

Wandering Heart

Small Group Study & Video Devotional

Week Three - Praise the mount

Matthew 16:13-20

¹³Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” ¹⁴And they said, “Some say John the Baptist but others Elijah and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” ¹⁵He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” ¹⁶Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” ¹⁷And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you but my Father in heaven. ¹⁸And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. ¹⁹I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” ²⁰Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

New Revised Standard Version (updated edition)

Wandering in the Text

Jesus turns to the disciples and asks them, “Who do you say that I am?” How would you answer this question? How has your answer to this question changed throughout your faith journey?

Speculations about Jesus’ identity are spreading throughout the land under Roman rule. What do you think Simon Peter meant when he proclaimed Jesus the Messiah?

Jesus affirms who he believes Peter to be, just as Peter proclaims Jesus as the Christ. When things get “rocky,” Peter will lean on this memory for solid ground, and to remember his calling. The names and affirmations we receive can shape our identity, our self-worth, and how we discern our callings. When have you received a name or affirmation that encouraged you in your journey of faith?

What are the “mountaintop” moments of your faith when you felt like God was close? Have you ever experienced spiritual euphoria? If so, what was that like? How do you anchor yourself in those memories when life gets hard?

Consider

Chris shared how time with Scripture provided comfort and hope during his recovery. He lifts up Romans 8:28 - "all things work together for good," and notes that, "not all things are good, but God can take anything and make it beautiful."

- Are there times when you have found comfort and hope from Scripture?
- What is your 'go to' verse?

Chris describes grace as "undeserved and unmerited favor" received when we have the humility to accept help.

- Do you find it challenging to ask for help from others or from God?
- How are humility and grace related for you?

The victory and hope in Christ's resurrection gave Chris a renewed will to live.

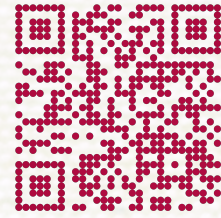
Often trials and tragedy in one's life can lead to renewed hope and faith.

- Have you found this to be true in your life?
- When/where have you experienced renewed hope in your life?

In her poem, *Praise the Mount*, Rev. Sarah Speed admits that sometimes she is hesitant to praise God's presence in her world, and promises that, "Today I will talk about my faith like we talk about the weather."

- Do you find it difficult to talk about your faith with others?
- In what ways, and in what places do you share your faith?

Watch Week Three Video



www.whpc.org/new-blog/2024/2/19/lenten-journey-small-groups

Praise the Mount

I have stayed quiet before.
I have held my tongue
while passing mountains.
I have slipped my hands deep into pockets,
despite the music that invites me to dance.
I Have glimpsed a new moon and a new love
and have acted as if it was something other than
a complete, God-given miracle.
But not today.
Not Today.
Today I will dance.
Today I will tap my toes all the way to heaven's gates.
Today I will point out every shade of gold
and periwinkle that we pass.
Today I will talk about my faith like we talk about
the weather -
early and unprompted, comfortable and
unashamed.
Today I will tell you that God did such a good job
with freckles, willow trees,
and your entire being.
And I will not be embarrassed by my own conviction.
I will not swallow my praise.
I have stayed quiet before,
but not today.
Today I will sing.

*Poem by
Rev. Sarah Speed*

Let us Pray

God of resurrection and reconciliation, you have claimed us as your own and continue to coax us into a new life in Christ. May your Spirit encourage and embolden us to be witness to the glory of your creation, to claim the saving grace of your healing and wholeness, and to proclaim your presence and power in our life and in the world.

Amen