

Episode 2: Confessions

News has spread and everyone knows that John the Baptist has been killed. The episode opens with Jesus dreaming that John the Baptist is free and no longer bound by shackles. It's a happy dream after the sad realization that John is dead. Jesus talks to Andrew and they comfort one another and decide they will not sit shiva in a home. John's home was the wilderness, they will observe shiva on a journey outside in the wilderness. Jesus and the disciples head out for their trip.

While on the shiva journey, Jesus is approached by Thomas and Ramah regarding their engagement. Ramah asks Jesus to give approval since her father will not approve of the marriage. Jesus then talks about a divided house to them and the rest of the disciples. Circle what Jesus said he came for in the passage below.

- **Luke 12:51-53 (ESV)** - ⁵¹ *Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division. ⁵² For from now on in one house there will be five divided, three against two and two against three. ⁵³ They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.*

As followers of Jesus, we are going to encounter division because there will always be people who reject Jesus. Do you have any family members who don't follow Jesus, or avoid conversations about God? Name them below and write a short prayer asking for God to work in their hearts.

One of the disciples questioned Jesus and said, "aren't we to honor our father and mother?" This is the 5th commandment that God gave Moses. In the space below add the first four commandments using Exodus 20:1-8.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. Honor your father and your mother

Did you notice the first 3 commandments are about God? We are to love God and honor him, even before our family. And unfortunately, this may cause division.

While on their shiva journey, they arrive in Caesarea Philippi where there are altars and a temple dedicated to Baal. Jesus stops the disciples and asks a question. Circle the place Jesus came to and underline the question Jesus asked of the disciples in the passage below:

- **Matthew 16:13-14 (ESV)** - 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.”

Jesus then asks a similar question. Underline the question and circle Simon’s response.

- **Matthew 16:15-16 (ESV)** - 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.”

Jesus then gives Simon a new name. Circle his new name below and underline the significance of this new name.

- **Matthew 16:17-18 (ESV)** - 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.

Many people were re-named in the bible; it often signifies a change in that person. Using the scripture referenced below; fill in the chart with the original name and new name of each person. Note the significance in the new name given to that individual.

Scripture Verses	Old Name	New Name	Significance
Genesis 17:1-5			
Genesis 17:15-16			
Genesis 35:10-12			

Has there been a point in your life (possibly when you accepted Jesus into your life) that you had a transformation? What would your new name mean?

Current Name _____ New Name (after transformation) _____

Because Jesus gave Simon a new name, it elevated his status and the disciples began to see him as more of a leader. The disciples start arguing and James and John wish that they would have spoken up to answer Jesus’ question. That evening Matthew approaches Jesus and questions why Peter is the leader when he is so temperamental and cruel to Matthew. It is through Jesus’ questioning that Matthew thinks further into what he actually did to Peter. When Matthew finally looks at how his decisions and choices affected Peter he realizes he hurt Peter first, he put away excuses, put himself in Peter’s shoes (well maybe sandals) and really evaluated how he hurt him. Even though he wanted to forget that part of his life, the actions he took still affected others, and he must repent for that!

Is there anyone that you have animosity towards, or they have animosity towards you? Could it be because of things that happened in the past? Put yourself in their shoes and reflect on why your relationship is hurting with them.

Matthew starts out his conversation judging Simon, saying he shouldn't be a leader because he is temperamental and cruel to him. I love what Jesus said in the show, he said that "he (Jesus) makes people what they aren't." So, flaws and all go to Jesus, he will fill in your weaknesses and make you a different, better, loving person. How can you remind yourself not to judge others? What can you do when you find yourself being judgmental?

Matthew ends up going to Peter and apologizing for all that he has done to him. Unfortunately, he doesn't get the response he was hoping for. Peter doesn't say, "oh, that's okay", he doesn't say, "I forgive you", he just leaves without saying a word. Sometimes we won't get the response that we want, but it is better to ask for forgiveness than to brush things under the rug or not say anything at all. Luckily, that's not the end of the story. More to come.

A couple of other things are going on in this episode. Shmuel gets accepted into the Sanhedrin and praised for handing over information about Jesus. Caiaphas decides to notify all of the Jewish leaders that they should look for heresy in Jesus' words to incriminate him. He also wants to convince Rome that Jesus is their problem and have them enforce man-made laws against him. Shmuel decides to try to find Jesus himself before the Sanhedrin. Once this news spreads and gets to Yussif, he hears of these plans and decides to use his father's influence to get on the Sanhedrin so he can help stand up for Jesus.

In this day and age, very few people are willing to stand up for someone else. People are more likely to get out their phones and record an altercation than step in and do something about it. At a recent seminar I attended to advocate against bullying, the speaker said if someone were to say something like, "hey, that's not right" or "don't talk that way about that person" the conversation would change direction within 6-8 seconds. We have power in our words and our actions to stand up for someone else. Is there negative speech that you say about someone else (this could be gossiping) or complaining about others that you need to stop doing? Alternatively, is there anyone that you need to stand up for? Reflect below:

Peter can't sleep the night after Matthew apologized to him. He finds Jesus outside by the fire and they talk about forgiveness. Read the scripture below and circle how many times we are to forgive someone.

- **Matthew 18:21-22 (ESV)** - ²¹ Then Peter came up and said to him, "Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times? ²² Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times."

I like how the show explained that this doesn't mean an actual 77 times. It is symbolic. Did you know, the number 7 is the number for completion? Answer the following questions, what do you notice?

- How many days did God take to create the universe? (Genesis 1)
- How many times did the Israelites march around the walls of Jericho before they fell? (Joshua 6:3-4)
- How many times did Naaman have to bathe in the Jordan river to complete cleansing and miraculously heal of leprosy? (2 Kings 5:10)

Now let's do a little Jesus math! Jesus says in the scripture we should forgive 77 times. He is taking the number of completion (7) and saying it's not just 7 but 77. Although we know the number 7 symbolizes completion, what he is really saying is we should extend endless forgiveness without limits. It's important to not hold resentment in your heart and to forgive just like God forgives us.

The end of this episode is so wonderful. The disciples are in the market, each doing their own thing and in comes Peter with a mission. He beelines it to Matthew and just embraces him in the biggest hug! He tells him that he forgives him right in front of everyone. It really pulls on your emotions because we just witnessed true forgiveness! Peter didn't just say a casual, "I forgive you man", no he bear-hugged Matthew and forgave him of everything he did against him. Wow! So powerful and inspiring!

That forgiveness is given to each of us every day from our loving father. No matter what we do, God forgives us if we just simply ask him. Every day we sin. Some days our sins seem bigger than other days, but it doesn't matter God will forgive us. Write a prayer below thanking God for his forgiveness and confess anything that you need to be forgiven for in your prayer.

Peter and Andrew talk about a story their Rabbi never explained from the Old Testament. This is a funny/ awkward one! They are referring to the story of Moses' wife, Zipporah, circumcising her son and putting the foreskin on Moses' feet, declaring him a "bridegroom of blood". This is found in Exodus 4:24-26. Check it out for yourself!
