

Letting Go

Matthew 16:1-20 Contemporary English Version (CEV)

1 The Pharisees and Sadducees came to Jesus and tried to test him by asking for a sign from heaven. 2 He told them: If the sky is red in the evening, you say the weather will be good. 3 But if the sky is red and gloomy in the morning, you say it is going to rain. You can tell what the weather will be like by looking at the sky. But you don't understand what is happening now. 4 You want a sign because you are evil and won't believe! But the only sign you will be given is what happened to Jonah. Then Jesus left.

What are the boundaries of your faith?

Do you have a pumpkin seed mentality or a pumpkin patch type faith?

Are you moved by what you see or are you called, compelled, and committed to what you don't see?

People will use an absence of a sign to justify a set up for your public persecution and execution. Be careful to plant seeds of faith and not waste time watching for signs.

13 When Jesus and his disciples were near the town of Caesarea Philippi, he asked them, "What do people say about the Son of Man?" 14 The disciples answered, "Some people say you are John the Baptist or maybe Elijah or Jeremiah or some other prophet." 15 Then Jesus asked them, "But who do you say I am?"

How do the others around you influence your faith?

Do you have anyone in your immediate circle with radical faith?

When is the last time that you saw an Eagle hanging out with chickens?

Who are you listening to?

Why would an omniscient all-knowing God ask his disciples, "Who do you say I am?"

Was the answer to the question for Jesus or was the answer for the disciples?

What questions has God been asking you?

How we perceive and understand God affects how we interact with others, deal with ourselves, and the world around us.

16 Simon Peter spoke up, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the **living God.**” 17 Jesus told him: Simon, son of Jonah, you are blessed! You didn’t discover this on your own. It was shown to you by my Father in heaven. 18 So I will call you Peter, which means “a rock.” On this rock I will build my church, and death itself will not have any power over it. 19 I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven, and God in heaven will allow whatever you allow on earth. But he will not allow anything that you don’t allow.

What chains do you voluntarily have on that have you bound right now?

What’s the dead weight that you are going to carry into the New Year that is preventing you to change into a new you?

Why do we like the idea of going to a new level but we do not like to change our condition?

Romans 12:2

2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

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17 Six days later Jesus took Peter and the brothers James and John with him. They went up on a very high mountain where they could be alone. 2 There in front of the disciples, Jesus was completely changed. His face was shining like the sun, and his clothes became white as light.

What does the word transfigure mean?

What happened to the other nine disciples in the scripture?

What prevented the other nine disciples from climbing up the very high mountain?

3 All at once Moses and Elijah were there talking with Jesus. 4 So Peter said to him, "Lord, it is good for us to be here! Let us make three shelters, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

5 While Peter was still speaking, the shadow of a bright cloud passed over them. From the cloud a voice said, "This is my own dear Son, and I am pleased with him. Listen to what he says!" 6 When the disciples heard the voice, they were so afraid that they fell flat on the ground. 7 But Jesus came over and touched them. He said, "Get up and don't be afraid!" 8 When they opened their eyes, they saw only Jesus.

9 On their way down from the mountain, Jesus warned his disciples not to tell anyone what they had seen until after the Son of Man had been raised from death.

10 The disciples asked Jesus, "Don't the teachers of the Law of Moses say that Elijah must come before the Messiah does?"

11 Jesus told them, "Elijah certainly will come and get everything ready. 12 In fact, he has already come. But the people did not recognize him and treated him just as they wanted to. They will soon make the Son of Man suffer in the same way."

13 Then the disciples understood that Jesus was talking to them about John the Baptist.