

¹³ When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?”

¹⁴ They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”

¹⁵ “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?”

¹⁶ Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”

¹⁷ Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. ¹⁸ And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. ¹⁹ I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” ²⁰ Then he ordered his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

Checking On Your Confessional Foundation

Jesus called me “Petros” or Peter. That’s my Greek name and it means “Rock-man.” In the Aramaic language this name is pronounced “Ceph-us”. My parents named me Simon or Simeon. You can call me whatever you want as long as you say, “Blessed are You,” and heap praise on me like Jesus did.

Andrew, my brother, was the first one to call Jesus the Messiah (Jn 1:41). Shortly later, Nathaniel, another apostle, confessed to Jesus, “*Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the king of Israel.*” Nathaniel made this confession only after Jesus had told Nathanael he had seen Nathaniel under the fig tree. Jesus told Nathan he would see greater things than this is and we did.

We saw Jesus’ miracles. We heard Jesus’ teaching. Initially, I didn’t exactly know what Jesus meant when Jesus said about my confession, “*this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven,*” but I knew exactly what Jesus meant on the Day of Pentecost. On the Day of Pentecost I preached God’s Word in a language I had never learned. This was a miracle. There is no way anyone can speak a foreign language without first learning the language, but the Holy Spirit miraculously revealed a foreign language to me so that I could speak the foreign language like it was my native language. The same is true about God’s Word. God’s Word is a foreign language to us until the Father in heaven reveals his Word in our hearts.

This the Father did in what I like to call my “Kata + echo” classes. “Kata + echo” is a Greek Word and it means “to resound something in someone’s ear,” like an “echo...echo...echo...echo...” Jesus is the Messiah...Messiah...Messiah...Messiah. This echo became stronger for me when I set my fishing gear aside and followed Jesus full-time. This echo becomes stronger for you when we memorize... memorize... memorize what God’s Word says. This echo becomes stronger for you when time is set aside for God’s Word every day and twice on Sunday: Worship and Bible class... Worship and Bible class... Worship and Bible class.

Hearing the Word is essential for having a confessional foundation, but so is putting God’s Word into practice. Jesus taught us disciples, “*everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵ The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. ²⁶ But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. ²⁷ The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash*” (Mt 7).

And I think that’s why Jesus praised my confession so much. Jesus could see what was coming. Jesus called me “Peter” or “Petros”, the masculine form of my name, but Jesus called my confession “Peter” or “Petra”, the feminine form of my name. This play on words should be enough to convince you that the foundation of God’s church is a true confession of faith based on the true and unchanging word of

God and not on a sinful person, but the nature of God is to be generous. And while Jesus did heap praise on my Kata + echo confession, on truth revealed to me by his Father and my Father in heaven, I did not receive the same kind of praise when I ventured off on my own thoughts and on my own strength. "Get behind me Satan!" That's how Jesus rebuked me after I rebuked him for talking about how the Messiah would suffer and die. Not only did Jesus predict his own death. Jesus also predicted my denial including the number of times I would deny him and how many times the rooster would crow. There are more sins I can lay before you, times when I was talking even though I didn't know what I was talking about, but this should be enough.

Enough to teach you that the holy Christian church is not built on a sinful man and enough to teach you to check on your own foundation of faith. Is your foundation just an "inherited faith," which casually assumes faith can be transferred automatically from parents to children? Is your foundation just an "institutional" faith that only believes what the church teaches without any consideration for what the Bible says? The experiences of this sinful world can beat you up like they beat me up or like the wind and water can beat up the side and the roof of a house. But the word of the Lord stands forever.

And my salvation and your salvation is built on the foundation of God's Word. I made my good confession in front of Jesus and our friends. Jesus made his good confession in front of Satan over a period of forty days and forty nights. "Worship the Lord and serve him only." Jesus made his good confession in front of the false church saying, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." Jesus made his good confession in front of a corrupt government. "My kingdom is not of this world," is what Jesus told Pontius Pilate. "The reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth," Jesus said. Jesus was not a threat to the Roman government and Pilate had said, "I find no basis for a charge against him," but sentenced Jesus to be crucified anyway.

These good confessions saved me from my sins and save me from yours, specifically those sins where we knew the good confession from our Cate + echo training and yet because of our fear or lack of discipline we failed to make a good confession in the face of Satan's temptation, a false teaching or a corrupt government.

The Lord is with you. Oddly, I had this truth reinforced for me in the aftermath of my denial of Jesus. When Jesus had confronted me with the same three questions, "Peter, do you love me?" I answered, "Lord, you know all things, you know I love you." And I did love him in my prominent years. Those are the years Luke, the good doctor and author of the Acts of the Apostles wrote about. And I still love him in these humble service years. There is no inspired record of these final years. What's known of me in these humble years is the stuff of legends. If I am to die for the Lord today, I would like it to be on an upside down cross. I pray you will never have to die for the Lord. This day or any day. I pray you will live for him with a good confession and a confession you will put into practice. Today Jesus is checking on your confession, the foundation of your faith. Amen.