

Church Like You Never Expected – “Mii”

Reconnect – May 24, 2009

Series/Morning Intro

- Today is the middle week of our look at “Church Like You Never Expected” series, using the Nintendo Wii as inspiration
- It’s the idea that a church, a group of people, could be interactive, engaging, and a place to come alive for people on a journey of faith
- And within that idea, we’ve been exploring what we see as steps you can take to “go deeper” with God
- Last week we looked at the idea of belonging – and this week, it’s believing – as we look at “Mii”

Church Like You Never Expected – “Mii”

Reconnect – May 24, 2009

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?”

“Well,” they replied, “some say John the Baptist, some say Elijah, and others say Jeremiah or one of the other prophets.”

Then he asked them, “But who do YOU say I am?”

Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”

Jesus replied, “You are blessed, Simon son of John, because my Father in heaven has revealed this to you. You did not learn this from any human being. Now I say to you that you are Peter [which means ‘rock’], and upon this rock I will build my church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it.

Matthew 16:13-17, NLT

Church Like You Never Expected: “Mii”

Reconnect – May 24, 2009

Text: Matthew 16:13-17, John 12:44-46

Key Thought: Faith continues with an opportunity to further what we believe: in regards to Jesus and what He offers.

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” “Well,” they replied, “some say John the Baptist, some say Elijah, and others say Jeremiah or one of the other prophets.” Then he asked them, “But who do YOU say I am?” Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” Jesus replied, “You are blessed, Simon son of John, because my Father in heaven has revealed this to you. You did not learn this from any human being. Now I say to you that you are Peter [which means ‘rock’], and upon this rock I will build my church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it. (Matthew 16:13-17, NLT)

Intro: Getting the rock wrong

- One of the most incredible natural formations in the world is found in Australia, and we’ve already seen a picture of it this morning – Uluru/Ayers Rock – in 1873 an Australian surveyor visited the rock and named it Ayers Rock – but it had from ancient times been “Uluru” - named one thing, called another, worshipped by some – everyone agrees that it’s there, but when it comes to what that means, everyone thinks differently – lots of questions and debate, not many answers beyond “look, there it is” (whoop, there it is) – all around something so solid, so undoubtable, all of these questions swirl

A bit like a faith journey towards Jesus

- Lots of questions, doubts, fears – two steps forward, three steps back – new people in your life, things you’ve always known, old friends, coincidences, failures, joys, successes, change – we walk towards, and then away, and then we take a sidebar for awhile – but in the middle of the swirl of change, every now and again, we have a “rock” moment – something that we can look back on, stand on, remember, something that changes us, alters us and something that we can’t back up from
- Peter has an incredible moment like that, in the section of Jesus’ biography that was already read this morning, and we’re going to take a closer look at that this morning

Go through the text: Matthew 16:13-17

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?”

- Jesus is with his disciples – his 12 close followers, that he has chosen, and who have agreed to live their lives alongside him, to learn from him
- In their time with him, they have seen and heard and even done some incredible things – people healed mentally and physically and emotionally, injustice confronted, evil beaten back, even physical phenomena, like when Jesus calmed a terrible storm just by telling it to be over

- They've been on tour – they go from town to town, bringing a message of hope, of God's love – and they find themselves in a bit of a more quiet moment – they're in an area that isn't Jewish – a region that hasn't really grabbed on to who Jesus is
- So they're sitting down – we're not sure where – and they're having a discussion – and Jesus changes the topic and gets interactive with them – he asks them a question: "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?"
- This event is mentioned in three of the four biographies of Jesus – and in the other two, the question he asks them is a little more direct: "Who do people say that I am?"
- Jesus often used the phrase "Son of Man" to refer to himself in discussions about what he was trying to do and who He was, and why he was on the scene – it's really just another way of saying "this guy", but with a little more mystique
- And then he sits back, and waits for their response
- But before we look at their answers, why don't we take a moment on it ourselves?

Q: "Who do people say that I am?" – what do people think of Jesus today? What's he classified as by different people? (historical myth, wandering prophet, person who was made into something else by others for their own purposes, shaman, avatar, teacher, philosopher, good man, tragic figure, etc.)

"Well," they replied, "some say John the Baptist, some say Elijah, and others say Jeremiah or one of the other prophets."

- Explain their different answers:
 - John the Baptist – preacher/revival figure/social activist/protestor who was murdered for his stand – ironically, a relative of Jesus, but not Jesus
 - Elijah – the one who was promised to come to set up the "chosen one" – you're good, but something better must be coming along, because you're not quite what we bargained for
 - Jeremiah – "the weeping prophet" – managed to tick everyone off at him and yet everyone wanted him around at the same time – foretold gloom and doom and spoke truth to power at every turn, never popular
 - One of the other prophets – everyone had a favourite historical figure, someone that they resonated with
- OK, that's fine – then Jesus has a followup question for them:

Then he asked them, "But who do YOU say I am?"

- Let's take that question again for ourselves:

Q: Who is Jesus to you?

- And now back to the answer the disciples give Jesus – from a familiar source:

Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”

- Labels – titles we use with people – evoke both the HEAD (technical definition) and the HEART (the feelings associated with the title)

Q: throw some out there for people – “police officer”, “soldier”, “firefighter”, “doctor”, “lawyer”, “flight attendant”, “model” – technical definition, the feelings/imagery that it evokes

- Then Peter gives:
 - Messiah (or Christ) – the chosen one, the sent one
 - Son of the Living God – you have a unique relationship with God because of all the qualities you share with Him – you’re just like God, the only true God (they’re in Caesarea Philippi, where they worship Pan – NOT a “living God”) – traditionally Hebrew understanding of God was that theirs was living, active, able to make a difference, and other gods were dead idols, ineffective

Jesus replied, “You are blessed, Simon son of John, because my Father in heaven has revealed this to you. You did not learn this from any human being. Now I say to you that you are Peter [which means ‘rock’], and upon this rock I will build my church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it.

- Plays on words throughout:
 - Son of the Living God / Simon, son of John / my Father – father/son stuff
 - Rocky / “this rock” – Jesus gave him the nickname when he first “called” him (“church – called-out ones”) – and it doesn’t “fit” – it’s ironic, because anyone that knows Peter knows that a better nickname for Peter would be “water” – he’s all over the place, emotional, life of the party and then down in the dumps, speaking his mind all the time – he can’t turn off the tap
 - And yet now, Jesus calls him “Rocky” - (like Caillou, the kids’ show – Caillou means “Rocky”, and yet the kid is the biggest wimp ever to be portrayed on television – pansy!)
- There’s more to this than just a nickname, and this is about more than Peter – Jesus sees something IN him, something incredible, something that God has placed in him – and this understanding, that is now going to motivate him, that is now going to energize him and vitalize him, give him new, transforming LIFE, is this “confession” that he makes – this affirmation of his faith in Jesus
- Peter has been up and down, and will continue to be up and down in the future, BUT right NOW, he “gets” it – he gets it RIGHT
- “revealed” – God put this inside Him – opened his eyes to it – “revelation” – like a plot twist in a TV show, where suddenly, we the watcher, are able to see what we didn’t know before, but what the writers knew a long time ago – our eyes are opened and now we know – the hatch has been opened
- “church” – a community, not a building – it means “called-out ones”- called by God for a purpose, renamed, brought into something different – it’s an invitation and an offer and a destiny all wrapped up together

But what about the “Rock” thing?

- Catholics use this section to show that the Pope, sitting in the “chair of Peter”, should be in charge, and that they are the way, because Jesus said so, way back then
- Protestants go all the way the other way and try to take everything away from Peter, and say that it’s just the decision of faith that Jesus is going to build His church on
- It must be somewhere in the middle – it’s this decision in the middle of who Peter is – in other words, Peter has the ball – and we’re going to see next week how Jesus is going to work with Peter to create his “church”, his group of called-out ones – God is going to use Peter, for sure – but he is also going to use others, too – and what they will have in common is this decision, this belief in Jesus that changes them, that changes everything

Belong. Believe... *Become*

- We make choices to believe every day, and those beliefs lead us to action:
 - We choose to believe the weather forecast on the Weather Network, and we dress accordingly
 - We choose to believe what the people around us at work tell us, and that affects the work that we do, whether we are working in teams or on our own
 - We choose to believe what we read in the newspaper or on our favourite blog – or at least, to the degree that we trust it – unless it’s People.com, and then it’s ALWAYS right
 - We choose to believe what our own senses tell us about the world around us – the chair that we’re in is solid, the lights are on, there’s music playing, there’s too much salt on our fries
- Choices to believe in anything worthwhile lead to actions and lead to changes in us and our responses
- We see that holding true in our spiritual journeys as well
- Last week, we looked at the idea of Belonging – that we could find a place with Jesus and his people
- And this week is about Believing – that God wants to show us things about Himself, about Jesus, about our lives – and if we will take the opportunity He gives us, believing these things can lead to actions that will bring us great benefit
- If we believe that He loves us, then we can have renewed confidence and self-worth, to step out, to try something, to achieve something
- If we believe that He offers us forgiveness for the wrong we’ve done and healing for the wrongs done to us, then we can be set free from the pain that has been, and enjoy the life He offers
- Sometimes it’s easy to worry about that – what if we miss the chance? What if we’re not really connected to God? What if He doesn’t REALLY care? How can we know?
- But this story is good for us, because what it comes down to with Peter is mostly about God, not him
- God is the one that shows Peter the truth, who REVEALS it to him – and it’s only then that Peter has to take the chance to believe it
- And it doesn’t matter whether you’re a feeler, or a perceiver, or a thinker, or a doer, or a judger, or intuitive, or an extrovert or an introvert – God works through every different type of personality to make these things clear – He will reveal things to you on your terms and make them clear enough to you that you have a choice to make – that’s the “Mii” that we are working on, just like with the Wii

Drilling Down Deeper:

- And as we said last week, this making of choices helps us to drill down deeper into what God has for us
- Believe: further your relationship with God, no matter where you're at with Him
 - Start having conversations with God
 - Read some of the Bible – start with one of the biographies of Jesus
 - Look for where God might be at work in your life
 - Talk about God with someone else who you think is furthering their relationship with Him, too
 - Consider bringing Him into your life and try making choices as if He were real/ interested in you

Key Thought:

Faith continues with an opportunity to further what we believe:

in regards to Jesus and what He offers.

“Then Jesus shouted to the crowds, ‘When someone believes in me, they do not believe in me only, but in the one who sent me. When they look at me, they see the one who sent me.

I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness.’” (John 12:44-46)

Conclusion:

- What is He showing you? Looking at your life, looking at the questions that you're asking, what you're wondering, what you've been thinking about, experiencing, going through – what is He trying to show you? What is He asking you to “Believe”?
- Think about it this week – chew on it – ask Him questions about it by praying about it, ask other people questions about it, look it up in the Bible to see what it has to say about it – and look for God to demonstrate it to you

Response:

- “Everything” (band)