# Confirmation Sermon

# Text: Matthew 16:13-18

# Theme: Tell the Story!

**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,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%2016:13-18&version=NIV#fen-NIV-23691a)] and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%2016:13-18&version=NIV#fen-NIV-23691b)] will not overcome it.

 Today is Confirmation Sunday. It is part of a long Lutheran tradition. It is a day filled with much honor, but also a little fear and apprehension. It is a tradition of hot spring Sundays, with relatives traveling miles to be with you today. Parents and sponsors, grandmothers and grandfathers will be straining to hear your unique voice as you affirm your baptism and recite the Creed. You will tell us the Story. The one you have heard. The old, old, story indeed. All wanting to hear your answer to Jesus’ question, “Who do you say that I am?”

**Tell us the Story!**

 If you want a quick answer to this question, just do a Google search on the Internet for Jesus. You will find 11.7 million hits. Here are some of the answers you will find. Telling the story of Jesus.

 Jesus is the great Tylenol. The medicine for pain we suffer. We look around and see TV evangelists marketing Jesus from elaborate TV sets, dispensing healing and miracles.

 Some see Jesus as the Mr. Fix it. He can fix all the problems of the world. He will get rid of covid 19, racism, poverty. He can remove suffering and hardship, if we only pray hard enough.

 God gives us a different answer. The story of Jesus in the Bible is one of suffering and death. Not long ago we read the story of Jesus death on Good Friday. It is a story of failure, weakness, suffering and death on a cross. This is the story of one who died for the unlovely, the unlovable. One whose body was pierced for you and me. Because we do not deserve it. We deserve the exact opposite. Our confirmands know the passage. One they memorized. Romans 6:23 [For](https://biblehub.com/greek/1063.htm) [the](https://biblehub.com/greek/3588.htm) [wages](https://biblehub.com/greek/3800.htm) [of sin](https://biblehub.com/greek/266.htm) [is death,](https://biblehub.com/greek/2288.htm)

 But Jesus did not stop there. As the passage form Romans goes on to say; [but](https://biblehub.com/greek/1161.htm) [the](https://biblehub.com/greek/3588.htm) [gift](https://biblehub.com/greek/5486.htm) [of God](https://biblehub.com/greek/2316.htm) [is eternal](https://biblehub.com/greek/166.htm) [life](https://biblehub.com/greek/2222.htm) [in](https://biblehub.com/greek/1722.htm) [Christ](https://biblehub.com/greek/5547.htm) [Jesus](https://biblehub.com/greek/2424.htm) [our](https://biblehub.com/greek/1473.htm) [Lord.](https://biblehub.com/greek/2962.htm)

Look beyond the cross. There is the empty tomb. God adds the resurrection to the **story.** It was not failure but victory. He calls out to you and me with the words we heard at our baptism, “you are chosen, you are my child, the one I love.”

 God’s words for us today are story of hope and victory in midst of failure, weakness, suffering and death. We are loved no matter what, we will never be forsaken.

 This is a day of words. As confirmands you will speak words of commitment, affirmation, and celebration. Parents, God-parents, relatives and friends and friends will mouth the words with you.

 Today we remember the words spoken by parents and sponsors at your baptism. That day we spoke for you, making promises to bring you to this day when you can speak the words of commitment for yourself. Words that will help you live as God’s people into the future to tell Jesus’ story. How?

- to live among God’s faithful people

- to hear his Word and share his supper

- to serve all people, following the example of our Lord Jesus,

-- to proclaim the good news of God

 These words are a tall order. These are promises which are beyond the ability of any of us to fulfill on our own. These are proud promises today, yet promises which we as adults know, looking back on our Confirmation day are easy to forget. Promises like those of Peter who said, "I’ll never deny you!" yet **did three times.** Promises that can be kept only though the power Jesus promises. “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,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%2016:13-18&version=NIV#fen-NIV-23691a)] and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%2016:13-18&version=NIV#fen-NIV-23691b)] will not overcome it.

 Here is the story. The old, old story. Of Jesus and his love. The words of the story bring the promise of forgiveness. The words of the story let us the truth. Your confirmation promise today tells the story again for all of us to hear. We all will be reminded of words your learned in the meaning of the Creed. "**I believe I cannot by my own understanding or effort believe in Jesus Christ my Lord, or come to him. But the Holy Spirit has called me through the Gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, and sanctified and kept me in true faith."**

 And so today we stand together looking into the future. Some of us are remembering our Confirmation day and see how the future has unfolded up to today. We look at our own story. We look into the future with some fear and apprehension for ourselves, and especially for you, not knowing what the future will hold. We like Peter can make brave promises we can’t always keep. People like you and me who have great intentions but can’t always quite follow through.

 But we also stand looking into the future reminded of our identity as children of God. We live in the assurance of the power of the Holy Spirit which can and will give us power to live with the uncertainty and fear that the future will bring. We know that we are connected, we are forgiven and it is enough.

So , you know the story! Tell it today. Tell the story! For all to hear!

"Who do you say that I am?"

"You are the Messiah, the son of the living God". Thanks be to God!

I Love to Tell the Story,” is a good hymn for Confirmation Sunday.  At baptism, parents promise to bring their children up in the faith, vowing to make sure their children will hear that ‘old, old story of Jesus and his love.’  And that is what we have been doing for these confirmands the past several years– at home, in Sunday School, in Vacation Bible School, and in confirmation instruction– parents, teachers, and pastors have been telling them that old story.  We sang it today. And our Confirmands will tell it.      That is a great hymn and one of my favorites—because I know it is true!

**AMEN**