

Chapel Pointe – Morning Service
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“Preseason Champs”

Matthew 16:13-20

Introduction (Me):

Video (Harrison and Jenison High School Football Team)

Detroit Lion’s 2008 Season

- Preseason – 4-0 The only team to go undefeated in the preseason matchups
- Regular Season – 0-16 The only team to win 0 games in a 16-game season
- The T-shirts – “Preseason Champs.”

Link back to video

What happens when you think you’re ready for something, but you’re really not?
 What happens when you think you’ve got the right stuff, and then when the time really comes, you fall short?

Tension (We):

Often, we think we’re prepared, and then reality hits...

- School and the exams – study, but it was the wrong stuff. My preference for essay questions over multiple choice or true and false.
- Recitals and band competitions.
- The big presentation at work that goes awry because of a question you weren’t ready for.

Our Christian lives can be like that too.

- Kids who go to summer camp...
- Students and adults who go on missions trips...
- Retreat weekends where everything becomes so clear, and then you come home to reality...
- A great worship experience, and then you get cut off by someone in the Grandville traffic on Chicago Drive...
- Maybe at some point in our lives we were really on fire for God, and now, we go through the motions...
- Looking at a family with a rebellious child and thinking, “I’m a better parent.”
- Shopping and seeing someone that looks different than you either by looks, shape, color, financial status, and elevating yourself in your own mind...

Just like the video... just like the Detroit Lions 2008 season, we think that we’re okay, but when the real opportunity comes, we find out that we may be preseason champs, but we’re getting whipped on the field when it really matters.

Preseason doesn't count!

Main Point: How you live is what you believe.

Contextualization (God):

Jesus brings his disciples about 30 miles away to a place that they had never been. They've been with Jesus for more than two years now.

Text (God):

v. 13-14 – The Setting

1. The question – “Who do people say I am?”
 - a. A dangerous question to ask. Friends may say, “No one is talking about you.”
 - b. The title, “Son of Man”
 - 1) Messianic use in the Old Testament
 - 2) Used to describe Jesus
 - c. Why ask the disciples?
 - 1) They would have had a good understanding
 - a) **Illustration: A politician who takes a poll – trying to find out the true pulse of the people.**
 - b) The people probably weren't going to come up to Him and tell Him what they really think.
 - c) The disciples were in a good spot to know.
2. The answers
 - a. Believed in the reincarnation or resurrection of prophets who were gone
 - b. All of them had comparable styles to Jesus
 - 1) John the Baptist
 - 2) Elijah
 - 3) Jeremiah
 - c. People thought that Jesus was provoking, but no one thought He was the promised Messiah of the Old Testament.
 - 1) For a normal person, these would have been very flattering...
 - 2) **Illustration: We all have people whom we'd like to be compared to – Tiger Woods, Michael Jordan, someone in your work-world, “The best mom or dad.”**

v. 15-16 – The Question to the Disciples

1. Jesus asks his disciples – what do you think?
 - a. Are you getting it?
2. Peter gives the answer
 - a. You are Messiah!
 - 1) Peter's comment marks the climax of the gradual recognition of Jesus before the crucifixion.

- 2) He didn't have it 100% figured out yet, but one thing he knew, Jesus was different than all the prophets. He saw in Jesus the Promised One of God in whom God's purpose is finally going to be accomplished

v. 17-19 – The Future

1. Jesus praises Peter's response
 - a. "Peter – we've heard other things come out of your mouth, and you're just not that smart!"
 2. The "church" – A gathering of people
 - a. Endorsing Peter?
 - b. Endorsing Peter's confession?
 - c. Historical background of Caesarea Philippi
 - 1) Built on the base of a mountain – Mount Hermon.
 - 2) "Upon this rock" – The imagery of where they were standing
 - a) Jesus took them to the worst place possible within walking distance of His ministry region.
 - i) Pagan area with a temple to the Greek god, Pan
 - ii) Half-goat / half-man
 - iii) Engaged in sex-acts as part of worship
 - iv) "In the time of Christ, Caesarea Philippi was a center of Greco-Roman civilization, with a largely pagan population." – W. Ewing, ISBE, p. 569
 - v) **Illustration: The Las Vegas of the day...**
 - 3) "The gates of hell..." – The cave
 - a) This rock had a huge opening in it, and water would gush forth from it.
 - b) They believed that the gods lived underneath the water and they would worship there to get the gods to come out.
 - i) Worship included sex acts
 - ii) Human sacrifice – death
 - 4) It's on this rock that I will build my church. I will overcome all the perverse religions that are destroying people and the worst kind of darkness in this world. My truth will set people free who are imprisoned by this. You need to leave your cities of comfort and take my truth to the realm of darkness and the gates of hell will not prevail against.
 - a) Death will not be able to swallow up this movement of truth.
3. Peter's role
 - a. The imaginary role of Peter – Standing at the Pearly Gates, letting people in.
 - b. The real image is one of steward – make provisions for the household, not stand at the outer gate to allow admission.
 - 1) Jews – Acts 2 – The first to make provisions for Jewish believers
 - 2) Gentiles – Acts 10 – The first to make provisions for Gentile believers

v. 20 – Keep the Secret

1. People didn't really get what the Messiah was supposed to do.

- a. Peter didn't even have it 100% yet.
 - 1) It's not that the declaration was wrong; it's just that they didn't fully understand the ramifications of what the Messiah was going to do.
 - 2) "If Peter had some misconception, how much more misconception would there be in followers outside the Twelve?" - D.A. Carson, EBC
- b. What would the rest of the culture think?

Application (You) "What do they need to do?":

It sounds like Peter scored a touchdown.

Look at some events that follow this great preseason game that Peter had – Look at how he played in the regular season, when it really mattered.

1. Matthew 16:21-22 – Peter rebukes Jesus for talking about His death
 - a. "Peter himself will find it impossible to associate Messiahship with Jesus' proclaimed mission of suffering and death; for him apparently the title conveys glory and success, not defeat and execution." – R.T. France, NICNT, p. 618
2. Matthew 26:31-35 – Jesus announced Peter's prediction of his denial of Jesus
3. Matthew 26:69-75 – Peter denies Jesus three times

Peter's announcement in Matthew 16 that Jesus was the Messiah was a great answer, when it didn't really count!

When Jesus was trying to explain that as Messiah He was going to save the world, through His death, burial and resurrection, not just act as a military warrior, Peter didn't want to hear it.

When Peter had an opportunity to stand up and say, "Yes, I'm a follower of Jesus, and He is the Messiah!" He lied, he denounced Jesus, and he fled in defeat because his picture of Messiah was being destroyed.

Peter was just like the Detroit Lions... Just like Harrison in the video – Ready to go when it didn't matter, and totally unprepared and inadequate for when it did!

How's your life? Are you prepared to be a Christ-follower and live like one when we sit in here on a Sunday morning? What about your life lived out, Monday through Saturday? Would your spiritual life be a parody of the "Preseason Champs" T-shirt for the Lions? The truth, preseason ended when you became a Christ-follower!

Commit, just for this week that...

- Your attitude in here is going to be what you display at home and work.
- Your language that you use in church is going to be the language you use the rest of the week.
- How your kids see you here is how they'll see you at home.
- That your spouse feels your encouraging words more than when people are listening, but that it becomes a regular part of your life with him or her this week.
- That your finances reflect a little more of God's agenda than your own, just for this week.

- That when you say you aren't going to be a workaholic, that you actually follow through on it, and invest time with your family.
- That your neighbors see someone who goes to church on Sunday, but genuinely cares for them as friends.
- That when you look at someone you don't do it with an, "I'm better than you because..." mindset.

Main Point: How you live is what you believe.

Inspiration (We) "Why do they need to do it?":

The world is full of Christ-followers who say one thing on Sunday and live a different life the rest of the week.

The last thing the kingdom of God needs is a bunch of "Preseason Champ" Christians, because we couldn't print up enough T-shirts to equip the team of Christians who look good when it doesn't matter, but completely fall apart when it does.

Our challenge from God: be a committed follower of Christ in moments when it counts! God is looking for someone just like you, to be fully-committed to Him and live that out on a daily basis.

"For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him." – 2 Chronicles 16:9

Are you that person? That person, doesn't wear this jersey? That person, doesn't just get the answers right in the practice-round, that person lives it each and every day.