

Introduction:

- Mt 7:24-27 A wise man builds on the Rock of Jesus Christ.
- If there is one place in life we need the Lion of the Tribe of Judah to roar, it is in the jungle of personal crisis.
 - Why do lions roar? They are highly relational. To scare intruders. To let the other members of the pride know where they are.
 - When you are in a personal crisis or a crisis of faith, you need the Lion of the Tribe of Judah to roar! No one can comfort like Jesus, scare away doubts like Jesus, or let you know where He is, like Jesus can.
- We are living in a time where so many Christians are drifting or have drifted away from Christ. Heb 2:1-3 He asks, "How shall we escape???" if we are drifting. Sounds like a crisis. le. TP around eyes walk, more TP, More TP can't see. Walk off platform.
- Pain, loss, and disappointment are the trinity of crisis.
 - Any one of them by themselves is a crisis but all three are found in a crisis.
 - Pain, loss, and disappointment are unavoidable in this life.

I. Who Do You Say I AM? Mt 16:15-17

A. Question of Identity.

1. Jesus has taken His disciples to a place called Caesarea Philippi. A place with a fresh water spring. In the rock are grottos that are filled with idols. The Roman and Greeks worshiped the god Pan (half man half goat). And in the midst of the swirl of people worshiping false gods Jesus pops a question.
 - a) It is a place with many gods.
 - b) It is a place where many religions came together.
 - c) It was a place known and called the gates of hell.
 - d) It is in this place that Jesus asks the question, "Who do men say I am?" The 12 are starting their most intensive training to become apostles (sent ones)!
2. ****If you do not have correct image of who Jesus is, you will never truly understand who you are in Christ. If you cant see Jesus you will never be apostolic or carry apostolic grace as a sent one.
 - a) In this important time with His disciples Jesus is helping them to focus on Him.
 - b) It was an All Eyes On Jesus moment!
3. In a world of many gods you must be able to identify the One True God or you will end up following the wrong god or gods.
 - a) Having identified the One True God you must fix, set, focus your eyes upon Him. The was what Jesus was after at Caesarea Philippi. You have to focus on Jesus...
 - b) For all the other gods will be crying for you attention.

B. The question goes deeper.

1. It moves from "Who do men say I am" (How do others see me? What are the other voices saying?) To "Who do you say I am?" (How do you see me?) That is a very personal question! Every one of us must answer this question!
2. Peter responds: *"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."* (Matthew 16:16, ESV)
 - a) You are the Anointed One - Messiah
 - b) You are the Son of the Living God. - Sent by the Father.
 - c) *"This truth of who I am will be the bedrock foundation on which I build my church!"*
 - (1) If you do not have correct image of who Jesus is, you will never truly understand who you are in Christ.
 - (2) If you do not have a correct image of who Jesus is you will fall in your hour of testing. Let's read Jesus response to Peter in Mt. 16:17 -ff TPT
3. *"Jesus replied, 'You are favored and privileged Simeon, son of Jonah! For you didn't discover this on your own, but my Father in heaven has supernaturally revealed it to you. I give you the name Peter, a stone. And this truth of who I am will be the bedrock foundation on which I will build my church—my legislative assembly, and the power of death will not be able to overpower it! I will give you the keys of heaven's kingdom realm to forbid on earth that which is forbidden in heaven, and to release on earth that which is released in heaven.'"* (Matthew 16:17-19, TPT) A wise man will take what Jesus has said here and build on it. *"Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock."* (Matthew 7:24, ESV) Our first scripture used today.
 - a) Peter, you are favored and privileged because the Father has revealed this to you.
 - b) Peter your eyes are now on me. Everyone must have their own personal experience of seeing Jesus with their own spirit. This is what empowers us to stand in the day of testing and to keep our focus on Him in a world of many gods.
 - c) Paul prayer now becomes ours: *"that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him,"* (Ephesians 1:17, ESV) Just as Father gave to Peter now give to us!

II. Why Must I See Jesus?

- A. You must see Jesus to overcome! Overcome what? sin, trials, crisis, pain, loss, disappointment. My job, when you are in crisis is to help you find (see) Jesus. The question in crisis is, "Where is God in all of this?" If I can see Him I can overcome.
 1. The first five words of the Book of Revelation are these *"The Revelation of Jesus*

- Christ*" It is not the revelation of the end times. It is the Revelation of Jesus Christ.
2. You must see Jesus to overcome in life. Notice who this revelation is given to: His servants!
 - a) The word used here is doulas - slave.
 - b) Slave was a title of honor for a christian in service to God.
 - c) The Father knew that the only thing that would empower an end-time people to stand in the face of wickedness, adversity, pain, loss and disappointment would be the greatest revelation of His Son that He could give!
 3. There are 34 truths of Jesus majesty just in Revelation chapters 1-3! There are 18 expressions of majesty just in chapter 1! Father knows that we need to see Jesus as He is and more!
- B. Nothing else will do!
1. Fancy buildings, skinny jeans, coffee machines, 10 steps to this and 5 steps to that will not get your thought.
 2. You must see Jesus! You must have your eyes on Jesus. He must become greater and we must become lesser.
 3. What Covid and 'Woke' have proven is that the church is not ready to stand under pressure, adversity and persecution.
 4. Our picture of who God is is far from the early church that was willing to die for Jesus.
- C. Seeing Jesus gives me blinders! Read: Phil 3:8-14 I only look straight ahead, and without distractions or fears.
1. I don't care to look at anything else! In a world of many gods I just see The One God.
 2. Anything I might do to qualify myself is rubbish, I just want, desire and need Him.

III. Help! I Can't See God

- A. What does it mean to not see God? Very simply, you do not sense His presence. Not sensing the presence of God might cause you to feel...
1. You may feel nothing at all, so you drift further and further away.
 2. You may feel alone...without God.
 3. You may feel rejected, ignored, distant, etc.
 4. And living in the 'feely' culture we are in this leads to a 'crisis.'
- B. What might cause me to not see Jesus?
1. I choose not to see Him. Ignore Him. Not seeing God may be by choice. You have walked away from Him. Many believers do that then they blame God for being distant. Ie. Couples may do this in a marriage. They ignore their spouse, that pushes spouse away. Distant. The ignored spouse now does the same. Greater distance. When you choose not to see God, don't be surprised if you find

- yourself in a crisis of faith...especially in a time of need.
2. They drift away from Him out of neglect of relationship. Heb 2.
 3. Not seeing God is a regular part of the Christian life. When I say 'not seeing God' I am talking about not sensing the presence of God. That is when you find out if your faith is real. You are as Paul said, "In a walk by faith and not by sight time."
 - a) The danger zone is when you begin to abandon your faith because you are not feeling anything.
 - b) Some christians will start to make bad choices at this point.
- C. It is ok to question your faith. Many of our spiritual 'growth spurts' happen when we are questioning God. Ie. Zacharias questions God. David questioned God. God is not scared of questions.
1. A crisis of faith is a normal part of the Christian life. What is disturbing to me is way to many people abandon their faith in the midst of a crisis or a faith crisis. IE. Did you know 25% of church goers never returned to church after Covid. To me that is a sign of the times revealing the condition of the church. We do not have our eyes on Jesus.
 - a) We are not teaching truth enough
 - b) Churches are building on relevance and not Gospel. People want to be spoon fed self help messages and not Gospel truth.
 2. Many people lost sight of Jesus while on instagram, FB, Twitter. They are more interested in how many likes they received than if Jesus likes them. Many who were locked down became spiritually locked up because of what they gave themselves to during that time. They became disenchanted with their faith.
- D. This crisis of faith is not foreign to Bible characters.
1. John the Baptist - Luke 7:19-23 Are you the one. "Tell him the blind see..."
 - a) In a jail filled with demonic activity, preparing to die, he begins to doubt.
 - b) Did I do the right thing? He questions his purpose. What led people astray.
 - c) Are you the one?
 2. Simon Peter - Luke 22:61-61 Peter denied him, looked in His eyes, left weeping bitterly
 3. Thomas, one of the 12 - could not believe that Jesus had rose from the dead.
 4. Judas - hung himself. Sinned against Jesus. I will say more later on that.
 5. Jeremiah: Jer 20:14-18 Jeremiah wanted to die. His life was just hard as a prophet. Rejection, and persecution.
 6. Elijah - 1 Kings 19:4 Elijah wants to die after a great victory. Tired, in a spiritual low.
 7. Jonah - Jonah wished to die. Angry with God, selfishly disappointed.
- E. Sin hides Jesus
1. Judas is a prime example. He betrayed Jesus with a kiss and for forty pieces of silver. He lost sight of Jesus and out of his guilt and despair he hung himself. IE.

Suicide is the second leading cause of death among 10-24 year olds.

2. Peter denied Jesus three times and thought he could never be restored. He lost sight of Jesus in his crisis of faith.
 3. If you are going to live in sin as a believer. Make poor moral choices. You are literally putting a blanket of unbelief over your eyes and Satan is using you to cover your eyes to keep you from seeing the truth. Keep that up long enough and you will find yourself with a seared conscience.
- F. Crisis hides Jesus.
1. Death of loved one. Bill Johnson, Healing through Grief, Charismas magazine.
 2. Financial - panic, where is God, I thought...
 3. God 'should have' . When you find yourself saying the 'should of's' you are entering a faith crisis realm.
 4. "When affliction comes, a weak or nominal Christian often discovers that his faith doesn't account for it or prepare him for it. His faith has been in his church, denomination, or family tradition, or in his own religious ideas – but not in Christ."

Mike Leake. Deconstructing Faith.

Conclusion:

- Jn 12:21 Greeks "*We would see Jesus.*" To be saved from your sin.
- Heb 12:2 Fix your eyes on Jesus.
- "*You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.*" (Psalm 16:11, ESV)
- The Holy Spirit wants us to see Jesus: "*When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future. He will bring me glory by telling you whatever he receives from me.*" (John 16:13-14, NLT)

A Christian loves God with all his heart (Mt 22:37), values God as his greatest treasure (Mt 13:44-46; Phil 3:8-10; Heb 11:24-26), and seeks God as the source of his greatest and longest-lasting pleasure (Psalm 16:11).