



Inner Growth - Jesus 6

The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

Matthew 1:1

Journey - Luke 9:3

Enlighten - Job 33:30

Saves - Psalms 18:31, 1 Timothy 1:15

Unity - Ephesians 4:13

Sinners - Luke 5:32

Jesus continues His ministry in the **Pharisees ask for a sign** from Matthew sixteen, verses one through four, tempting Him. However, the response from the Son of God refers to the sign of Prophet Jonas. The Pharisees and Sadducees were opposed to each other in principles and conduct. Yet they joined against Christ. But they desired a sign of their choosing: they despised those signs that relieved the necessity of the sick and sorrowful and called for something else that would gratify the curiosity of the proud. It is hypocrisy when we slight the signs of God's ordaining to seek for signs of our devising.

The leaven of the Pharisees is the encounter with Jesus in Matthew sixteen, verses five through twelve, where the disciples forgot to bring bread. However, the Son of God warns them to be careful of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. Here, "leaven," a symbol of corruption, refers to the teaching of these two religious groups. Jesus calls their teaching

"leaven," like yeast, because even a small amount can penetrate and influence a group of people to believe the wrong thing.

Jesus warns the disciples in verse eight after understanding their thoughts in verse seven, the perspective of the minds they were focusing on food as opposed to the last statement in verse six. The Son of God points out where their faith is at and mentions the past two miracles of feeding the multitude with the loaves and fishes. Then Jesus emphasizes to the disciples the importance of the bread of life, than to be more mindful of not bringing the physical bread.

Jesus continues His ministry in **Peter's confession of faith** from verses thirteen through twenty, the coasts of Cesarea Phillipi, with the disciples, where Peter answers the question from the Son of God. However, Jesus replies importantly in verse eighteen for Peter to remember. "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." The "gates of hell" represent all the demons and evil strategies that Satan can marshal in an attempt to destroy the church or to withstand its mission in the world. The scripture does not mean that any particular believer, local church, fellowship of churches, or denomination will be immune to doctrinal error or otherwise overcome by sin and Satan's snares. Jesus warned believers and churches of possible spiritual deception and failure, as in Matthew twenty-four, verses ten through eleven, Revelation two, verses five and twelve through twenty-nine, and chapter three, verses one through six, respectively.

However, what Matthew sixteen, verse eighteen, means is that despite Satan doing his worst, the church that Jesus Christ is building cannot, in the end, will not be visibly moved by Satan. God's true church will rise in faith, authority, and the power of the Holy Spirit to righteously assault Satan's kingdom and domain of darkness by delivering people from sin, bondage, and oppression. The church that Jesus is building can never be overwhelmed by Satan.

Following Jesus and self-denial is the next section for the Son of God, where He details in scripture of taking up the cross. Therefore, it means all who decide to follow Jesus will endure suffering. The cross of Christ represents a symbol of suffering, as in First Peter two, verse twenty-one, and chapter four, verse thirteen. But the degree of and what kind is unknown for each person. Only God will know that. Again, the cross of Christ represents a symbol of death, as in Acts ten, verse thirty-nine. Ridicule as in Matthew twenty-seven, verse thirty-nine. Shame, as in Hebrews twelve, verse two. Rejection, as in First Peter two, verse four, and self-denial, as in Matthew sixteen, verse twenty-four.

When believers take up the cross and follow Christ, they deny their selves, as in Luke fourteen, verses twenty-six through twenty-seven, and commit to four areas of struggle and suffering. First, believers suffer in a lifelong battle against sin, as in Romans six, First Peter four, verses one to two. By crucifying sinful desires stemming from the flesh, as in Romans eight, verse thirteen: Galatians two, verse twenty, chapter six, verse fourteen, Titus two, verse twelve, and First Peter two, verses eleven, twenty-one through twenty-four, respectively.

Believers suffer in a war against Satan and the powers of darkness in pursuit of advancing the kingdom of God, as in Second Corinthians ten, verses four to five, chapter six, verse seven, Ephesians six, verse twelve, First Timothy six, verse twelve, accordingly. Believers experience both the hostility of the adversary with his demonic host as in Second Corinthians six, verses three through seven, chapter eleven, verses twenty-three to twenty-nine, and First Peter five, verse eight, and the persecution that comes from standing against false teachers who distort the true gospel, as in Matthew twenty-three, verse one through thirty-six, Galatians one to nine, and Philippians one, fifteen through seventeen, respectively.

Believers will suffer the hatred and ridicule of the world, as in John fifteen, verses eighteen through twenty-five, Hebrews eleven, verses twenty-five to twenty-six, by testifying in love

that its deeds are evil, as in John seven, verse seven, by separating themselves from both it morally and spiritually, and by refusing to accept its standards or philosophies as their own, as in First Corinthians one, verses twenty-one through twenty-seven. Like Jesus, believers may also suffer ridicule and persecution from the religious world, as in Mark eight, verse thirty-one.

Jesus continues His journey in **the Transfiguration** section from Matthew seventeen, verses one through thirteen, beginning in verse two. In His transfiguration, Jesus changed in the presence of three disciples, and they saw His heavenly glory as he was: God in human flesh. The experience of the transfiguration was an encouragement to Jesus as He faced death on the cross in Matthew sixteen, verse twenty-one. The next is **A demonic boy healed**, from verses fourteen through twenty-three, where a man came to Jesus who brought his son to the scribes and disciples, and they could not cure him. Jesus responds in verse seventeen, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me." The scripture reflects his estimation of disciples and churches who fail to minister to others in the real power of God's kingdom. Failure to deliver those oppressed by Satan and demons in verses fifteen through twenty-one demonstrates a lack of faith, understanding, and spiritual authority, as in verses seventeen and verses twenty to twenty-one.

The Holy Spirit emphasizes that not only does Jesus drive out demons, but also He desires His disciples to do the same thing through faith. Jesus is intensely disappointed when His people fail to share in His ministry against the forces of Satan.

Jesus frequently comments on the nature of true faith. He speaks of faith that can move mountains, cause miracles and healing, and accomplish great things for God. Just what is this faith that Jesus speaks of? Faith produces results: "It shall remove" mountains. Faith is not a belief in "faith" as a force or power, but it is "faith in God," as in Mark eleven, verse twenty-two.

Faith is a work of God within the hearts of Christians, as in Mark nine, verse twenty-four, and Philippians two, verse thirteen. It involves an awareness divinely imparted to our hearts that our prayers are answered, as in Mark eleven, verse twenty-three. The Holy Spirit creates it within us. We cannot produce it in our minds, as in Romans twelve, verse three, First Corinthians twelve, verse nine. Since faith is a gift imparted to us by Christ, it is significant to draw near to Christ and His Word to deepen our commitment to and confidence in Him, as in Romans ten, verse seventeen, and Philippians three, verses eight through fifteen.

We depend on Him for everything, "for without me ye can do nothing," as in John fifteen, verse five. In other words, we are to seek Christ as the author and finisher of our faith, as in Hebrews two, verse twelve. His presence and our obedience to His Word are the source and the secret of faith, as in Matthew nine, verse twenty-one, and John fifteen, verse seven.

Faith is under God's control. It is given based on His love, wisdom, grace, and kingdom purpose. Faith is to accomplish His will and to express His love for us. It is not for our selfish interests.