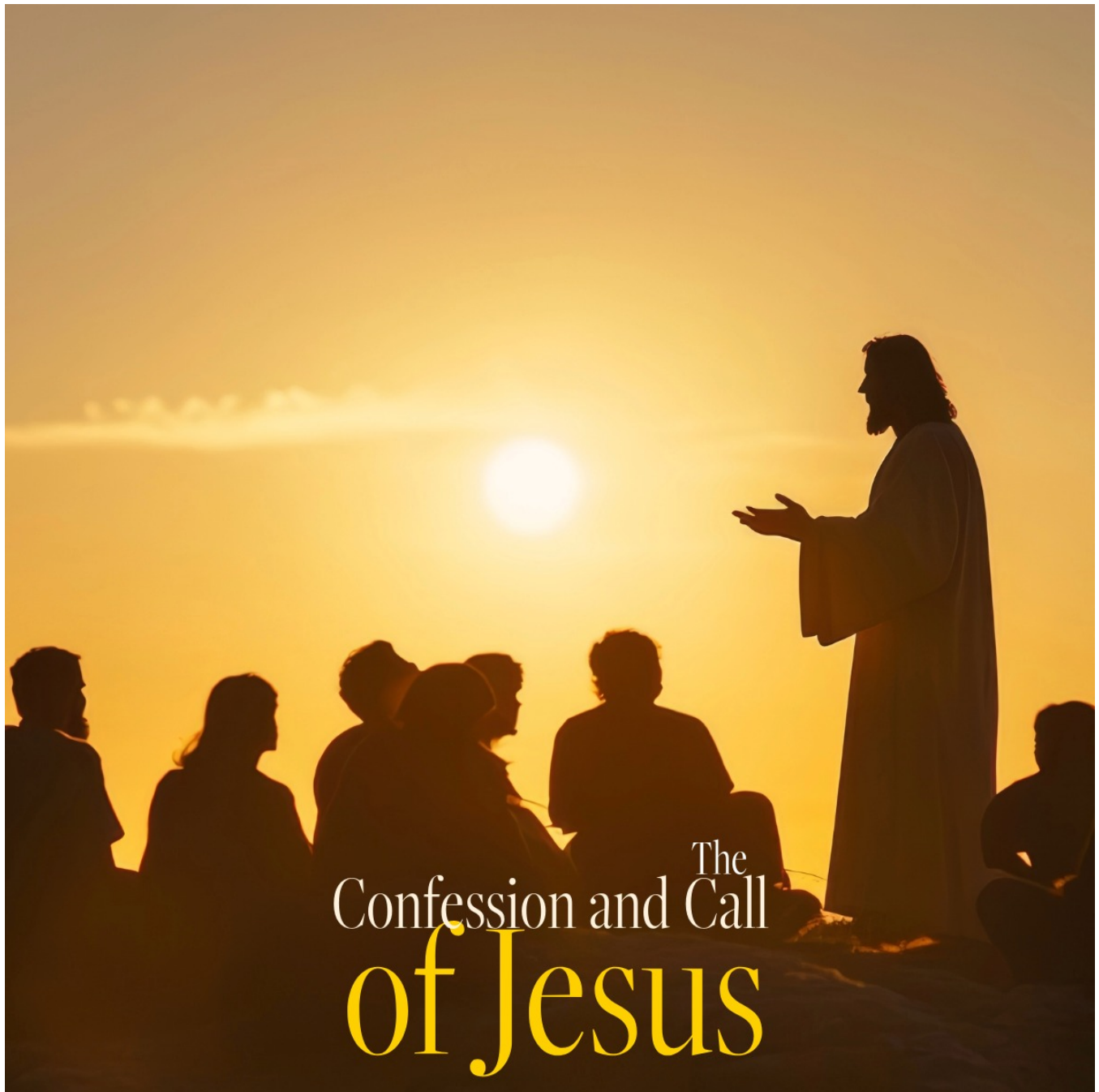




The
Confession and Call
of Jesus

**SERMON & SCRIPTURE
DISCUSSION GUIDE**



August 23, 2026 (Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost): Confession and Call of Jesus

Text: Matthew 16:13-20

Topic: Confession of Faith: The Revelation of Jesus as the Messiah

Core Values: God's Truth, Divine Revelation, Faith Confession, Divine Authority

Main Idea: Peter delivers the foundational confession of the Christian faith.

Application/Beginning thought... Peter's declaration about Jesus is a pivotal New Testament event and is recorded in all the Gospels as a turning point in Jesus' ministry.

Bible Study Questions:

1. Who do "the people" say Jesus is? Why would they think this?
2. Who does Peter say Jesus is? Why is this significant?
3. From where did Peter get this knowledge? (This is significant!)
4. Do you think the "gates of Hades" a metaphor or a literal statement? What does this tell us about the active mission of the church?
5. What were the three significant statements Jesus made about Peter's future?
6. What does each of these three statements mean?

Group Discussion Questions:

1. Why do you think Jesus asked about the public's opinion before asking about the disciples' personal belief?
2. If Jesus asked you, "Who do you say I am?", how would you respond?
3. In Mark's telling (Mark 8:27-30), Peter simply declares "You are the Christ". Why does Matthew record Peter using both a Hebrew (Messiah) and a Greek (Son of the living God) title to Jesus' question?
4. Can you describe a revelation that came to you via the spirit rather than human intelligence?
5. There are several ways to interpret what Jesus meant by "upon this rock". The rock could be Peter, the rock could be the divine revelation in Peter's statement, the rock could be Peter's faith, or the rock could be Jesus himself. Discuss how each of these interpretations could be valid. Note that John Wesley rejected the Catholic interpretation (the "rock" is Peter) and instead offered a dual interpretation (the "rock" is Peter's faith or Jesus himself). For additional insight, look up the Greek words Matthew used for "Peter" and "rock" and compare with the Aramaic words that Jesus spoke.
6. Why is it of utmost importance for the Catholic Church to interpret the rock as Peter?
7. Why did Jesus order the disciples not to tell anyone that He was the Messiah.
8. How can we pray for you?

Prayer: Heavenly Father. Thank You for revealing the truth of who Jesus is to our hearts. We declare today that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the living God, and the absolute foundation of our lives. Through Christ our Lord, Amen.



August 30, 2026 (Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost): Confession and Call of Jesus

Text: Matthew 16:21-28

Topics: The suffering Messiah and the cost and reward of discipleship

Core values: Surrender, Agape Love, Kingdom Mindset, Spiritual Courage, Authentic Discipleship

Main Idea: Jesus resets His disciples' expectations by plainly foretelling His suffering, death, and resurrection and outlines the cost of discipleship.

Application/Beginning thought... Shortly after Peter correctly identifies Jesus as the Messiah, Jesus begins to explain to the disciples what that title means for himself and for them.

Bible Study Questions:

1. Does Peter understand Jesus' fate?
2. Explain in your own words what Jesus meant by "divine things" and "human things"?
3. What does Jesus mean when he tells the disciples they must deny themselves and take up their cross?
4. What did the image of a cross mean to a first century listener prior to it becoming a religious symbol? How does understanding this historical reality affect how we interpret "bearing our cross" today?
5. What is the reward for following Jesus? If you were one of the disciples, what would you be thinking in this moment?
6. What words of encouragement did Jesus offer the disciples about what they would see in their lifetimes? Did this come true?

Group Discussion Questions:

1. Some would criticize Peter for rebuking Jesus, especially after declaring Him Messiah in Matthew 16:16. Jesus certainly did! What would a first century Jew expect of the Messiah?
2. Jesus tells Peter he has his mind on "human things" rather than "divine things." How do we distinguish between a good human desire and a divine perspective?
3. What is the cost of discipleship? What is its reward?
4. In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus explicitly foretold his death and resurrection on three separate occasions (Matthew 16:21-33, 17:22-23, and 20:17-19). He also alluded to this in Matthew 12:39-40. Review these verses and describe any similarities and differences in circumstance and emphasis. How does the "Sign of Jonah" allude to his death and resurrection?
5. The world offers many ways to "gain the world" at the expense of the soul (e.g. career ambition, politics, social status). Where do you find it the hardest to resist this trade-off?
6. A common understanding of Jesus' "some will not taste death" statement means some of His followers would witness a powerful demonstration of His divine glory in their lifetimes. Name some events that would have shown "the Son of Man coming in his kingdom" in their lifetimes. (Hint: What happened six days later?)
7. How can we pray for you?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help us to set our minds on divine things, rather than human things. Give us the courage to take up our crosses and follow Jesus without holding back. Teach us to surrender our desire for comfort and control, trusting that in losing our lives for Your sake, we find true and eternal life. Protect our souls from the distractions of this world and fill us with your sacrificial love. Through Christ our Lord, Amen.