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SILVER STAR BIBLE SCHOOL 1994

NO MAN EVER SPAKE LIKE THIS MAN

Speaker: Bro. Colin Hollamby

Study #5

Confirming the Disciples: Upon this Rock will I build My Ecclesia

Reading: Matthew 16:1-23

Our Dear Brethren and Sisters in the Lord Jesus Christ

We really would like to endorse those final words of our Bro. Dev, as he concluded his considerations of the parable, this morning, brethren and sisters, because they are very, very true words.

You know, we get problems in our meetings, from time to time, and some of them are very serious difficulties. They may not just relate to our own ecclesia, they may relate to us on a very wide front, and you brethren and sisters here, know a lot about that. And there'll be a lot of correspondence that goes back and forth; and we're always plotting and planning and saying, 'Well, if they do that, we'll do this; and then they'll do that as a result, so, we'll do this after that. And sometimes, brethren, we don't even stop and think to give God a little bit of room to move. And our views may even be right, our prognostications might even be correct, but we so hedge ourselves in sometimes, and in that, brethren and sisters, we are confining the areas, in which God, Himself can work. And so, it is a very vital matter that we should not really make those plans; we don't know what somebody else is going to do; we don't know what He who walks in the midst of the ecclesias is going to do. But sometimes we think we do, and we're almost trying to force His hand; the only think that we can do, brethren and sisters, is to do what we know to be right. And when we have that kind of purity that the faithful and wise servants will have, we can only act upon that basis. And everything after that, brethren and sisters, is just what Bro. Thomas use to say, 'do what is right and be valiant for the truth; and all lovers of the truth will approve you'. And for all others, you need not worry; they have got a mind, just as we have got a mind; they can make decisions just like we can make decisions. And if they're making decisions upon the expediency of the flesh, that's not our problem; it's their problem, and we can only faithfully and wisely and palatably and simply express the truth. And if people don't want to listen, well, they don't listen, and they don't listen to their eternal peril, and our Lord Jesus Christ, brethren and sisters, is an outstanding example of that.

Here He was in John chapter 6, we've just concluded our considerations of some of the things in John chapter 6, and as a result of what He said, multitudes left Him, never to

return. And even though just in that very same chapter, they wanted to come and take Him by force and make Him a King; after His little dissertation about eating His flesh and drinking His blood, they went back from Him, no more to work with Him. And so much was the strain on Him, brethren and sisters, that He turned to His own beloved 12 and said, 'Will ye also go away?' And we can see a man who was a man of outstanding loneliness; a man, brethren and sisters, who couldn't give Himself to people, unless they gave themselves to Him. He didn't commit Himself to the crowds; He found it even very difficult to commit Himself to His apostles, because they still, yet, do not understand for what He really stands. And although they have been with Him now for two and a half years, they haven't yet understood the man, whom they dearly love; and they do dearly love Him, because NEVER MAN COULD SPEAK LIKE THIS MAN! Never man acted like this man; never man wrought miracles like this man; never a man prayed like this man; never a man controlled Himself like this man; never a man controlled other people like this man could control them. And, who could not like a man like that? Who could resist the very great advances that He is making on the minds of those twelve? And on this particular incident that we are going to consider today, we see the grand and the sublime heights to which those apostles have reached, in their understanding; and then He turns straight around and begins to instruct them further, and they act like a satan to Him. And they touch Him in the softest part of His flesh.

And so, as we just begin to link those things that were contained in John chapter 6, because it's obvious, in the record in Matthew that the record of the grand confession of the apostles was just after the event of the feeding of the 5,000. We look back at those things and we see, brethren and sisters, that in the loaves and the fishes, in the flesh and the blood, in the bread and the wine, and in the spirit and the life of our Lord Jesus Christ, we see parallel matters. And they are very parallel matters that are drawn out of John chapter 6, and it brings us, doesn't it, as we saw the Lord breaking the bread, and distributing it to the apostles, and they to the multitude; it reminds us of the establishment of that memorial feast of which we partake, week by week.

And when we know that it was the body and the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ that was offered, not just the blood; He offered His own body once for all, Hebrews chapter 10 and verse 10 tells us, 'He offered His blood so that reconciliation might be made possible for us'. And in both the body and the blood, in the bread and in the wine, we see eternally positive principles. Because if we examine the Old Testament offerings, we find that there was never, ever, anything that was negative, that was allowed to go on the altar. Everything that went on the altar and was consumed by divine fire was always positive. And the Lord Jesus Christ didn't just offer His blood, He offered His body as well. It was a positive giving of all the strain upon every nerve and muscle that was given, brethren and sisters, in a complete sacrifice because the Word had so taken over all His intellectual capacities and all His emotions. And it was those intellectual capacities that were completely governing His emotions, so that when we see Him in emotional stress, it's not because He was overcome; it's because the situation called for that; it's because there was a very deliberate move on His part, to show the emotion that was necessary. And we see a man therefore, brethren and sisters, LIKE NO OTHER MAN! because when we show our emotions it's very often just because we're

overcome by the occasion. NOT WITH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST; His emotions were totally under the control of His intellectual powers, and they were totally under control of the Word. It was the mind of God in Him, and let this mind, be in us, says the apostle Paul, which was also in our Lord Jesus Christ. And that's the mind that we're trying to apprehend; that's the mind who gave His body and His blood, as living sacrifices upon the altar of Himself, so that we might be able to have the opportunity of our sins forgiven, and finally, eternal inheritance with Him as well.

So, when we come into Matthew chapter 16, we read at verse 1, that recurring theme, from the same area that it had always come from since His grand temptation in the wilderness under the superintendence of the Divine Spirit. 'The Pharisees and the Sadducees came tempting Him, and desiring that they might see a sign from heaven'. And then we come over to the section which we are going to deal with this morning, from verse 13.

Let's just go back to John chapter 6, to see the wave upon which He has ridden, and now the trough into which He has fallen, as far as public acceptance of Him is concerned. John chapter 6 and at verse 66, 'From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then Jesus said unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? And Peter, ever the spokesman for the group, answered and said, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life'. He could have said 'the works', but he didn't; he was giving testimony to the fact that NO MAN EVER SPAKE LIKE THIS MAN! Thou hast the words of eternal life, and those words, the Lord had just told them, was Spirit and they were Life. They were able to be the powers of a new creation! They were able to create a new attitude in a man, and they were able to show the basis upon which that attitude should conduct its life. For His words were Spirit and they were Life.

So, after they wanted to take Him by force and make Him a king, He gives to them this dissertation, and they go back and they walk no more with Him. And He's obviously feeling, brethren and sisters, extremely lonely. Looking for some consolation, looking for some strengthening from people who understand His mission, and He asks them if they will also go away, and they return to Him, 'no, there's nobody else to whom we could go because 'Thou hast the words of eternal life'.

So, coming back then into Matthew chapter 16 and going in at verse 13, 'Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, and He asked His disciples saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they say the feeling among the multitudes is, you may be John the Baptist, and some of them say, well, we think He's Elijah; and some of them say, it must be Jeremiah or one of the prophets come back again'. There was no other explanation that He must be some man of God they said. And the Lord then asked the question that is really agitating His mind very much at the moment. 'But, whom do ye say that I am?' I want to know what you think down in the deepest recesses of your hearts; you've been with Me for 2 ½ years, you've seen the miracles that I've done. You've heard a lot of things that I've said. You've come to the conclusion that I have the words of eternal life, but there are some things yet, that ye must know. I would like

to know, what really is your confession of faith at the moment? And brethren and sisters, the following words would have sent a chill of utter ecstasy down the spine of our Lord Jesus Christ. It would have moved Him like nothing else in His ministry had moved Him, because Peter says on behalf of the group, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God'. Now, what's so marvelous about that? What would be so marvelous about that? What would be so secretive about that? Because in verse 20 Jesus said to them, as the record says, 'He charged His disciples that they should tell no man that He was Jesus the Christ.' Now, here He has spent 2 ½ years among these men, educating them in divine ways, revealing unto them slowly, His identification; revealing unto them very surely His origin. They come to realize that He is the Christ, the Son of the living God, and then He wants for them to tell no man. But, we thought that was the burden of His ministry. What did He say when Pilate asked Him if He was a king? He says, 'to this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world'. Why should he not want them to tell any man that He was Jesus the Christ? Was His whole mission not devoted to advising the people that He was their Messiah? Were they not on a pinnacle of expectancy because the seventy weeks prophecy had run its course? Were they not allowed to know that He was their Messiah? Well, brethren and sisters, there must be something a little bit deeper in the wonderful confession of Peter's faith, than what we see on the surface. And there is!

There's something very wonderful about what Peter said on behalf of the rest of the apostles, and personally, brethren and sisters, it is a real mistake to think of Peter as an impetuous man. He was a very forward man, and he acted upon the basis of his limited understanding, but there was nothing Peter wanted better than to be with His Master, and to be accepted by His Master. And on every occasion that we see Peter, he's like that. He's very forward in endeavouring to express his faith to His Master. He loves His Master dearly and he's prepared, even if only intellectually, to go to any extent with this man, but he doesn't really know the extent to which he is going to be asked to go. But, he is nonetheless, a man of outstanding courage, likewise, were the rest of the 12, brethren and sisters. They must have been, Judas apart, and even Judas must have had the potential, they must have been the best 12 men in Israel for the job. And regardless of how we see them depicted throughout the gospel narratives at times, they must have been the best men! Jesus would have made no mistake, when in consultation with His Father for a whole night, and then goes out and selects those 12, who would company with him, for the 3-1/2 years of His ministry. **THEY WERE THE GREATEST MEN IN ISRAEL, JESUS CHRIST APART!** And now He has made a very wonderful confession of their faith, on behalf of these people, and look what Jesus says to them in verse 17, as He is really delighted by what they have said through Peter their spokesman. Jesus answered and said unto him, 'Blessed art thou Simon Barjona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father has revealed this unto thee, and He is in heaven'.

In other words, brethren and sisters, Jesus is saying to Peter, that the source of your information, upon which you have based your judgment, has come from heaven. It's of heavenly origin that you have received this knowledge, and what Peter must have actually said, brethren and sisters, is this; Peter answered in verse 16 and said, 'Thou

art the Christ, the Son of the living Yahweh'. Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living Yahweh, he must have said that, because, to be a son of elohim is no great thing. Their law said they were all the sons of elohim. Every person in Israel was a son of elohim and therefore, became an elohim or one of the elohim, one of the elohim of the mighty ones of Jacob, because they had sprung from the loins of Jacob. Every man in Israel was one of those, but here was a depth of understanding that Peter had come to as a result of the instruction that he had heard at the mouth of Jesus, for the last 2-1/2 years. And he had weighed it up very carefully, brethren and sisters, and he had said, 'this man must be the Son of the living Yahweh'. And he almost certainly would have gone back to the second of Samuel chapter 7, and when in great consternation at the end of those promises, David had presented the proposition, 'Is this the manner of man, O Adonai Yahweh? The apostle Peter must have looked at the earlier verses where it said, 'I will be His Father and He shall be My Son'. And linking those places together, with perhaps Isaiah chapter 7 and verse 14, where a virgin should conceive, and knowing the origins of this man, he not only is simply confessing that this Man has been born by miraculous ways, he's testifying that every word, every action, every emotion, every miracle is stamping Him as the Son of the everliving Deity. There's only one of them, and Peter has come to that very rich conclusion, and so, brethren and sisters, as the Lord is in an earnest search for somebody to be with Him, as all that multitude of disciples goes back, and walks no more with Him, and He's left, seemingly, with just a small group of people around Him again, HE'S VERY LONELY, and He wants to evoke out of these men, just how deep their affection for Him is. Just how deep their understanding of Him is; just how great their perception of what He stands for really is. And they come to that conclusion that He must be the Son of the living Yahweh.

Brethren and sisters, we can show that there is another passage in the scripture, which helps us to understand the gravity and the depth of that statement. And we can feel the apostle Peter, gripping himself, and with all the earnestness and the gravity of his conviction, he says those words to the Lord. There was a man there who heard that, whose name was Judas Iscariot. And even if it was not Judas' own perception, he heard those words. And the Lord Jesus Christ was living at a time when to say the Divine Name, because of the foolish superstition of the Jews, was blasphemy. And Judas Iscariot was one who heard those words, and Jesus was very anxious, that no man should know that truth, in that form. And so He said to the apostles, 'tell no man that He is Jesus the Christ', He didn't mean, 'tell no man that He is Jesus the Christ'. That was the burden of their work; He meant the form in which Peter has expressed it; conceal it! because He knew the danger, brethren and sisters, that if that leaked out, His hour had not yet come. And that was the very basis upon which Judas went to the High Priests and the Pharisees and gave to them a little bit of information, which the High Priest himself used, in the final court case in which our Lord appeared.

And He said to him, 'I adjure thee by the living God, tell us, is it true that you say you're the Son of the living Yahweh?' And as soon as that was done, brethren and sisters, that High Priest rent his clothes, and he said to them publicly, he said, 'You've all heard His blasphemy'. And so, they took Him out, and they crucified Him on the basis of the confession that the apostle Peter made, which Judas heard. And the Lord came to His

end because it was testified of Him, that He had committed blasphemy. And He hadn't said a word; He just said 'that's true'. That's true what you say High Priest, I am the Son of the living Yahweh. And to this day, brethren and sisters, to this day, that is the only thing of which a Jew will never be persuaded, because they think like Nicodemus; because they think like the rest of the Jews of His day, when He said, 'except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood, ye have no life in you'. They think that's cannibalism! They think that when a man needs to be born again, they think that he must enter into his own mother's womb and be born. And so when they are told that it was the 'everliving Deity, Yahweh, the great first cause of all things Who had a Son', it's totally objectionable to them, because they can only think of conception in one way. And it's the one thing, brethren and sisters, which the Jewish nation will not accept, that Yahweh had a Son.

And here is the apostle Peter now, and he is saying to Christ, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living Yahweh'. And Jesus answered and He says, 'Blessed art thou Simon Barjona; for this hasn't come through the agency of flesh and blood; this could never have come to you upon the basis of flesh and blood. This has not been 'fleshly reasoning'; you have allowed the Spirit to dominate your mind. You have resigned yourself and you have listened to the words and the testimony of the prophets and of Myself. It is only My Father, which is in heaven, Who could have enlightened your eyes to this vital truth, that I am indeed, the Son of the living Yahweh'.

And so, the Lord Jesus goes on in verse 18, in His tremendous confirmation of the apostles. And remember the occasion? HE'S EXTREMELY LONELY; He wants somebody, He desperately wants somebody to stand with Him in the face of the great multitude of disciples leaving Him, and it would have been a tremendously confirming little episode there on the shores of Caesarea Philippi, as He asks His disciples, who they really believe He is. And so in verse 18, the record goes on to say, 'That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my ecclesia; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.' Brethren and sisters, here we have some very wonderful promises, to and about the apostle Peter, but we need to be very careful, how we understand it, because the Lord Jesus Christ pronounces a blessing upon the apostle Peter. There's no question about that, 'blessed art thou, Simon, son of Jona, thou art Peter. Thou art a stone and upon this rock will I build my ecclesia.' What does He mean?

Does He mean 'the rock of Peter'? Does He mean 'the rich words which have just come out of the mouth of Peter'? NO, He doesn't mean either of those, brethren and sisters, but He is pointing to the apostle Peter and He says, 'thou art a stone, and upon this rock I will build my ecclesia. Peter, grand as your statement of faith may have been, it's nothing like the subject of the confession of your faith. And the subject of the confession of Peter's faith, brethren and sisters, IS THE ROCK, upon which the ecclesia of the living God is bounded and built. There is no other foundation that can be laid, than Jesus Christ our Lord. And so, the Companion Bible actually tells us that this is

one of three occasions in the New Testament, when a special figure of speech is used in which the speaker points to himself, when He says 'upon this rock will I build my ecclesia'.

And we would just like to run through a few scriptures, brethren and sisters, which will help us understand and reinforce in our minds, the good reason as to why the Lord would have done that. And we can go back to some very early places in the scriptures, can't we, and we'll go to a few of them. We can go right back, for example, to Genesis chapter 28, for in Genesis chapter 28 we remember the occasion of the dream of Jacob. It's the occasion when he dreamed about that staircase; the staircase that bridged heaven and earth. And the great gulf that is between God and man, was going to be bridged by that staircase that Jacob saw. And in verses 18 to 22, we read that 'Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. And he called the name of that place 'the house of El'. The house of El. And Jacob vowed a vow in verse 20 and it said, 'If God be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall Yahweh be my Elohim: And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be the house of God'. This stone shall be the house of God; and what's he saying, brethren and sisters, he is pointing forward to the time when there would be a 'foundation upon which God's house would be built'. And he says, 'this is the stone upon which God's house will be built, and it was the very place on earth, upon which he had seen the angels of God ascending and descending upon, as John chapter 1 verse 51 says, 'the Son of man'. Here is the house of God. It's been established as a firm foundation upon the earth; it's the place that bridges heaven and earth. And it's the only place, brethren and sisters, the ecclesia of the living God, the house of God, it is the place where God dwells upon the earth.

We know that the Rock that followed them through the wilderness was Christ, and we know, brethren and sisters, that that happened on two occasions; at the beginning of their wilderness wanderings and again at the end. And the details surrounding the smiting of the Rock on the first occasion, in Exodus chapter 17, are very different from the details surrounding the commanded 'speaking to the Rock' in Numbers chapter 20. It's a very interesting little passage to pursue, but, if you pursue them you will find, that at the beginning of the wilderness wanderings, Moses was told to smite the Rock with his own rod that had turned into a serpent, and that he was to take certain of the elders of Israel with him, they were to accompany him on the journey, to smite the Rock. And it's figurative of that occasion when the Rock was smitten by the serpent power of sin, and wielded by the elders of Israel. But, on the second occasion, he was told to take the rod that was laid up before Yahweh, the rod that had so recently budded and proved that Aaron was the priestly family. He was told to take that rod, when the people were thirsty, that rod, and to go and speak to the Rock, and water would issue forth. But, because the people had so stirred up the spirit of Moses, and had got him so frustrated, that he passed the rod aside, and he picked up his own rod that had turned into a serpent, and went up to the Rock and smote it twice. And on that occasion, and we can see the words of Moses, typically speaking, brethren and sisters, Moses crucified the

Son of God afresh! and put Him to an open shame. And upon that basis Moses was debarred from leading the children of Israel into the kingdom of God. THAT ROCK, we are told by the apostle Paul, WAS CHRIST. And in both aspects, His coming as a crucified servant and as a crowned King, He is depicted in that Rock.

Just come with us for a moment to the 32nd chapter of Deuteronomy, for here we have some very wonderful descriptions about a Rock. Here we are going to see that the Rock, Who is Christ, is really a very real replica of His Father. Verse 1 of Deuteronomy chapter 32, 'Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth. My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distill as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass: Because I will publish the name of Yahweh: ascribe ye greatness unto our God. He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He.' And so, Moses is saying that Yahweh, the Deity, is like a Rock. And as we examine the face of a grand granite rock, brethren and sisters, we can really see that there is character in rock, isn't there? You ask people who study rocks, you ask them about their interest in them, and they'll say, 'Here's every rock that we've got in our collection, and they all have character about them'. And that's why the Deity is called a ROCK, because the attributes of the Deity is listed there; His work is perfect, He's a God of truth and without iniquity. He's just and right, and we can see in the firmness and the stability of that Rock, the unmoveable nature of that Rock. We can see the eternal qualities of the Deity shining through in the person of His Son who said, 'Upon this Rock will I build my ecclesia'. And there is the character, the beauty, the strength, the impregnability, the weather-resistance, the imperviousness of the Rock; and we see it in our Lord Jesus Christ. HE IS THE ONLY FOUNDATION WHICH HAS EVER BEEN LAID, and when the Lord God of heaven, through Isaiah his servant says, 'Behold, I lay in Zion a stone, a foundation stone,' he was of course, speaking of none other than our Lord Jesus Christ of whom the apostle Paul testifies that no other foundation can be laid, than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ our Lord.

The testimony of Peter, brethren and sisters, was mere words. Men's words, thrilling words, true words, very important words, but, nonetheless they were words; and God will never build His edifice on the foundation of the words of man. He builds it on the firm substance of the only begotten Son, whom the apostles had so recently come to know as the Son of the living Yahweh.

And then, the apostle Peter is given more promises. When the Lord said that 'upon this Rock will I build my ecclesia', there is the foundation upon which the members shall be called out from the darkness of Gentile world, and they shall be established as the ecclesia of the living God, the foundation is our Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ goes on to say to Peter, 'that the gates of hell will not prevail against it'. And as we read from our beloved Bro. Thomas, he says this about a key. 'A key is used in scripture as a symbol of the power of revealing or interpreting secret things, also for power in general. As a key is to a lock, so is power to things intellectual, moral and political'. And so the key of the kingdom is given to Peter, but first of all, he says, that the gates of hell will not prevail against my ecclesia, because He has got the key of hell



and of death. He has broken the power of the grave as our Lord Jesus Christ, and all that company of persons, who are His ecclesia, down through the ages of time, have been locked in the ground. And there's coming a day, brethren and sisters, when the bonds of death will be burst for them, because the 'key of hell will be used by the One Who has overcome the power of the grave', and they will be released from the earth and they will be brought to the bar of judgment to receive in the body, those things that they deserve. The gates of hell will not prevail against the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Rock upon which God establishes His own house. But the keys of the kingdom would be given to Peter, and whatsoever he would bind on earth, would be bound in heaven. And whatsoever he would loose on the earth, shall be loosed in heaven; it's a picture of the prison house. The prison house of sin and death, into which all mankind have been born, and as Peter now, opens the key of intellectual knowledge because he's got the key of the kingdom of God, He's going to use that key of the intellectual knowledge of kingdom of God, to spread that message to the Gentiles. First of all to the Jews on the day of Pentecost, and secondly, to the Gentiles through Cornelius in Acts chapter 10. We are not going to turn to those, brethren and sisters, because we have some other matters to consider about these things. So Peter is given the 'keys', the power of loosening or binding. And as the gospel message went through the hand of Peter firstly, and the rest of the apostles, if they didn't believe that they were condemned, if they believed they were candidates for eternal life in the kingdom of God. And there was the binding and loosening that the apostle Peter was charged with on this occasion.

Now in verse 21, we read of something else that must be a necessary preliminary, a necessary matter in the teaching of the apostles. Verse 21 says, 'From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. And Peter took Him, and began to rebuke Him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee'. Brethren and sisters, we might find it hard to understand, how a man, could in one breath, reach such a truly sublime conclusion, and then in the very next breath, resist the obvious purpose of the living God. How could he do such a thing? Seems very strange, doesn't it? We are not to consider it strange however, brethren and sisters, there were real reasons why this occurred. And the real reasons were, that they weren't really expected to believe those, until the works of salvation had been accomplished. The burden of our Lord Jesus Christ was to preach the coming of the kingdom of God. The things concerning the name of Jesus Christ were spoken about, but they weren't expected to be understood, not like we are expected to understand them.

For example, brethren and sisters, a very first principle of our faith is this, 'that Messiah is Jesus of Nazareth'. How could somebody fifty years before Jesus was born, ever know that? How could they ever be expected to believe that Messiah was Jesus of Nazareth? They couldn't possibly; but it's a first principle of our faith. And so there are certain things, brethren and sisters, about the things concerning the name of Jesus Christ, that are only slowly unraveled; that's why there's a great emphasis on the preaching of the kingdom of God. There were certain secrets that were completely

concealed from even the angels, who desired to look into certain things about the sufferings and the glory of Christ. The prophets, themselves, had written them, and they had written them not understanding them. And here was some men who were gathered around the Lord Jesus Christ now, and He sees it a great necessity to warn them of what's coming. And these men were clean through the Word that Christ had spoken to them. John chapter 15 and verse 3, I'm sure Bro. John (Ullman) spoke about that yesterday. Here were men, who were clean through the Word that had been spoken to them. They were the branches attaching to the Vine. They could not possibly attach to the Vine upon the basis of something that was necessary, if they didn't believe it. They could not possibly be cleansed through the Word, if they didn't believe something that was necessary to be believed. And so the attitude of Peter is, that he began to rebuke the Lord when these matters were brought to their attention. And he said, 'this shall not be unto thee Lord; this shall be far from thee'. It won't happen to thee, you've come to be King! And you can still see, brethren and sisters, the labouring of the apostles, in common with the whole multitude of the Jews, that they really only had one thing in their mind.

And if we turn to Luke chapter 18, we will see just how carefully or how truly it was concealed from their consciences. Luke chapter 18 and verse 31 and it says, 'Then He took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. For He shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: And they shall scourge Him, and put Him to death: and the third day He shall rise again. And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken'. None of those things, brethren and sisters, permeated their consciousness, and it was mainly because they only had one objective in mind. They could only see one of the missions of the Lord Jesus Christ. They couldn't see the necessity for the things that they are going through with Him, and through which He was yet to go through, and so therefore, it wasn't a matter of fundamental belief, or they would never have been cleansed by the Word that He had spoken to them. IT WAS YET TO BE REVEALED. And it's very fair of the Deity, brethren and sisters, not to demand those things. Now, they knew in a general way, the principles of sacrifice, and that sacrifice must come before reign, or kingship or glory. They knew those general principles, but as far as it was specifically related to the death and the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, they couldn't perceive that!

And so when we turn back to Matthew chapter 16, we find how keen a trial this was to our Lord Jesus Christ. Because, as He laid before them, the prospects that were going to befall Him in Jerusalem, in just under 12 months now, Peter took Him and began to rebuke Him saying, (notice the margin brethren and sisters; notice what the margin says. It says 'pity thyself, Lord') That was the sharpest arrow that could ever have been aimed at our Lord Jesus Christ. Here He is told by Peter to take a course of aversion toward the very cause of His coming into the world. He is advised by Peter to circumvent crucifixion, and every sinew of His body would have naturally shrunk, from the idea of crucifixion. There was a shaft that touched Him in the softest place of His

flesh. No wonder, brethren and sisters, He turned around to Peter and He said, 'Get thee behind me, Satan'. Get thee behind Me, Satan, and why? Why did He say, 'Get thee behind Me, Satan? Well, He didn't believe in some ethereal spirit that wanders around the earth and seduces all mankind. He said, 'Thou art a stumbling block unto Me; and the reason is Peter, 'that thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men'. That's where all our troubles come from, from us, from men, and we know that's true. And the Lord was profoundly and yet so simply saying, that all the troubles that arise in our minds, and all the troubles that come to us from outside, have a source in man. That's where they come from, and so, brethren and sisters, when we think of this tremendous trial under which the Lord has been placed now, by a man who just didn't understand what he was saying. A man, who just a few moments ago, has given to the Lord, His greatest thrill of all His ministry, a man who has just raised the mind of that man, the Lord Jesus Christ, to a state of absolute ecstasy in the confession that he has made, and now, he gives to Him the bitterest shaft, the bitterest poison that could ever have been brought to His attention.

And brethren and sisters, we hear that very often, don't we? We see a man, we see a man who is devoted to the things of God. And we see him doing this and doing that and forever he seems to be burden down with servitude to others; to the life of the ecclesia and to other people. And do you know what we often say to him? 'Do you know what's going to happen to you? You're going to get sick'. That's what we say. Are we saying anything different that what Peter said? We're saying no different at all, brethren and sisters. And we see a man, therefore, whose servitude took Him, even to the death of the stake. Why should we worry where it takes us? Why should we worry where our servitude leads?

And how does Matthew chapter 16 finish? It finishes with a little statement by the Lord Jesus Christ, He says, 'Do you know what you disciples, if you really want to be My disciples, then, you must deny yourself. YOU MUST DENY YOURSELF. When was the last time, brethren and sisters, that we really did that? When we really denied ourself, because, that is the first principle of discipleship. It is the first principle of discipleship; DENY OURSELVES. And here was the Lord being told, 'Pity yourself; take a little time out for yourself; take some ease and leisure; don't think that you have to be strapped into a pair of handcuffs; don't think that you have to be bound up in a spiritual straight-jacket; that's what they're telling the Lord. And the Lord says, 'well, if you want to be my disciples, I'm telling you that's exactly what you have to be in'. WE DON'T LIKE THOSE TERMS, BUT THAT'S WHAT THE LORD IS SAYING! He's saying 'you've got to be a prisoner to Me'; you've got to deny yourself; you've got to take up a stake and you've got to follow Me.' And there is no clearer doctrine anywhere in the bible than that. There is no clearer doctrine anywhere in the bible, brethren and sisters, than that, if we are going to be among His disciples, we must deny ourselves; we must take up our cross and we must be identified with Him. In flesh and in blood; in life and in death. Not that we are going to experience the same kind of death as He, but it's not yet been said of us, brethren and sisters, that we've died in the faith. None of us here have that testimony appended to our name. And if we die in the faith, if we die in the faith, we will die in the service of our King. We will die in the service of

others, because the only true qualification for rulership is servitude. And that's what He did. He gave Himself, so that we might have an opening of forgiveness with our God, and finally, eternal redemption in His kingdom.

Brethren and sisters, the Lord Jesus Christ, in just a short space of time, has faced two, nay, three, tremendous trials. They wanted one moment to come and make Him a King by force; and the very next moment they are walking away because He has said hard sayings unto them; He has evoked a very wonderful confession of faith out of Peter, that they have come to apprehend Him, as the very replica of the Almighty Deity; Thou art the Son of the living Yahweh, and in the very next breath, Peter is shooting an arrow, a more bitter one which could not be conceived by man; and He leaves us finally by telling us that if we want to be associated with Him in glory, there's only one thing to do, it's to make it our meat and our drink to do His will. It's to make it so, brethren and sisters, so that in some small way, we become, the Word made flesh.