

Thornbury Baptist Church  
Easter Teaching Series  
Small Group Discussion Questions

**Talk Date:** May 11th 2025

**Talk title:** I will build my church

**Passage:** Matthew 16:13-20

**Speaker:** David Lawrence

**Discussion Questions**

- In Jesus' own time there were many opinions about his identity (14). What opinions might the friends, neighbours and colleagues of group members have about the identity of Jesus? And what is the significance of their opinions?
- Peter's answer to the question of Jesus' identity earned Jesus' approval. Here 'Messiah' and 'God's Son' seem to point to the same thing: Jesus is God's anointed and approved King. What are the implications of recognising Jesus as 'King'? (see Matthew 7:21; Luke 6:46; James 1:22; Matthew 12:50)
- Peter's insight into Jesus' identity was a revelation from God. We are not told how that revelation came, but it is likely that the time Peter spent in Jesus' company played a major part (see John 5:36, 14:11; Matthew 14:28-33). Peter spent time with Jesus before he saw who he was: what might this suggest about how we share faith with people on our frontline?
- If Peter's confession about the identity of Jesus is the rock on which Jesus builds church, what does this tell us about the nature of church?
- Jesus lived amongst lots of people (the crowds) and served and healed them all (Matthew 4:22-25). But he also was clear that to be his follower, to be part of his new movement (the church) required more than hanging around with him, being intrigued by him or even being healed by him (Luke 14:25-27, 33). How does Peter's confession help draw that distinction between 'crowd' and 'disciple'?
- In verse 18 we read that 'the gates of Hades' will not stand in the way of Jesus' church-building project. NOTE: 'Hades' is the 'world of the dead', not 'hell' - that is the word 'gehenna'. Translations that insert the idea of 'hell' here are misleading. Jesus is saying that nothing can prevent the ultimate triumph of God's purposes in history. What effect might that claim have on us as we 'do church' in Thornbury? What about if we were in a church in Gaza?
- Peter's confession qualifies him to admit all of those who make the same confession into the community of Jesus (the Church). That's what verse 19 is all about. Peter must unlock the entrance to the church only those who share his confession of Jesus' authority. That's who 'heaven' allows in (19), and that's the line Peter needs to hold. How easy or difficult is it to hold that line today?

**Takeaway**

What is the main thing each person is taking away from this discussion?

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<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCM1OwaJ4eSICosAji9Ofzjw>