

Worship Material
Who are you?
Materials from Roots Bible Study
Sunday 27th August

Begin with an opening prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, Messiah, name above all names,
we worship and adore you for revealing yourself to us,
becoming one of us and calling each of us by name.
In you, we discover who we truly are,
for you lead us to become the people you mean us to be,
one with you and with one another in your Church.
Amen.

Read Matthew 16: 13-20

Bible notes

Caesarea Philippi was named after Caesar, and Herod's son Philip, a Roman puppet-king. The city symbolised Roman power.

This is the place where Jesus invites his disciples to name him. Unsurprisingly, others place him among the prophets – Matthew has already linked him to John the Baptist (14:2) and Jeremiah (2:17). Peter's statement is mind-blowing. The Jews had been waiting for the Messiah for centuries (Isaiah 7:14). Confidently to recognise Messiah in Jesus is to proclaim a new world order, where God's authority is made real in a human being. Matthew has already told his hearers that Jesus is the Son of God (3:17). However, this is the first time a disciple names Jesus in this way. In response, Jesus recognises a direct revelation from the Father and affirms Simon's nickname 'Peter', recognising a rock-solid moment of understanding. This insight is the foundation for the Church community's commitment to Jesus on the basis of understanding and confessing his identity.

Jesus reassures the disciples that even if they face hostility (as the Early Church did), they can be confident. Peter, the keeper of the keys, holds the responsibility of passing on the good news of the kingdom that has been revealed to him, letting people into God's community and ensuring they maintain a God-focused way of life. This 'Messianic secret' is a theme running across Matthew, Mark and Luke. Peter and the other disciples need to understand more before they can proclaim Jesus' identity in public.

A prayer of thanksgiving

Father, we thank you that we can always trust in you,
for you make provision for our faults and failings,
and send us all the help and encouragement we need.
Thank you for Jesus and his earthly life among his disciples,
from that we learn so much.

Thank you that we can always have confidence in Jesus,
leaning on his teaching and promises.

We praise you for who he is,
and for who we are and will become in your plans for us.
Lead us onward, heavenly Father.

Amen.

A prayer to conclude

We go out into your world
full of the confidence that you give us.
May we, like Peter, begin to grasp what is special
about your kind of strength and your kind of courage,
as we grapple with our turbulent world.

Amen.