Abide in Me

Mentored by the Master

Discipleship in Real Time

Loudonville COMMUNITY CHURCH

Volume 11 - Number 19 **The Week of March 22, 2026**

Intentional Apprenticeship

Beware, See, Follow

Matthew 16:1-28

Spiritual growth is often slower than we expect and uneven. Amid their apprenticeship, the disciples are at a hinge point. They have seen miracles, heard His teaching, and walked closely with Jesus, yet their understanding remains partial and fragile. At the same time, opposition to Jesus is intensifying. The Pharisees and Sadducees, normally at odds, now unite in shared resistance, demanding a sign while missing the very presence of God in front of them.

The religious leaders cannot see because they refuse to believe (vss. 1-4). The disciples struggle to see because they are slow to understand (vss. 5-12). Jesus warns the disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees which refers to the spreading influence of false thinking about who Jesus is and what He has come to do. At the center of the passage stands Peter's great confession: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Yet even this moment of clarity is quickly followed by misunderstanding when Peter resists the path of the cross. In this teaching, we are invited to see Jesus clearly, think according to God's purposes, and follow Him fully, even when the path leads to a cross.

[1] And the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and to test him they asked him to show them a
sign from heaven. [2] He answered them, "When it is evening, you say, 'It will be fair
weather, for the sky is red.' [3] And in the morning, 'It will be stormy today, for the sky is
red and threatening.' You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you
cannot interpret the signs of the times. [4] An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a
sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah." So he left them and
departed.

[5] When the disciples reached the other side, they had forgotten to bring any bread. [6]
Jesus said to them, "Watch and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." [7]
And they began discussing it among themselves, saying, "We brought no bread." [8] But
Jesus, aware of this, said, "O you of little faith, why are you discussing among yourselves
the fact that you have no bread? [9] Do you not yet perceive? Do you not remember the
five loaves for the five thousand, and how many baskets you gathered? [10] Or the seven
loaves for the four thousand, and how many baskets you gathered? [11] How is it that you
fail to understand that I did not speak about bread? Beware of the leaven of the
Pharisees and Sadducees." [12] Then they understood that he did not tell them to beware
of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

[13] Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples,
"Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" [14] And they said, "Some say John the
Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." [15] He said to
them, "But who do you say that I am?" [16] Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the
Son of the living God." [17] 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. [18] 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. [19] 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." [20] Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the
Christ.

[21] From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and
suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the
third day be raised. [22] And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "Far be
it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you." [23] But he turned and said to Peter,
"Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on
the things of God, but on the things of man."

[24] Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and
take up his cross and follow me. [25] For whoever would save his life will lose it, but
whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. [26] For what will it profit a man if he gains the
whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?

[27] For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then
he will repay each person according to what he has done. [28] Truly, I say to you, there are
some standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in his
kingdom."

OBSERVATION *(What does the text say?)*

Before your group meets, carefully read the passage again and perform the following prompts:

- Box all the references to the Pharisees and Sadducees.
- Underline the words of warning by Jesus in vss. 5-12.
- Double underline Jesus' references to understanding or lack of understanding.
- Circle every mention of leaven and note in the left margin what it represents.
- Place brackets around the geographic movements or locations.
- Place a star next to Peter's confession in verses 16–17.
- Place a † over Jesus' reference to the cross.
- In the left margin describe what it means to be a disciple of Jesus.

INTERPRETATION *(What does the text mean?)*

1. Why do the Pharisees and Sadducees unite against Jesus? What does it mean that they came to *test* Jesus? How is this different from sincere inquiry?

2. Why does Jesus refuse to give them the kind of sign they are demanding?

3. What does Jesus mean by the *leaven* of the Pharisees and Sadducees?

4. Why do the disciples misunderstand Jesus' warning about leaven? What does this reveal about their spiritual condition?

5. Why is Peter's confession such a pivotal moment in Jesus' ministry?

6. What does Jesus mean when He says this truth was revealed *not by flesh and blood*?

7. Why does Jesus immediately begin to speak about His suffering after Peter's confession? What does Peter's rebuke of Jesus reveal about his expectations of the Messiah?

8. Why does Jesus respond so strongly to Peter's resistance?

9. What does it mean to set the mind on *the things of God* versus *the things of man*?

APPLICATION *(How does the text shape our lives?)*

1. What *leaven* wrongly influences people's assumptions or views of Jesus?

2. Like the disciples, when are we most prone to forget God's past faithfulness?

3. What is included in a clear confession of who Jesus is?

4. In what ways might we affirm Jesus with our words but misunderstand Him in practice?

5. Why do we often buckle at the idea of a suffering Savior or the cost of discipleship?

6. What does *taking up my cross* look like in your life right now?

7. Where are we tempted to *gain the world* at the expense of our soul?

8. What does it look like to set our minds more fully on *the things of God*?

ABIDE PRACTICE THIS WEEK

Each day this week, intentionally practice setting your mind on the things of God:

- Begin by verbally affirming who Jesus is.
- Recall one specific way God has provided for you in the past to strengthen your faith.
- Ask, *What does it look like to follow Jesus today, even if it costs me something*?

Sermon Notes*: Beware, See, Follow*

Matthew 16:1-28

© The *Abide in Me* Bible study series is written by the pastoral staff of Loudonville Community Church, 374 Loudon Road, Loudonville, NY 12211 (www.lcchurch.org)