

Life's Three Most Important Questions

Matthew 16:13–19 (ESV)

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?”¹⁴ And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, others say 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 replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”¹⁷ And Jesus answered 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 tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.¹⁹ I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”

1. Who is Jesus? (Matthew 16:13–17)

- The answer to life's most important question is not merely emotional; it is rational and supernatural.

Until we know who Jesus is we cannot know who we are.

2. Who am I? (Matthew 16:18)

- I am forgiven.

2 Corinthians 5:17 (ESV)

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

- I am a part of a family.
- I am a part of a movement.
- I am victorious.
- I am trusted.

3. What is my purpose? (Matthew 16:19)

- My purpose in life is to be responsible with the authority I have been given.

John 8:31-32 (ESV)

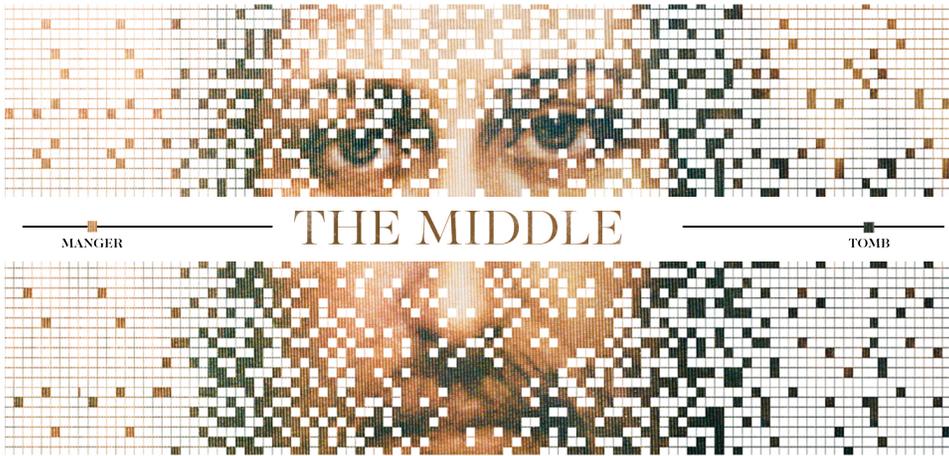
So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples,³² and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

John 8:36 (ESV)

So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

The keys provide:

- Freedom from the penalty and power of sin.
- Freedom from my past.
- Freedom from my fears.
- Freedom from my struggles.



PETER'S CONFESSION

MATTHEW 16:13-20

#NVSTORYSHARE

CONNECT THE STORY

What happened in our last story? What key principles or truths did we discover through the story of the healing of Lazurus? Can someone retell the story?

TELL THE STORY

Tell the story: as best as you can, do not stop and teach, try not to make points (Commentary), just tell the story.

REBUILD THE STORY

As a group: chronologically rebuild the story from memory. Ask questions if necessary. Like – “What happened first?”, “What happened next?”, “Did we leave out anything?” Finally, have participants look at their Bibles and see if anything was added or left out of the story as they go through it one more time.

ASK QUESTIONS

- **Where do you see yourself in this story?**
- **What do we learn about Jesus/God in this story?**
- **What do we learn about man in this story?**
- **What is Jesus teaching you personally through this story?**
- **What application/adjustment do you need to make in your life due to the truth discovered in this story?**

ADULTS

- What made Sunday different in your family when you were growing up? (stores closed, no alcohol sold or served, no work outside, grand parents house for lunch etc.)
- Describe the place and time where you find time to reflect rather than plan? How often do you find that place?
- Why did God give us laws and commandments, yet they are not sufficient to save us?

COLLEGE

- In your social circles what are the most common perceptions of who Jesus is?
- When did you first acknowledge Jesus as your Savior and Lord (Forgiver & Leader)?

STUDENT

- Who do people say Jesus is?
- Who is Jesus? How does your answer to this question affect your life?

CHILDREN

- Older Child – What is the difference between what the world says about God and what His followers say about Him?
- Older Child – How do we know who Jesus is?
- Younger Child – What does the world say about God? What do we say about Him?
- Younger Child – How do we know who Jesus is?

KINDERGARTEN/PRESCHOOL

- What were Jesus and His helpers (disciples) doing?
- Who did people say Jesus was?
- Who did Peter say Jesus was?
- How did Peter know this?
- Practice and learn the Bible verse this week. When you learn it, who will you tell it to?

THE MIDDLE

MY
TIME
WITH
GOD

MONDAY

READ MATTHEW 16:16-18.

Jesus had just asked the apostles who they believed Him to be when Peter offered his answer as spokesman for the group. This was not the beginning of the church movement—Jesus was still laying the foundations for the movement—but He did set out a two-fold objective for the movement: building His church and confronting hell. The very mention that these forces will not overpower the church suggests that they will try, and that the church and these forces will be in conflict. What evidence shows you that Jesus understood this to be a *spiritual* movement? The foundational truth behind the coming movement that Jesus is “the Messiah, the Son of the living God!”—did not come from human intellect, but was revealed by the “Father in heaven.” What significance do you see in the fact that Jesus referred to it as “My church”? The church is not subject to our own preferences and desires, since it’s not “our” church, but His! The word “church” translated means a gathering or assembly. What insight does this give you regarding the church movement?

READ ACTS 1:6-8.

How would you articulate Jesus’s strategy for the church movement expressed in these verses? How comprehensively has His strategy been implemented? What is the power behind the strategy? What is the significance that the Holy Spirit’s power will “come on you”? These are the last words recorded in scripture that Jesus spoke to the apostles—His final instructions before His ascension into heaven to resume His rightful place at the Father’s side. Like the proverbial ripples on a pond, Jesus instructed His followers to begin where they were and move out from there in ever widening circles. It is not our own power or ability that *will* accomplish it, but that of the Holy Spirit. Few people would suggest that “the ends of the earth” have been reached with the Christian witness of the church movement. An August 2016 report of the International Mission Board reflects that nearly 58% of the world’s population lives in an unreached portion of the world, meaning that less than 2% of the population are evangelical Christians. Clearly, the church must continue moving if its objective and strategy are to be met.

WEDNESDAY

READ ACTS 2:22-24, 32-33.

These verses come from Peter’s proclamation on the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came upon God’s people in a Mighty way and the church movement began in earnest, some 50 days after the crucifixion or 47 days after the resurrection. How do these words of Peter reflect the process for the church movement? What does the fact that Peter was a fisherman and not a preacher and that this was not a church service tell us about the church movement process?

THE MIDDLE

MY
TIME
WITH
GOD

THURSDAY

READ ACTS 2:36-41.

What change would you expect the church movement to have? What change has it had in your life? What evidence of change do you see in these verses? What an explosive impact the launch of the church movement had! First, there were the sounds of rushing wind and the flames of fire that accompanied the coming of the Spirit onto the believers that Pentecost morning. Then, there was the explosion of numerical growth as well. Between Jesus’s ascension and the coming of the Holy Spirit, the band of believers numbered “about 120” (Acts 1:15). Suddenly, after the arrival of the Spirit and the brief testimony of Peter, “that day about 3,000 people were added to them.” Think about it—the number of new believers added to the church that day was 25 times the number of believers when the day began. Now that’s growth and movement!

RE-READ MATTHEW 16:16-18.

How much moving are you doing in the church movement? Of the objective, strategy, process, and change of the church movement, which seems to be the weakest link within the group of Christians with whom you most closely associate? Explain. Regardless of your history, what will be necessary for you and your church to be part of the church movement going forward? Explain.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

“And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.” Matthew 16:18

TUESDAY

FRIDAY