

Matthew 16:1
Easter Sunrise
April 4, 2010

Matthew 16:1 (New International Version)

The Demand for a Sign

¹The Pharisees and Sadducees came to Jesus and tested him by asking him to show them a sign from heaven.

Matthew 16:21 Do YOU Get It?

There are many, many things people might not understand. For example, I don't get that because of the combination of thrust and lift, AIR actually holds an airplane in the sky. Most of us probably have no clue as to the intricacies of brain-surgery. There are those, however, who do understand the principles of flight and the ins and outs of brain surgery. They have been taught these things and have made them a part of their lives.

Jesus' disciples were taught many things too. Matthew records one of these teaching moments. ***From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.***

Previous to this lesson, Matthew records a conversation Jesus had had with the disciples. He had asked them who people thought he was. Amidst a barrage of popular opinion of Jesus, Peter made his confession. ***"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."*** Peter got it. He had heard Jesus teach just that. The Holy Spirit imbedded that truth in his heart, and that same truth resounded in his confession.

However, it was during one of these teaching moments where just the opposite came out of Peter's mouth. He had heard Jesus speak of suffering and death, and Peter would hear of no such thing. Do you remember Jesus' rebuke? He called Peter "Satan" Satan's plan was that no one would suffer, die, and rise for sin. Peter wasn't thinking in God's terms. He substituted God's wisdom with man's wisdom... faith for unbelief. He didn't get it.

Certainly it could not have been easy for any of the disciples to hear their beloved teacher talk about such dark things like betrayal, suffering, and dying. But there were a couple things Jesus taught that obviously went right over their heads.

Jesus clearly said these things MUST happen – literally, ***it was necessary***. This was God's plan of action. This was the plan from the beginning when God first promised a Savior. The job of the Rescuer would be to suffer and die. But death was not the end of the story.

Did you catch the second thing the disciples must have missed? On the third day, Jesus would be raised to life! Resurrection was the climax of God's plan all along. Peter and the rest didn't get it... not because Jesus didn't speak clearly to them about it, but because of their lack of faith. They simply didn't believe.

Do you get it? Do you always have in mind the things of God? Do you believe that it was for your sins Jesus suffered and died? Or is sin everyone else's problem but yours? We stop this morning to look inside the empty tomb. Do you get that? Do you believe that it is necessary that Jesus be raised to life? Do you know what that empty tomb means to you? Do you see the eternal life in heaven earned for you, or do you live as if this life is it?

Jesus has spoken clearly to us all through Lent. Jesus has clearly taught us that it WAS necessary that he suffer and die. It was necessary for us. And it's true! He DID take back his life. For you. The empty cross is stained with the blood of Christ – shed on our behalf. The tomb is empty as proof of what Jesus earned for you and me.

It is necessary that Jesus rise...and he did! Believe it! Amen.