

once make him to see clearly, but only in part, as his faith was only in part. For healing occurs according to one's faith. The Lord commands the man not to go back into the village, because, as I have mentioned, the inhabitants of Bethsaida were unbelieving and would have caused harm to the soul of the man. The Lord also commands him not to tell anyone what was done to him, lest, by not believing him, the villagers draw down upon themselves greater condemnation. And how often are we not also spiritually blind, living in the village, that is, in this world? But when Christ leads us out of the village, that is, from the world and its affairs, then we are healed. But after we have been healed, He tells us to return no more into the village, but to our home. For the home of each one of us is heaven and the dwelling places there.

27-30. And Jesus went out, and His disciples, into the villages of Caesarea Philippi: and on the way He asked His disciples, saying unto them, Whom do men say that I am? And they answered, John the Baptist; but some say, Elijah, and others, one of the prophets. And He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Peter answereth and saith unto Him, Thou art the Christ. And He charged them that they should tell no man concerning Him. First He leads the disciples away from the Jews, and then He asks them about Himself, so that without fear of anyone they might confess the truth. They reply, "Some consider Thee to be John, and others, Elijah." For many thought that He was John risen from the dead; and Herod himself, mindful that John while alive had not worked any miracle, thought that it was John who, by being raised from the dead, had also received the power to work miracles. After asking the disciples about the opinions others had of Him, the Lord asks them for their own opinion. He is all but saying, "Others, in error, think this about Me; but from you let Me hear the truth." How does Peter answer? He confesses that Jesus is the One foretold by the prophets, the Christ. What the Lord said in response to Peter's confession, and how He blessed Peter, Mark omits, lest by telling these things he appear to favor Peter, as Mark was Peter's disciple. But Matthew recounts all these things in detail.⁷ The Lord charged them not to speak to anyone concerning Who He was. For He wanted to keep this knowledge hidden,

⁷ Mt. 16.17-19

lest the multitude find this to be a stumbling block and on this account not believe, and thus become liable to even greater punishment.

31-33. And He began to teach them, that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders, and by the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. And He spake that saying openly. And Peter took Him and began to rebuke him. But when He had turned about and looked on His disciples, He rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind Me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men. When He saw that they had confessed Him to be the true Messiah, then He also began to reveal to them the mystery of the cross, although not in its entirety. For they did not yet understand what He was saying. They did not yet understand what it meant to "rise again", and they thought that it was better not to suffer at all. This is why Peter began to reproach Him for flinging Himself, as it seemed, towards His own death, although it was within His power not to suffer anything. But the Lord shows that His passion will be for our salvation, and that it is Satan alone who does not want Christ to suffer and thus save mankind. The Lord calls Peter "Satan" because Peter had Satan's thoughts, not wanting Him to suffer, and opposing Him; for 'Satan' means 'the adversary'. The Lord says, "Get thee behind Me," that is, follow My will and do not oppose it. Do not come against Me, but follow behind Me. The Lord rebuked Peter for thinking in human terms. Thinking in a coarse, carnal fashion, Peter wanted the Lord to take His ease, and not to suffer temptations and not to be crucified for the sake of the salvation of the world.

34-37. And when He had called the people unto Him with His disciples also, He said unto them, Whosoever desireth to follow after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whosoever desireth to save his life, shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the Gospel's, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose