



## WEEK 5: MESSED UP MESSENGERS

Matthew 16:13-20

1. In Jesus' day, names had a little more meaning than they do in our society today. But names can still say something about who we are. Especially nick names. If you have (or had) a nick name, share it with the group and how you got that nick name.
2. When Jesus asked His disciples what people were saying about Him, they listed several misperceptions people had. What misperceptions do people have about Jesus' identity today? What contributes to these misperceptions? Did you hold any of these misperceptions in your past?
3. Jesus then asked His disciples the most important question: "who do you say I am?" How did God present that question to you? Tell about the last time you were part of asking someone this question (sharing the gospel). What is your most frequent reason for not sharing the gospel with people? What would help you move beyond these excuses and share more boldly?
4. In verses 18, Jesus spoke of the prevailing power of His church . In what way(s) do you see the church prevailing against *the gates of Hell* in our world today? In what way(s) does the opposite seem to be true? What do you think are the key elements necessary for the Church to prevail as God intends? How is God calling you to play a bigger role in storming the gates of Hell?
5. In verse 19, Jesus tells us that we have power to tie and untie things in heaven and earth. Do you feel like your prayers are packing that kind of power? Why do you think most American Christians are not experiencing this degree of God's power in their lives? How can we begin to live as though we really believe what Jesus said here?