

The background features several overlapping, flowing, wavy lines in various shades of red and maroon, creating a sense of movement and depth. The lines are semi-transparent, allowing them to intersect and create darker tones where they overlap.

Confessions

Revisit the story of
Peter's confession in
a whole new light.

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WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Introduction

There are two common techniques magicians use to convince audiences they are doing magic: misdirection and sleight of hand. Misdirection is when they distract you from focusing on what they are doing. Sleight of hand is when they manipulate objects so cleverly you don't notice what they did. Combined, they look like magic.

When you take a moment to step back and see each part of what the magician's do individually, you realize they are building up to the moment of "magic." Seeing each part individually doesn't take away from the impact of the moment but it does help you understand the moment better and appreciate everything they did that led to that moment.

Session Scriptures

Mark 8:1 – Mark 9:13 (KJV)

1 In those days the multitude being very great, and having nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples unto him, and saith unto them,

2 I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat:

3 And if I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint by the way: for divers of them came from far.

4 And his disciples answered him, From whence can a man satisfy these men with bread here in the wilderness?

5 And he asked them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven.

6 And he commanded the people to sit down on the ground: and he took the seven loaves, and gave thanks, and brake, and gave to his disciples to set before them; and they did set them before the people.

7 And they had a few small fishes: and he blessed, and commanded to set them also before them.

8 So they did eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets.

9 And they that had eaten were about four thousand: and he sent them away.

10 And straightway he entered into a ship with his disciples, and came into the parts of Dalmanutha.

11 And the Pharisees came forth, and began to question with him, seeking of him a sign from heaven, tempting him.

12 And he sighed deeply in his spirit, and saith, Why doth this generation seek after a sign? Verily I say unto you, There shall no sign be given unto this generation.

13 And he left them, and entering into the ship again departed to the other side.

14 Now the disciples had forgotten to take bread, neither had they in the ship with them more than one loaf.

15 And he charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod.

16 And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have no bread.

17 And when Jesus knew it, he saith unto them, Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? Perceive ye not yet, neither understand? Have ye your heart yet hardened?

18 Having eyes, see ye not? And having ears, hear ye not? And do ye not remember?

19 When I brake the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They say unto him, Twelve.

20 And when the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? And they said, Seven.

21 And he said unto them, How is it that ye do not understand?

22 And he cometh to Bethsaida; and they bring a blind man unto him, and besought him to touch him.

23 And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw ought.

24 And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking.

25 After that he put his hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly.

26 And he sent him away to his house, saying, Neither go into the town, nor tell it to any in the town.

27 And Jesus went out, and his disciples, into the towns of Caesarea Philippi: and by the way he asked his disciples, saying unto them, Whom do men say that I am?

28 And they answered, John the Baptist; but some say, Elias; and others, One of the prophets.

29 And he saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Peter answereth and saith unto him, Thou art the Christ.

30 And he charged them that they should tell no man of him.

31 And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

32 And he spake that saying openly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him.

33 But when he had turned about and looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men.

34 And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

35 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it.

36 For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

37 Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

38 Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

1 And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power.

2 And after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves: and he was transfigured before them.

3 And his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them.

4 And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus.

5 And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.

6 For he wist not what to say; for they were sore afraid.

7 And there was a cloud that overshadowed them: and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him.

8 And suddenly, when they had looked round about, they saw no man any more, save Jesus only with themselves.

9 And as they came down from the mountain, he charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of man were risen from the dead.

10 And they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with another what the rising from the dead should mean.

11 And they asked him, saying, Why say the scribes that Elias must first come?

12 And he answered and told them, Elias verily cometh first, and restoreth all things; and how it is written of the Son of man, that he must suffer many things, and be set at nought.

13 But I say unto you, That Elias is indeed come, and they have done unto him whatsoever they listed, as it is written of him.

Surveying the Scriptures

The story of Peter's confession about Christ being the Messiah is one of the more well-known passages of scripture. Many know it from the book of Matthew where Peter is called the rock, but it is also found in the books of Mark and Luke. However, many don't know where it falls in the broader story of Christ or Peter's life. They don't understand the context in which it was happening, the events that led up to it, or the events that happened immediately after it. In other words, they miss its context, a key ingredient to help us understand it at a deeper level.

After reading the session scriptures, answer these questions:

1. What major event(s) happened before Peter's confession?

2. What major event(s) happened after Peter's confession?

3. Draw a timeline of the events.

Digging Deeper

Peter's confession occurred well into Jesus' ministry, possibly 6-12 months before Christ was crucified. At this point, he had seen Jesus perform numerous miracles and performed some miracles himself. Some might say by this time Peter and the other disciples should have known Christ was the Messiah.

Search the gospels to answer these questions.

1. What miracles had Christ performed specifically for Peter well before Peter called Christ the Messiah?
2. What disciple called Christ the Messiah before Peter did?

Life Application

Context matters. When we view things in context, we get a clearer picture of what's happening and why. It may not help us predict the future but it can give us clarity on our past and our present.

To view things more in context, we can:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Personal Reflection

Think about something happening in your life right now. Try to understand its context by answering these questions.

1. What significant things have happened in the last 3-12 months?

2. How are these things connected to what's happening now?

3. What can you expect God to do in the next 1-3 months?

WHO'S LISTENING?

Introduction

Hearing is one of our five main senses. The human ear works by picking up sound waves, turning them into electrical signals that go to our brain where they are interpreted. Therefore, our brains are where we actually listen.

Listening involves more than hearing. Listening requires us to pay attention and make sense of what we hear. It's one of the reasons many struggle to remember what they hear accurately.

When we hear something we don't interpret as important, we discard it. We may retain the memory that something was heard but won't retain it in as much detail as when we hear things we interpret as important.

Our brains decide what is important based on factors unique to us. That's partly why no two people have the exact same experience.

Session Scriptures

Matthew 16:13-20 (KJV)

13 When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?

14 And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

15 He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

19 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.

20 Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ.

Mark 8:27-30 (KJV)

27 And Jesus went out, and his disciples, into the towns of Caesarea Philippi: and by the way he asked his disciples, saying unto them, Whom do men say that I am?

28 And they answered, John the Baptist; but some say, Elias; and others, One of the prophets.

29 And he saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Peter answereth and saith unto him, Thou art the Christ.

30 And he charged them that they should tell no man of him.

Luke 9:18-21 (KJV)

18 And it came to pass, as he was alone praying, his disciples were with him: and he asked them, saying, Whom say the people that I am?

19 They answering said, John the Baptist; but some say, Elias; and others say, that one of the old prophets is risen again.

20 He said unto them, But whom say ye that I am? Peter answering said, The Christ of God.

21 And he straitly charged them, and commanded them to tell no man that thing;

Surveying the Scriptures

After reading the session scriptures, answer these questions.

1. What are some **similarities** between Matthew's, Mark's, and Luke's account of Peter's confession?
2. What are some **differences** between Matthew's, Mark's, and Luke's account of Peter's confession?
3. What is the **biggest difference** between the three accounts?

Digging Deeper

The similarities and differences between the three accounts of Peter's confession are important to consider. Scholars continue to debate how and why the similarities and differences exist.

Do some research to answer these questions.

1. Who wrote each of the books (Matthew, Mark, and Luke)?

2. Why might the author of Matthew have a longer account of Peter's confession than Mark and Luke?

Life Application

What we pay attention to matters. Naturally, we tend to pay more attention to things that affect us or people we love. Next, we tend to give attention to things that affect our closest friends and loved ones. Strangers tend to get the least of our attention. However, Jesus gave a lot of His attention to people He had never met. His attention was influenced by need, not position.

To pay attention on the right things, we can:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Personal Reflection

Think about the past week and answer these questions.

1. What (or who) got the majority of your attention?

2. Who benefited most from that attention?

3. How did your focus impact you?

WHO'S TALKING?

Introduction

President George Washington lived from February 22, 1732 to December 14, 1799 and was president from April 30, 1789 to March 4, 1797. These facts are repeatedly shared in the dozens of biographies written about him. Yet, people are still writing new biographies about him more than 200 years after his death. Why?

Every biography written about President Washington approaches his life differently. Though the facts of his life haven't changed, people continually find new ways of understanding and interpreting them. Each author's audience looks a little different as they tell their version of his story, making their audiences understand him a little differently.

Session Scriptures

Matthew 16:13-20 (KJV)

13 When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?

14 And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

15 He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

19 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.

20 Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ.

Surveying the Scriptures

After reading the session scriptures, answer these questions:

1. How were the two questions Jesus asked different?

2. How is Jesus' first question and Peter's answer to Jesus' second question similar?

3. Who did Jesus say revealed the truth to Peter?

Digging Deeper

Peter was considered one of Jesus' closest disciples, along with James and John. However, he is the only disciple recorded as answering Jesus' second question.

Study the gospels to answer these questions.

1. What things had Peter witnessed with James and John before his confession that other disciples had not?
2. What did Jesus teach about flesh and spirit?
3. How might our understanding of scriptures and our faith be different if Matthew did not include verses 7-19?

Life Application

Perspective matters. It is influenced by what we know, believe, and experience. It also influences our actions and interactions, especially relationships. The more we realize how much our perspective

impacts us, the more we see the need for God to intervene because He sees every perspective clearly.

To get the right perspective, we can:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Personal Reflection

Think about someone you struggle to understand or get along with and answer these questions.

1. What do you find most difficult about understanding or getting along with them?

2. How are you two similar and different?

3. What can you do differently to connect with them?

WHAT ARE YOU THINKING?

Introduction

Temporary insanity is a legal defense lawyers sometimes use when there is no doubt of their client's guilt. With temporary insanity, the defendant is not arguing if they did the crime. They are admitting they did it but arguing they should not be found guilty because they were mentally unable to understand what they were doing.

For example, a defendant might use the insanity plea if DNA proves they murdered their spouse but they did it while intoxicated to the point of insanity.

In order to win an insanity plea, a defendant has to prove he or she was so mentally or emotionally disturbed that they acted insanely, with no control over their actions.

Session Scriptures

Mark 8:31-38

31 And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

32 And he spake that saying openly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him.

33 But when he had turned about and looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men.

34 And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

35 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it.

36 For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

37 Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

38 Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

Surveying the Scriptures

After reading the session scriptures, answer these questions:

1. Who did Jesus teach about His upcoming suffering?

2. How did Peter respond to Jesus' teaching?

3. What did Jesus do after Peter's response?

Digging Deeper

The exchange between Jesus and Peter was a big deal. It wasn't a simple misunderstanding. The way they responded to each other showcased a clear divide.

Do some research and answer these questions.

1. What does the word rebuke mean?
2. Why do you think Peter rebuked Jesus?
3. What had Peter done just before rebuking Jesus?
4. Why do you think Jesus called Peter Satan?

Confessions

Peter's confession of Jesus being the Messiah is one of the more well-known stories in the Bible but leaves a lot of questions unanswered. Studying its unique circumstances offers great insights into our Lord and Savior, Christ Jesus.

Take a fresh look at Peter's confession and you might discover why his confession was (and remains) a game-changer.