

Dear Heavenly Father,

### *Praise*

I join with Peter and declare Jesus to be “the Christ, the Son of the living God.” I believe that he died on the cross in my place and was resurrected to bring life to the world. ‘Hallelujah, what a Savior, Who can take a poor lost sinner, Lift him from the miry clay and set him free! I will ever tell the story, Shouting, Glory, glory, glory, Hallelujah! Jesus ransomed me.’ Praise the Lord!

### *Today in Your Word*

No sooner had Jesus returned to Jewish territory than the Pharisees and Sadducees again asked for a sign. Their question revealed their unbelief, for Jesus had performed many signs. What made it even worse was that they understood the signs which predicted the weather, but they refused to see the signs which confirmed Jesus to be the Messiah (cf. Isa 53:4). This teaches me that unbelief is not due to a lack of evidence. Rather, it is due to the sinfulness of the human heart—people don’t *want* to believe. Jesus left them with the sign of Jonah (a reference to his resurrection), and headed back toward Gentile country. On the way, he warned his disciples about the “leaven” (the insidious teachings) of the Pharisees, but they thought he was rebuking them for not bringing any bread. Their lack of faith frustrated Jesus, for they had seen him feed the crowds twice, yet they were still worried about running out of food! This shows me that I need to recognize the connection between what you have done and what you will do. Since you have met my needs in the past, I can trust you to take care of me in the future. When they reached Caesarea Philippi, which was largely Gentile, Jesus asked his disciples, “Who do people say that I am?” After hearing the various opinions, Jesus asked, “Who do you say that I am?” Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matt 16:16). Jesus responded, “You are Peter (*petros*), and on this rock (*petra*) I will build my church.” Jesus agreed with Peter’s confession and declared that his church would be built on that foundation, that is, on himself as Messiah and Son of God (the cornerstone) and also on Peter and the apostles (who bore witness that Jesus was the Christ; see Acts 4:11; Eph 2:20; 1 Pet 2:5–7). After this, Jesus explained to his disciples what it meant to follow him: “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me” (Luke 9:23). This teaches me that the key to discipleship is self-denial. I must die to myself daily (give up the right to have my own way), and I must obey even to the point of death. That is the example Jesus left for me, and I must follow in his steps (1 Pet 2:21).

### *Reflection*

When Jesus began to explain that he must suffer and die (Isa 53:9), Peter said, “Never, Lord! This shall never happen to you!” (Matt 16:22 NIV). This shows me that good, godly people can embrace and teach ideas that come from Satan. Peter himself was not Satan, but his statement to Jesus was Satanic (it contradicted the clear will of God). Am I making sure my beliefs are in harmony with Scripture?

### *Request*

Father, I want to take up my cross each day and follow Jesus. Help me to deny the flesh and say ‘Yes!’ to the Holy Spirit. May my ears always be open to his gentle voice.

### *Thanksgiving*

Thank you for the grace and power that you have for me today. How grateful I am to be following the One who gave his life for me! Hallelujah!

In Jesus’ name, Amen.

*Suggested Hymn: “[Battle Song of the Church](#)” – Mary J. Helphingstine.*

*Meditation Verse: [Mark 8:36](#).*