

Notes from Pastor Mo's Sermon
"Who do you say I am?" • August 6, 2023

What's the Word on the street?
"Who do people say I am?" vs. 27

- People are always going to have varying opinions regarding "who" Jesus is, from highly regarded prophet and teacher to drunk and glutton. Same goes for us. People will always have something to say.
- Jesus was VERY secure in his identity, so why did he even ask his disciples what other people thought about him?
 - He may have wanted to see if what others were saying "about" him impacted their understanding of "who" they knew him to be.

What's the Word on the street?
"Who do people say I am?"

"Well," they replied, "some say John the Baptist, some say Elijah, and others say you are one of the other prophets." vs.27-28

- John the Baptist: people were close in that both brought a message from God, but Jesus had a different message.....so no.
- Elijah: The prophet come back to life! Who was prophesied to come and proclaim the coming of the Messiah and the turning back to God. Now some things were happening that were prophesied to happen during this time like signs of healing and miracles but, still not right.
- Great Prophet: Sent by God to speak on behalf of God, which is a still high honor and Jesus is looked at obviously in high regards which is good because that wasn't always the case.
- Those who were most religious saw what Jesus was doing and they perceived him as a drunk, glutton, someone who hangs out with low life's, a sorcerer and working with the devil to perform the miracles he was doing.
- So who is this Jesus?

Jesus' Million Dollar Question

Then he asked them, "But who do YOU say I am?" vs. 29

- I want us to notice here that Jesus doesn't even say one word regarding who "others" have perceived him to be. He gave no time or attention to the positive (least it feed his ego and make him prideful) or the negative, knowing how fragile humanity is and how easily we can slip into feelings of insecurity. Jesus models the wisest way for us to react to both negative and positive things said "about" us.
- He doesn't give one ounce of his energy to what others say about him because he knows who he is.....
 - Affirmed in the Torah, as he's read his scriptures and the word of God spoke to him as he read prophets like Daniel who spoke of the Son of Man coming to reign eternally, a title Jesus use for himself and Isaiah who spoke of the suffering servant who would take upon himself the punishment of all the nations so they can be made right with God.
 - Jesus' identity and will of God had been affirmed for him, through time in Holy Scripture, prayer and through the revelation of the Holy Spirit.
- Jesus goes right to the Million Dollar question of "who do you say I am?"
 - You is plural so he is asking ALL the disciples. He is asking us!
 - He asks those who are closest to him
 - His disciples who have left it all behind to follow him. those he has given his time, energy and love to
 - Who am I to you?

Peter replied, "You are the Messiah.

But Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him. vs.29-30

- Jesus, like God knows our hearts and our thoughts. Although they had the right answer, they had the wrong understanding of what this meant in their hearts.
- It's important we too evaluate our true intentions behind our actions, God knows they anyways and our service or words aren't a pleasing fragrance to God if done from selfish motives in our heart.

Right Title Wrong Understanding

- The disciples assumed Jesus was going to be a powerful worldly King, like King David favored by God. Yoking themselves to that meant they too would benefit from his position.

Peter Serves as Our Alert!

Do we see Jesus through.....

- **The Lens in which we grew up:** For me, Jesus was the Prince of Peace which meant we don't fight or argue. Turn the other cheek always and keep the peace. Which created a bunch of conflict avoidant people who were resentful, angry, pushed down emotions and didn't know how to disagree well.
- **As the one who supports our human wants and desires:** No, Jesus gives us what we need not what we want. Sometimes what we want, or desire are things that will lead us farther away from God's will for our lives.
- **As the one who sustains the values, we want to enhance:** Every Christian I know aligns Jesus with their political party. Jesus values are Kingdom values and often don't align with either political party.
- **As the one who will enable us to become what we want to become:** Nope, when you say, "your will be done," then God aligns our lives with what is best for the growth of our souls and the purpose which we were created NOT for the plans we create for ourselves.

Then Jesus began to tell them that the Son of Man must **suffer** many terrible things, be **rejected**, he would be **killed**, he would **rise** from the dead. He **talked about this openly** with his disciples. Vs 31-32

"If any of you wants to be my follower, you must deny oneself and take up your cross." Vs34

- Jesus talks to them openly and lays it right out. This is how much he wanted them to "get it" and understand who he fully was and what this could look like when lived out in the world. When we say "yes" to God and what God is doing in the world it often goes against worldly power dynamics, structures, and values.

Peter took him aside and began to reprimand him for saying such things. Jesus turned around and looked at his disciples, then reprimanded Peter. "Get away from me, Satan!" he said. "You are seeing things merely from a human point of view, not from God's." vs 32-33

- Jesus is not talking to Peter; he is talking to Satan. Because Jesus is so united and in communion with the Father and the Holy Spirit, he is quickly able to discern that this is the voice of the one who is trying to divert him so slightly from doing his Father's will. It

is the voice of the one he's experienced before in the wilderness. The one who tried to get him to.....

- Question his identity: If you are the Son of God then
- Make him think he can meet his own needs with his talents and gifts: Turn this stone to bread
- Convince him he can rule over the nations without following the hard road that includes suffering: All these things I will give you if you fall down and worship me
- Satan works in our lives the same way and often through those who are closest to us, as he did with Jesus.
- Jesus didn't get mad at Peter or personalize what Peter said because he knew that wasn't who Peter was, Peter loved Jesus.
- We too can discern like this when we are deeply rooted in our relationship with Jesus through time in the Word, prayer and we take the time to truly "rest" in God.