.

I could tell that the Holy Spirit was working with him. He didn't accept Christ right then. I didn't press him.

He wasn't ready yet. But the time came when he was ready, and he became so committed to Christ. And he's led so many more people to Christ by himself than I have.

He just went on with this gift of just loving people, reaching out to them, and sharing Christ with them. Because eternity is what matters most. But of course, that doesn't mean we ignore the present life.

It means we make the present life count. We help people. We serve people.

We feed the hungry. We do those things because these people will live forever, one way or another. And we want to help them in the right ways.

From the point of conversion, our lives are forfeit. They don't belong to us anymore. I'm very grateful.

I didn't expect to be alive now. I didn't think I'd make it past the age of 20. You know, I was being beaten on the streets for my faith as a young Christian.

I thought, you know, I'm going to get killed any day now. The Lord has kept me. But the Lord is gracious.

Our lives are forfeit. We always should be ready to give our lives for him. The Son of Man will come to reward those who follow him, in verse 27.

And Jesus offers a foretaste in verse 28, that some who were with him would see the Son of Man come. Well, this is something that happens in the next paragraph. In Matthew chapter 17, they get a foretaste of his coming glory in the transfiguration.

This is Dr. Craig Keener in his teaching on the book of Matthew. This is session 13, Matthew 14-16.