



## LC STUDY GUIDE

### "Strong to the Finish" Series

The Passage: Matthew 16:13-20

June 20 – July 3

**Intro:** For most groups this is the final gathering before the summer break. If you haven't already, take some time before starting your study to reflect on this year that was framed as "Re-Discovering Jesus." Ask each other: "What highlights will we walk away with? How have we been affected individually, and how have we grown as a group?" (Take some time to reflect, validate, and celebrate together.)

This study will be abbreviated as we want to move quickly to the question that Jesus asks his disciples, "Who do you say I am?" and we also want to examine our heart's answer. Perhaps this question has been settled long ago for you. Consider if that answer is reflected your life and practices. Perhaps you have not answered this question to your satisfaction; if so, let your heart mediate on its answer tonight.

**Central Idea: Each follower of Jesus must answer the question he asks his disciples: "Who do you say I am?"**

#### Matthew 16:13-20

**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.

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**O** – What words, details, and textual features strike you as compelling in these 7 verses?

I – Why do you think the disciples mention the names they did? What do they have in common?

*(Elijah, Jeremiah and John the Baptist are among the greatest names they know. Each were God-fearing prophets who were highly regarded by the people of Israel.)*

I – Peter accurately responds that Jesus is the Christ, which is the Messianic title of the most sacred office. In response, Jesus not only gives him a name but also a calling. Why do you think he does this?

*(It's in understanding Jesus as our personal Messiah that we receive our calling. Our realization and confession of Jesus being the Christ is the foundation of our spiritual identity and mission.)*

A – In a year focused on Jesus, we've discovered and re-discovered many things about our Lord and perhaps about ourselves. How would you answer the question that Jesus posed to his disciples? Does that answer reflect the life you are living? Spend a few quiet moments before answering aloud. What needs to change to faithfully and passionately live a life that professes that "Jesus is the Christ!"?

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- a. Please note that not all these questions are to be asked in a single meeting. Take some time to prayerfully discern what will serve your LC the best. Select and reword the questions that best fit your voice and your Life Community group.
  - b. Complement these questions with "process questions" (what else? what more? what do others think?)
  - c. When you ask questions, give people ample time to think and respond. Wait. Take your time; don't rush people but encourage participation. Avoid answering your own questions!
  - d. Application: Pace the study to conclude with difference-making application.
  - e. Secondary texts—use other texts sparingly, even if they are relevant. Such texts will push you into "teaching" rather than facilitating, causing people to feel distracted or de-powered.