



“Danish Lutheran pastor Nikolai Grundtvig (1783– 1872) wrote this hymn text that first appeared in 1837. Besides serving as pastor, Grundtvig developed an interest in strengthening educational standards among citizens. This interest resulted in establishing a system of public schools throughout Scandinavia. In this hymn text, Grundtvig’s interest in teaching shines, as he teaches about the doctrine of the Holy Christian Church. Therefore, he puts this doctrine on our lips, so that we not only learn it but also proclaim it to others.”

- <https://www.lcms.org/worship/hymn-of-the-day-studies> study by Robert A. Sorensen
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kQiyHDkZBcE> Rejoice in God's gift of hymnody, recorded at Concordia University in Seward, NE during the 2015 Higher Things youth conferences. “Magnificent. I expect to hear this thundering out of the clouds on the last day. Diamond Dust VII”
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UnTMA27L5n0> Listen to Robert Morehead comment on the hymn. He is referencing Evangelical Lutheran Worship, the ELCA hymnal. Verse 4 is significantly different than LSB. THL has 7 verses. His reference to a missing verse 6 matches verse 6 in TLH.
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ECY2IleRg8> Dr. Rodney Wynkoop conducts the Duke Chapel Choir, the Duke Vespers Ensemble, and the Evensong Singers in the premiere (Sept. 29, 2016) of Dan Forrest's setting of The Church's One Foundation (AURELIA), commissioned by Duke Chapel, for the Celebration of Music honoring the re-opening of Duke Chapel.

Commentaries have been chosen because the author has written in a way that compliments the reading. Not all of the commentaries are from Lutheran sources. They have been edited for length and in some cases for additional content that is not in keeping with a Lutheran understanding of Scripture. Links are provided for those who wish to read the entire commentary.

The Holy Bible, English Standard Version. ESV® Text Edition: 2016. Copyright © 2001  
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**O. T.** - “Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness”

**Psalm** – “Blessed is everyone who fears the LORD”

**Epistle** – “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed”

**Gospel** – ***“But who do you say that I am?”***

**Isaiah 51:1-6; RCL, Exodus 1:8-2:10 or Isaiah 56:1, 6-8 (Next week: Jeremiah 15:15-21; RCL, Exodus 12:1-14 or Jeremiah 15:15-21)**

*Although the lectionary excludes the last two verses of this passage (verses 7-8), they are clearly related (see their repetitions of verses 1 and 6).*

*Just as the Matthew passage for the day deals with identity, so does this short passage...*

*For Matthew the question was, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" (16:13). In the Isaiah passage it is not the leader whose identity is under scrutiny, but the people themselves, as the prophet asks them to look to their own heritage. Although this passage points to several moments in Israel's story, the most overt reference is to Abraham and Sarah.*

*Given this founding couple's prominence in Genesis, one would think recollections of them would be spread throughout the biblical story, but actually they are not. In fact, this is Sarah's only appearance in the Hebrew Bible outside of Genesis. Even in Exodus through Deuteronomy, Abraham's name only appears in the formulaic "Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." Then he virtually disappears until the early exilic book of Ezekiel when, in a saying reminiscent of this one, Ezekiel criticizes those left in the land who say, "Abraham was only one man, yet he got possession of the land; but we are many; the land is surely given us to possess" (Ezekiel 33:24)..."*

➤ [http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=2103](http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2103) [Patricia Tull](#)

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## **The LORD's Comfort for Zion Verses 1-23**

**51** **"Listen** to me, you who pursue righteousness,  
you who seek the LORD:

**look** to the rock from which you were hewn,  
and to the quarry from which you were dug.

**<sup>2</sup> Look** to Abraham your father  
and to Sarah who bore you;  
for he was but one when I called him,  
that I might bless him and multiply him.

**<sup>3</sup> For** the LORD comforts Zion;  
he comforts all her waste places  
and makes her wilderness like Eden,  
her desert like the garden of the LORD;  
joy and gladness will be found in her,  
thanksgiving and the voice of song.

**<sup>4</sup> "Give attention** to me, my people,  
and give ear to me, my nation;  
for a law<sup>[a]</sup> will go out from me,  
and I will set my justice for a light to the peoples.

**<sup>5</sup> My** righteousness draws near,  
my salvation has gone out,  
and my arms will judge the peoples;  
the coastlands hope for me,  
and for my arm they wait.

**<sup>6</sup> Lift up** your eyes to the heavens,  
and **look** at the earth beneath;  
for the heavens vanish like smoke,  
the earth will wear out like a garment,  
and they who dwell in it will die in like manner;<sup>[b]</sup>

but my salvation will be forever,  
and my righteousness will never be dismayed...

*<sup>7</sup> "Listen to me, you who know righteousness,  
the people in whose heart is my law;  
fear not the reproach of man,  
nor be dismayed at their revilings.*

*<sup>8</sup> For the moth will eat them up like a garment,  
and the worm will eat them like wool,  
but my righteousness will be forever,  
and my salvation to all generations."*

- a. [Isaiah 51:4](#) Or *for teaching*; also verse [7](#)
- b. [Isaiah 51:6](#) Or *will die like gnats*

"Isaiah 51 emphatically seeks to break open an unimaginable future. Expectations are reversed; life is to be changed.

We are conditioned to expect condemnation when prophetic texts begin with the imperative to hear or listen. For example, the first address of the book summons Israel to hear the charge of rebellion (1:2; other instances include 1:10; 7:13; 28:14, 23). How very different Isaiah 51 is! By the third verse, the waste places and desert are like Eden rather than a threatened future standing against Israel's disobedience.

"Comfort" is the word for the *today* of the initial hearers and for all subsequent readers who are without hope, suffering in the waste places and deserts that emerge in alienation from God. Isaiah 40ff is echoed here, actually more than echoed, because the message of comfort which was commissioned in the heavenly court is delivered directly to the exilic hearers. Isaiah 40:2 states that God's people have completed their term of punishment; they have "received from the Lord's hand double for all [their] sins."...

The opening imperative of Isaiah 51 leads to an unexpected speech -- unexpected in terms of the typical pattern of prophetic speech but, more importantly, unexpected by the audience which is living under the judging hand of God.

**The imperatives pile up in these six verses: listen, look, look, listen (different Hebrew root), give heed, lift up, look. In each case, attention is drawn toward good news.** We are on the cusp of change. Whatever the past, it is a new day. The disjunctive "but now" of 43:1 and 44:1, which counters the drift toward judgment at the end of the prior chapters, is stated again in different words in Isaiah 51. This is a "new thing" (42:9; 43:19; 48:6).

The prophet grasps for ways to open the hearers' perception to the new and emerging reality in their relationship with God. Can one imagine it? Well, look at your origin, the rock from which you were hewn. Perhaps the "rock" anticipates the reference to Abraham and Sarah in the next verse. But God has been referred to as a rock several times in Isaiah (e.g., 17:10; 26:4; 44:8). Previously the text has asserted that God created, made and formed Jacob/Israel (43:1; 44:2). The one who stretched out the heavens (40:12ff) can create a new future beyond the present judgment...

The emphasis in Isaiah 51 falls heavily upon the action of God. The audience is without hope, so fully despairing that it has no levers to pull to bring about a better future. Such an

audience is not just having a bad time or in need of a little boost to get them over a hump. This audience has drunk from the cup of God's wrath (51:21-22). That is over. God now comforts. It becomes a way to name God ("I am he who comforts you" [51:12]). Now the word to Zion is: "You are my people," (51:16) AND this is not a cyclical matter. It is "forever," "never to be ended," and "to all generations" (51: 6, 8). It is more permanent than heaven and earth!..."

➤ [http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=133](http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=133)

[Richard W. Nysse](#) Professor of Old Testament, Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN

**Psalm 138; RCL, Psalm 124 or Psalm 138 (Psalm 26; RCL, Psalm 105:1-6, 23-26, 45b or Psalm 26:1-8)**

This Psalm was also used in Year C, on the Fifth Sunday of Epiphany, February 10, 2019 as was this opening comment from Charles Spurgeon. The explanatory comment about the temple is also from the LLL lesson for that Sunday. The complete set of comments including one from James Limburg are available at:

<https://bethlehemlutheranchurchparma.com/BibleStudies/47265/DownloadText>

*"This Psalm is wisely placed. Whoever edited and arranged these sacred poems, he had an eye to apposition and contrast; for if in Ps 137:1-9 we see the need of silence before revilers, here we see the excellence of a brave confession. There is a time to be silent, lest we cast pearls before swine; and there is a time to speak openly, lest we be found guilty of cowardly not confessing. The Psalm is evidently of a Davidic character, exhibiting all the fidelity, courage, and decision of that King of Israel and Prince of Psalmists. Of course the critics have tried to rend the authorship from David on account of the mention of the temple, (verse 2)\* though it so happens that in one of the Psalms which is allowed to be David's the same word occurs. Many modern critics are to the word of God what blowflies are to the food of men: they cannot do any good, and unless relentlessly driven away they do great harm..."*

➤ <https://www.christianity.com/bible/commentary.php?com=spur&b=19&c=138>

Charles H. Spurgeon's Treasury of David

## **Blessed Is Everyone Who Feels the LORD A Song of Ascents.**

**128** Blessed is everyone who fears the LORD,  
who walks in his ways!

**2** You shall eat the fruit of the labor of your hands;  
you shall be blessed, and it shall be well with you.

**3** Your wife will be like a fruitful vine  
within your house;  
your children will be like olive shoots  
around your table.

**4** Behold, thus shall the man be blessed  
who fears the LORD.

**5** The LORD bless you from Zion!  
May you see the prosperity of Jerusalem  
all the days of your life!

**6** May you see your children's children!  
Peace be upon Israel!

\*Translating verse 2 as “temple” creates disagreement about the authorship of David, since the temple came after him. Here are two approaches to resolve that question:

“...the mention of “the temple” in this verse seems to render such an opinion (*that David is not the author*) doubtful. If, however, we translate this word by “mansion”, which is the proper rendering of the original--*the mansion of thy sanctity*, --this objection to its composition by David falls to the ground. --*James Anderson's Note to Calvin in loc...*

“...The holy temple was a type and figure of the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore we find Daniel opening his windows toward the temple, where he prayed three times a day; and we find Jonah saying, “Yet will I look again toward thy holy temple.” So looking to Jesus, he is our temple...”

➤ <https://www.christianity.com/bible/commentary.php?com=spur&b=19&c=138>

“In Hebrew, the name for the book of Psalms is *tehillim*, or “praises,” because from beginning to end, the God we confess is the subject of our praise.

Yet we must be clear, this unbridled praise is always grounded in gritty reality. There is no room for escapism or denial in these texts; the Psalter does not afford us this kind of luxury. What the psalms do provide, however, is a lens through which to see this world, and even more, a language that can lead us to full confession in the midst of it. Psalm 138 provides both.

This psalm is typically labeled as a psalm of thanksgiving, as the opening line suggests. Yet, the verb “to give thanks,” *yadah*, can also mean “to praise,” or better still, “to confess” in the sense of giving testimony. To thank God is always to confess something about this God; gratitude apart from testimony always falls short. The psalmist announces, “On the day I called, you answered me” (verse 3).

Although some thanksgiving psalms provide specific details regarding deliverance (for example, Psalm 118), others such as this psalm remain rather muted in their description, perhaps leaving us to wonder: What testimony is being offered here? The point, however, is not *what* God did, it is *that* God did; it is that God moved in response to the psalmist’s cry and God answered. The testimony is that the God who made the heavens and the earth (Psalm 115:15), the one who stands over all, heard a cry and answered. God’s willingness to answer serves as the ground of our hope. It is the very thing that strengthens our souls (verse 3); it is the very thing that makes possible the larger confession of this psalm...”

➤ [https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=4545](https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=4545) [W. Dennis Tucker, Jr.](#)  
Professor of Christian Scriptures, George W. Truett Theological Seminary, Waco, Texas. This Baptist seminary is part of Baylor University.

### **Romans 11:33-12:8; RCL, Romans 12:1-8 (Romans 12:9-21; RCL, the same reading)**

*In this and the following verses is the conclusion of all that he (Paul) had delivered, especially in this and the two preceding chapters. He had spoken of many profound mysteries, and answered many critical questions; and here he makes a pause, and falls into an admiration of God, his abundant wisdom and knowledge. He seems here to be like a man that wades into the waters, till he begins to feel no bottom, and then he cries out: **Oh the depth!** and goes no farther...”*

➤ <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/romans/11-33.htm> [Matthew Poole's Commentary](#)

## The Remnant of Israel Verse 1-10

### Gentiles Grafted In Verses 11-24 (Proper 15 - last week)

#### 11 The Mystery of Israel's Salvation Verses 25-36 (Proper 15)

<sup>33</sup> Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!

<sup>34</sup> “For who has known the mind of the Lord,  
or who has been his counselor?”

<sup>35</sup> “Or who has given a gift to him  
that he might be repaid?”\*

<sup>36</sup> For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.

- a. [Romans 11:1](#) Or *one of the offspring of Abraham*
- b. [Romans 11:12](#) Greek *their fullness*
- c. [Romans 11:17](#) Greek *root of richness*; some manuscripts *richness*
- d. [Romans 11:25](#) Or *brothers and sisters*
- e. [Romans 11:31](#) Some manuscripts omit *now*

\*“Rhetorical questions highlighting the absurdity of anyone teaching God anything. We have no access to God’s thinking except what he chooses to reveal to us... (verse 35) rules out any thought that the Creator God owes us anything.”

➤ The Lutheran Study Bible, page 1933. Concordia Publishing House, 2009

### A Living Sacrifice Verses 1-2

*“One could probably preach on this passage for months without much repetition, except for its grounding in the mercies of God.*

*So, what follows will attempt to describe some key elements and implications for living as individuals and communities of faith. (continued after the reading)*

**12** I appeal to you therefore, brothers,<sup>[a]</sup> by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.<sup>[b]</sup> <sup>2</sup> Do not be conformed to this world,<sup>[c]</sup> but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.<sup>[d]</sup>

### Gifts of Grace Verses 3-8

<sup>3</sup> For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. <sup>4</sup> For as in one body we have many

members,<sup>[e]</sup> and the members do not all have the same function,<sup>5</sup> so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.<sup>6</sup> Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith;<sup>7</sup> if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching;<sup>8</sup> the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads,<sup>[f]</sup> with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

### **Marks of the True Christian Verses 9-21 (Proper 17-next week)**

- a. [Romans 12:1](#) Or *brothers and sisters*
- b. [Romans 12:1](#) Or *your rational service*
- c. [Romans 12:2](#) Greek *age*
- d. [Romans 12:2](#) Or *what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God*
- e. [Romans 12:4](#) Greek *parts*; also verse [5](#)
- f. [Romans 12:8](#) Or *gives aid*

“Looking back and forward at the same time

The word “therefore” in verse 1 points to the essential link between Paul’s admonitions and their theological basis. He has spent chapters 9-11 (over 2,000 words in English) exploring core elements of God’s relationship with humanity, God’s perpetual call to life, humanity’s resistance, and how we humans can find our way back to the God who always desires our return. As he says at the end of this exploration, it all depends, we all depend, on the unflagging mercies of the God “from [whom], through [whom], and to [whom] are all things” (Romans 11:36).

So Paul continues, “I appeal to you, therefore, by the mercies of God.” It’s another way of recalling the center of the Law, the prophets, the writings, and the gospel. He calls us to keep God’s unending mercies ever before us, to write that down, tie it to our forehead, write it on the doorframes of our houses, teach it to our children, talk about it all day long, and ponder it through the night (Deuteronomy 11:1-21). He calls us to live by an essential truth, stated elsewhere with different language but describing the same thing:

- “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, strength, and mind and your neighbor as yourself” (Deuteronomy 6:5, 11:1, 13; Matthew 22:37, Mark 12:30-1; Luke 10:27)
- “Faith, hope, and love abide, and the greatest of these is love” (1 Corinthians 13:13)
- “For God so loved the world ...” (John 3:16)
- “Everyone who loves is born of God and knows God ... for God is love” (1 John 4:7-8).

All our forward motion should proceed out of that enduring reality...”

- [http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=3375](http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=3375)

[Frank L. Crouch](#) Dean and Vice President, Moravian Theological Seminary, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

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“Romans 12:1-8 is a summary and reminder of Romans 1-11, in which the Apostle Paul is writing an apologetic of the presence, work, and callings of God on the entire human family. Readers are called to live a countercultural lifestyle, moving from the life of flesh to a life formed by the Holy Spirit. Thus, writing to those under the Roman Empire, Paul persuades Christian communities living in the imperial center to live not according to the political ideologies of Rome, but rather to live out faith on the basis of what God did in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ...”

The life to which Paul calls Christians in Rome, and consequently those in the 21st century, is a life that exhibits the essence of God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. Put differently, a holy life is one through which all one says and does is governed by sacrificial living (Romans 12:1; see also Isaiah 6:3; Philippians 2:5-11)...”

- [http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=4563](http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=4563) Israel Kamudzandu

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“Paul lists grace gifts elsewhere [1 Corinthians 12:7-11, 28-30; Ephesians 4:11-12]. Each list is different and provides specific examples. No list is exhaustive; there may be other gifts. The key is to receive all gifts humbly in faith and to use them to serve others...”

God graciously bestows various gifts to be used for the benefit of others. Our abilities can cause us to think of ourselves too highly. Paul urges Christians to avoid that temptation while exhorting us to use God’s gifts to serve others. Paul repeatedly emphasizes the gracious gifts of God that are received in faith.”

- Lutheran Study Bible, page 1935 Concordia Publishing House, 2009

**Matthew 16:13-20; RCL, the same reading (Matthew 16:21-28: RCL, the same reading)**

“He saith unto them, But whom—rather, "who." say ye that I am?—He had never put this question before, but the crisis He was reaching made it fitting that He should now have it from them. We may suppose this to be one of those moments of which the prophet says, in His name, "Then I said, I have labored in vain; I have spent my strength for naught, and in vain" ([Isa 49:4](#)): Lo, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree; and what is it? As the result of all, I am taken for John the Baptist, for Elias, for Jeremias, for one of the prophets. Yet some there are that have beheld My glory, the glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father, and I shall hear their voice, for it is sweet...”

- <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/jamieson/jfb.xi.i.xviii.html> Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible, Robert Jamieson, A.R. Fausset, and David Brown

“The Holy Gospel beginning in the 16<sup>th</sup> Chapter of St. Matthew”

## The Pharisees and Sadducees Demand Signs Verses 1-4

## The Leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees Verses 5-12

## Peter Confesses Jesus as the Christ Verses 13-20

<sup>13</sup> Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, **“Who do people say that the Son of Man is?”** <sup>14</sup> And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” <sup>15</sup> He said to them, **“But who do you say that I am?”** <sup>16</sup> Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” <sup>17</sup> And Jesus answered him, **“Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. <sup>18</sup> And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock<sup>b</sup> I will build my church, and the gates of hell<sup>a</sup> shall not prevail against it. <sup>19</sup> I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed<sup>d</sup> in heaven.”** <sup>20</sup> Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ.

## Jesus Foretells His Death and Resurrection Verses 21-23 (Proper 17)

## Take Up Your Cross and Follow Jesus Verses 24-28 (Proper 17)

- a. [Matthew 16:18](#) The Greek words for *Peter* and *rock* sound similar
- b. [Matthew 16:18](#) Greek *the gates of Hades*
- c. [Matthew 16:19](#) Or *shall have been bound... shall have been loosed*

**“This is the Gospel of the Lord”** “Praise to You, O Christ”

“Matthew 16:13a is not important, right?

We can just skip to verse 13b, yes?

We can just start with the question “Who do people say that I am?” That’s the core if it all here, right?

Wrong!

We cannot skip the geographical marker in this incident. If we do, we miss the key piece of information that ends up informing what happens in this important exchange between Jesus and his disciples. Because where are they as this pericope opens?

Caesarea Philippi. *Caesarville*.

Once upon a time it was known as the region of Naphtali. It was an Israelite place. A God place. A Promised Land place. But even as the Soviet communists could not stand to have a town named “Saint Petersburg” (and so changed it to “Leningrad”), so the Romans changed names when it suited them better.

The translation we have in Matthew 16:13-20 says it was “Caesarea Philippi,” but literally in the Greek it is “Caesarea of Philip.” That distinguished it from the older city of Caesarea, which was south and west of there a ways along the Mediterranean Sea. But it also pointed to the more immediate history of the place. Around 20 B.C. Augustus had given the town and its surrounding region to King Herod. Herod built up the city, including a temple of white marble that honored the cult of the Caesar. After Herod died in 4 B.C., the region passed to King Philip, who further built up the place and renamed it “Philip’s Caesarville” so as to flatter and honor his patron, Caesar Augustus.

In other words . . . this was a place that oozed the unctuous nature of politics as usual. It was a place that worshiped Augustus, a place filled with political patronage and a reveling in all things worldly. The very name of the town pointed to the “I’ll scratch your back if you’ll scratch mine” give-and-take of the kingdoms of this world. Translated to a twenty-first century context, this would be a place that would be crawling with high-paid lobbyists in \$1,000 suits earning \$700 an hour to shill for AARP or the National Rifle Association or any number of high-octane single-interest groups that work the system for influence and manipulation.

So it was no coincidence that it was here that Jesus asked his famous question, “Who do people say that I am?”

*Don’t skip verse 13a...*

- [https://cep.calvinseminary.edu/sermon-starters/proper-16a/?type=the\\_lectionary\\_gospel](https://cep.calvinseminary.edu/sermon-starters/proper-16a/?type=the_lectionary_gospel) Scott Hoezee

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“Questions have a way of marking important moments and events.

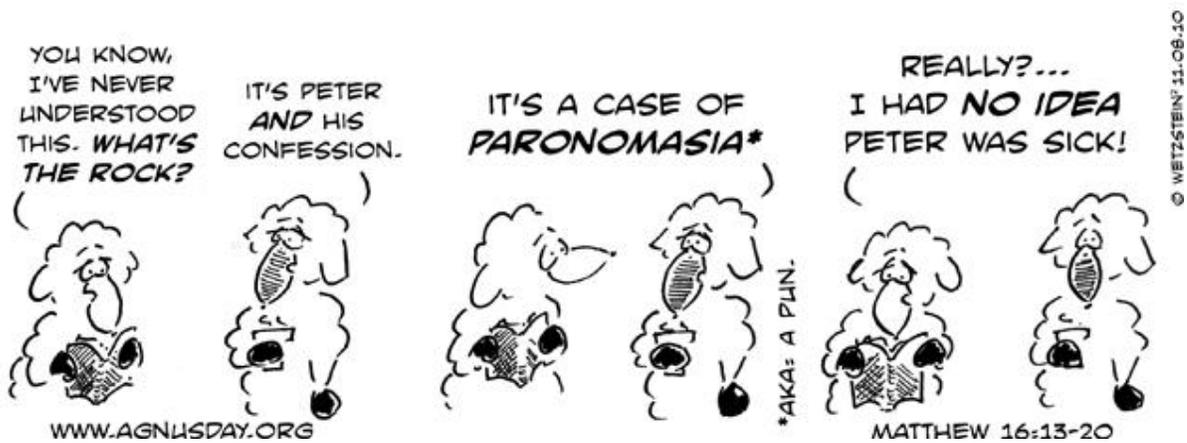
So it is with today’s lesson. Matthew’s story has from the beginning drawn us in with the good news announcement of salvation that is to be for us in this one who as “Immanuel -- God with us” will “save his people from their sins” (1:21-22). Yet central questions haunt the reader. The Sermon on the Mount has been delivered and Jesus’ ministry of teaching and healing is well underway when John the Baptist still asks that question at issue for every hearer of the good news today, “Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?” And Jesus’ reply is pointed, “Blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me” (11:3-6).

Even foreigners as in last Sunday’s lesson have expressed “great faith” in their acknowledging of this “Lord” as the agent of God’s mercy (15:21-28). Now it is time for Jesus’ disciples who have followed him in his Galilean ministry to come clean and acknowledge the identity of this one who has called them and led them in this mission to the world.

Today’s lesson has fittingly been acknowledged as pivotal and climactic in Matthew’s narrative of Jesus’ Galilean ministry. The stories to this point have repeatedly pressed the issue of faith and discipleship as the many stories of Jesus’ teaching and healing have led these disciples and ourselves to expect some things about this one called the Son of Man.

And now these stories are focused in Jesus’ intensely direct and personal question and in Peter’s response. “But who do *you* say that I am?” There is no escape and this is no time for evasion. Peter speaks for the disciples, for Matthew’s gospel and the community to which it is first addressed, and certainly for us, announcing that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the Living God (16:15-16). Jesus confirms this “confession” by Peter as a mark of God’s blessing and as the “rock” upon which he will build his church (16:17-18)...

- [http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=981](http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=981)  
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**The Matthew Challenge** If you were on schedule you would have written today's Gospel in June. This month you would be in chapters 22 and 23.

Weekly review thoughts



“Sometimes you can look out and wonder what the future holds for Christians and the church. And maybe sometimes it looks like the church is in some pretty dark times and sin has the upper hand, but did you hear what Jesus said? The church will not be overcome. In other words, it’s going to be around forever. And Jesus has a pretty good track record for promises. When he says something will happen it does. He said he would rise from the dead, something unheard of in the history of the world and he did. And he said the church would not be overcome and it hasn’t. From the time of the disciples to the time of Luther even up to the time of this little group of believers right here.

It’s easy to wonder what the future of the church is when so many people don’t know who Jesus is. But you know what? Jesus still builds his church and he uses us to do it...”

- <http://www.nnyredemption.com/podcast/matthew-1613-20/> Pastor Aaron Goetzinger Redemption Lutheran Church in Watertown, NY.