



# For Further Study



Read and meditate on the passage below:

*<sup>17</sup> 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. <sup>18</sup> 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. <sup>19</sup> 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.” (Matthew 16:17-19)*

The above passage is from the gospel according to Matthew. His account is different from that of Mark. Whereas the Markan Jesus does not respond to Peter’s confession of Jesus as the Messiah, Matthew elaborates with an affirmation of Peter. First, Jesus says that Peter is blessed (or in a state of blissful happiness) because his announcement of Jesus’ identity has come through divine revelation.

Then, Jesus speaks of how the proclamation of Peter, that Jesus is the Messiah, is the foundation of belief among his followers. If people continue to search for a Messianic deliverer from Roman oppression, they will not choose to follow Jesus; if they chose to embrace this new understanding of the inner movement of God that leads to loving others as an expression of devotion to God, they will follow Jesus as Messiah.

Jesus concludes that this confession has life-giving implications. Even death and the grave (Hades) will not prevail or overcome it. Those who follow Jesus as Messiah will unlock (use the keys) the mysteries of faith and liberate people (loosen) from oppression in this world in a way that brings the values of heaven to earth.



## REFLECTION:

Consider what it means to live with Jesus as the anointed One of God and to follow him.

## PRACTICE:

Think about what it means to bind and loosen. Then reach out to someone to help them find freedom.