7 - Jesus is the Messiah

Warning: Technical theological words used today! (Theological = words about God)

We know Jesus is the Messiah/Saviour/Christ. But how did we come to know this? This question of how God reveals (revelation) his truth is essential to following Jesus today.

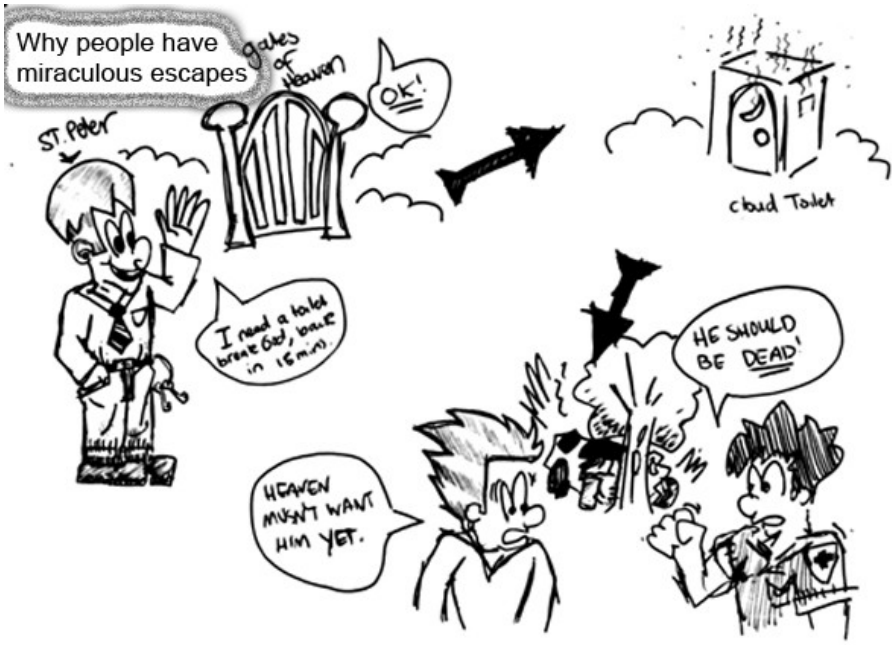
St. Peter is the first person in Mark's gospel to say and accept Jesus is the Messiah. Here is how it happened.

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." 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. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock. I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. 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 in heaven." Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ. (Matt 16:13-20)

'For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.'

There are four points as to how this came about.

1) **The source** of revelation came from God.
2) Jesus **prompted** this revelation.
3) It was **based** on the Old Testament expectation for a Messiah.
4) Jesus **confirmed** the revelation.



This fourfold pattern is followed for every revelation that we accept as Catholics. How can we be certain that we are following the truth? How do we know the revelation is from God?

The question arises somehow, this is the prompting – it doesn't really matter how the question is prompted.

The question is about the source of the revelation, is it from God or not?

We are left we two ways which must agree for us to confirm the revelation, what it is based on and is it confirmed.

Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. All truth must be based on the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. We have as our source, the Bible, particularly the gospels and the living tradition of the Church. The Tradition is what has been handed on from generation to generation from the time of Jesus. The gospels actually came from this tradition, but have a special place. We count both of these the 'Word of God', scripture and Tradition. (see week 2 for more details).

How can we confirm any revelation? In our passage from Matthew's gospel we have the answer, Jesus gave this power of confirming the truth to St. Peter. We call this special gift the 'Petrine Ministry'. Which means St. Peter has a special grace to confirm truth. He can never add to the truth, but elaborate the truth based on Scripture and Tradition. The person with this gift became known as the pope. St. Peter was the first pope. There is an unbroken line of popes right up to this day. It is the longest surviving line of leadership in the world today.

The pope shares this ministry of confirming the truth in faith and morals with the bishops of the world. Together we call this special authority the 'Magisterium'. The Magisterium is the 'teaching office' of the pope and bishops or pope on his own in proclaiming faith and morals. He can only confirm, never add, only elaborate the truth.

Because this is so important, it is worth going into detail. The key to understanding this, is to see that this is the work of the Holy Spirit. It comes from God. Like the disciples we might find the teaching challenging, but Christ calls us to follow in truth. He has not left us alone, but through the magisterium still teaches us today and will continue to teach and guide us forever. This is part of this promise to be with us forever. It is a great joy to know the truth and live it.

There are three levels of the Magisterium each requiring a different level of assent. Assent means to agree and follow it. The following table describes each of the levels and the assent required.

There are different levels of Magisterial teachings.

Teacher	Level of Magisterium	Degree of certitude	Assent required
1. Bishop	Ordinary	Authoritative	Submission
2. Pope	Ordinary	Authoritative	Religious submission of intellect and will
3. Bishops proposing dispersed, but in unison	Ordinary (and universal teaching of the Church)	Infallible	Catholic Faith * or definitive assent #
4. Bishops, in union with Pope, proclaiming doctrine at General Council	Extraordinary / Solemn (and universal teaching of the Church)	Infallible	Catholic Faith * or definitive assent #
5. Pope *'ex cathedra'*	Extraordinary / Solemn (and universal)	Infallible	Catholic Faith * or definitive assent #
* Divine and Catholic faith. Faith is demanded if it is part of the deposit of Faith. # Definitive assent is demanded if it is not revealed, but is connected to Revelation.			

When someone from a town has achieved greatness, there may be a town celebration where the mayor gives the town key to the person. I offer you the key to the kingdom of heaven. This key was given to St. Peter as the first pope. This key is expressed by the pope's decisions on faith and morals. This grace of clarity given to the popes is a fast track to heaven. So many problems would be avoided if we take this path and align ourselves with this light on Earth. If we accept the guidance of the Magisterium and remain faithful to it. I offer you this choice now, but I only offer it clarifying two points.

1) This is an invitation. If you are not ready to take up this challenge, then I invite you to continue to pray and reflect. Continue the journey, there is always the opportunity later. But how much better to say, 'yes' when called.
2) This can only be lived through prayer. Jesus is Truth and Love. Jesus is the source of love. The Magisterium challenges us to follow the hard road of unconditional love on earth. We may not understand why, but like the disciples we can say, "We will follow, because you have the words of eternal life". We can not follow without the help of Jesus. Without love, truth can be used by pride as a judegment on others. This must never happen. Love and acceptance is always first, and with strength, the truth can be lived. Jesus did not come to condemn the world but to save it. We must not condemn others, but save them. Help them, love them. The only way we can do this is to pray. To receive from God the love we need to follow him in the fullness of the truth and to love others as he does.

I. PROFESSION OF FAITH

I, [insert your name]., with firm faith believe and profess everything that is contained in the Symbol of faith: namely:

I believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen. I believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten not made, one in Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation, he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets. I believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. I acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

With firm faith, I also believe everything contained in the Word of God, whether written or handed down in Tradition, which the Church, either by a solemn judgement or by the ordinary and universal Magisterium, sets forth to be believed as divinely revealed.

I also firmly accept and hold each and everything definitively proposed by the Church regarding teaching on faith and morals.

Moreover, I adhere with religious submission of will and intellect to the teachings which either the Roman pontiff or the College of Bishops enunciate when they exercise their authentic Magisterium, even if they do not intend to proclaim these teachings by a definitive act.

FINALE: JESUS IS THE MESSIAH

This is the most incredible discovery we could ever make. Let us review our understanding of Jesus and reflect on what this means for us.

Jesus is the Messiah. Jesus is the Word of God. Jesus is our best friend and makes a covenant forever with us.

This means through him, with him and in him we have eternal life. We are destined for heaven the greatest, joyous, happiest place in existence. Every sin is forgiven through Jesus. Every challenge we face in life can be overcome in Jesus. We are friends with God. God is our best friend. …. Sorry I had to pick myself up from the floor, but I can't wipe off my smile.

This weeks passages:

We start this section with a healing miracle – being able to speak and hear. How can we speak with God – through Jesus. Then we have the second multiplication miracle, the

feeding of the four thousand. This leads into the bread allusions of watching out for the leaven of the Pharisees and the understanding that Jesus is the Bread, the Eucharist. But the disciples don't get it. This the set back for this cycle. Each cycle there was a set back, John arrested – Jesus calls the disciples, The Pharisees and Herodians reject Jesus – Jesus sets up the 12 apostles as the new Israel, Jesus' own town rejects him – Jesus sends out the 12 in pairs to preach to the other towns. And now we have his own disciples misunderstanding him – what does he do? He sets up Peter as the first Pope to give clarity, unity and to forever give the correct interpretation of Jesus' teachings.

Most importantly Jesus is the Messiah, our personal saviour, our best friend.

Day 1 The Deaf-and-Dumb Man Mk 7:31-37

How hard it is to communicate. To really share what we feel. We would dearly love to be able to communicate with someone, but we are closed, we are as if deaf and dumb.

Is there someone you find it hard to communicate with?

Jesus shares our pains and sufferings. The sigh that he makes is out of empathy with for the deaf and dumb man. He wants to heal him. Jesus feels his suffering and sighs under the weight of it as he enters into it. But like the death and resurrection he seeks to transform the suffering, by his love, to set free. 'Ephphatha!' Be opened!

What Jesus does for people physically, he even more desires to do spiritually. We are deaf and dumb spiritually. Be opened to the Spirit! Be able to hear the Holy Spirit and speak to God – freely. Dear Jesus, give us the gift of prayer. Help us to persevere so we may hear your voice and truly communicate our heart with you. Amen.

Day 2 The Four Thousand Mk 8:1-10

Jesus had compassion on the crowd and so performed the miracle. Out of love he acts. He knows the practical needs of others and responds. He desires to respond to our needs. What are your needs?

The crowd followed Jesus, because they trusted him. They knew they did not have enough food, but they still followed. He don't have to have it all worked out. Leave room for faith – seek Jesus trusting he will provide. Through prayer and trust Jesus does

perform miracles. Providence is a real thing. If other's don't follow, keep following and Jesus will guide.

Day 3 The Leaven of the Pharisees Mk 8:11-16

'No sign will be given'. They want to test him. They want Jesus to fit into their understanding. But Jesus will never fit into anyone's understanding, because he is so much more than we can understand or ask for. The proper response is surrender to Jesus. But they don't. 'Beware!' says Jesus. Beware of yourself. Do you want Jesus to fit into your hopes and dreams, or are you surrendering your life to Him?

We now have the crux of this section. They have one loaf of bread in the boat. But later they say they have none. Jesus is the loaf of bread. This is an allusion to the Eucharist. That Jesus is the Eucharist. This miracle of multiplication is a preparation for a deeper understanding of the Eucharist. The Eucharist is a great miracle. The bread actually turns into Jesus. If Jesus can multiply the bread, he can turn himself into bread. This might not fit our understanding, it is something we accept and believe because it is given to us as a great gift, in fact the greatest gift possible, God himself.

Day 4 Lack of Understanding of disciples Mk 8:17-21

Jesus could easily condemn the whole world for lack of understanding. But he came to not condemn, but to save. This frustration expressed by Jesus is an encouragement to believe. Jesus warned them of the dangers of Pharisees and Herod, but by using the term yeast, this becomes a spiritual danger. Why then did they talk about having no bread?

At one level, Jesus is implying he can create bread out of practically nothing, at a deeper level, Jesus is the bread. They thought Jesus was talking about physical bread, but he was talking about himself, the bread of life, the Eucharist. He was warning them to receive the message of Jesus and himself without any error. Pure truth, pure love, pure Jesus, pure Eucharist, pure faith.

Day 5 Coming to physical sight Mk 8:22-26

The disciples don't see spiritually. This blind man, Jesus heals so he sees. But Jesus is working for a far more important thing than physical sight, spiritual sight. The disciples did not see clearly. Jesus wants people to see the truth. What is the truth?

How will people see the truth?

Day 6 The Confession Mk 8:27-30

You've made it! The secret is out. Jesus is the Messiah. Peter clearly sees the truth – Jesus is the Messiah. The whole first half of the Gospel leads to this point. Jesus being the Messiah changes everything. Our whole world is turning upside down on this point. Who is Lord of your life? Jesus or you?

Do you want to accept Jesus as your personal Lord and Saviour? Will you truly follow Jesus, seek His will and do it above all else?

We can not do this without his help and this is the best part – bit by bit we can make Jesus our Lord and Messiah. Starting with those 5minutes. For 5 minutes he is Lord. And as we change our life, he becomes more and more Lord. More and more we come into his kingdom. A kingdom of love, peace and joy. Don't have enough love, peace and joy? Then make Jesus your Lord and you will.

Day 7 The Confession from Matthew's gospel Mt 16:13-20

We finish with the same passage, but told by Matthew.

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