

“Who is Jesus?”

The Rev. S. Shane Nanney ~ August 27, 2023

Exodus 1:8-2:10, Matthew 16:13-20

In the 16th chapter of Matthew, we find Jesus and the disciples traveling into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, and as they were going along, Jesus paused and asked the men a couple of intriguing questions. First, He wanted to know who everyone was saying He was, and then He wanted to know who they thought He was. Jesus already knew the answers to those questions, but He wanted those men to think through them. The questions are 2000 years old, but they still need to be answered today by every one of us. Jesus already knows what you think. He already knows who He is to you, but do you know? The most important things we will ever do in this life and the most important decisions we will ever make hinge on those questions, so in today's message, let's answer three questions related to this subject, "Who is Jesus?"

WHO DO PEOPLE SAY HE IS?

It's likely that if Jesus were still walking among us today, He would be considered a criminal. Everyone would be mad at Him...

- The FDA for turning water into wine without a license.
- The EPA for killing fig trees.
- The American Medical Association for practicing medicine without a license.
- The Department of Health for asking people to open graves, for raising the dead and for feeding 5,000 people in unsanitary conditions.
- The NEA for teaching without a certificate.
- OSHA for walking on water without a lifejacket and other unsafe boating practices.
- SPCA for driving hogs into the sea.
- The GOP and evangelical Christians for being too woke.

The disciples told Jesus that some people thought He was John the Baptist. Others thought He was Elijah, or Jeremiah, or one of the other prophets. In other words, He was a good man, a religious man who did great things and taught well, but surely not God or the Son of God. Things have not changed much. Some people today still think Jesus was just a good teacher and a fine religious leader, but surely not the only begotten Son of God. It is ironic that while people think Jesus taught great things and taught the truth, they miss that one of His fundamental teachings was His deity. How can they say He taught the truth and yet deny what He taught?

People always have and always will be confused about who Jesus is, so the more important question for us is this...

WHO DOES THE BIBLE SAY HE IS?

Is Jesus just a prophet? Is He just a good man? Not hardly! What did Peter say? "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

In other words, "You are the Messiah, the Anointed One of God. The name Christ is the official title of our Lord, occurring 514 times in the New Testament. It means that He was anointed or consecrated to His great redemptive work as Prophet, Priest, and King of his people.

The Bible says that Jesus is...

- Your Lord
- Your Comforter
- Your Advisor
- Your Mediator
- Your Advocate
- Your Strength
- Your Inspiration
- Your Protector

- Your Provider
- Your Shepherd
- Your Master
- Your Peace

To Abraham He was the ram. To Israel He was the lamb. To Ruth He was a Redeemer. To Nehemiah He was a Master Builder. To David He was the Tender Shepherd. To Solomon He is the Wise and All-Knowing God. To Amos He was the Burden Bearer. To Malachi He was the Son of Righteousness with healing in His wings. To Mark He was the Suffering Servant. To John He was the Light of the world. To Paul He was a Wonderful Savior. Listen, I could go on and on and on. Who does the Bible say Jesus is? We don't have time to say it all!

But now let's consider the third and most important question of them all.

WHO DO YOU SAY HE IS?

If Jesus walked with us each day of our lives, if Jesus went to work with you tomorrow and in the middle of the day asked you, "Who do you say I am?", you would probably respond with something like Peter said, "Well you're my Lord and Savior!" In his message titled Practical Atheism, Harold Vaughan says this,

"There are few that deny God with their lips, but millions who deny God with their lives. Belief in God is at an all-time high while morality is at an all-time low. Our currency states, "In God We Trust," but our policies prove we trust anything but God. Christians in America have a high regard for the Bible, but only thirty-eight percent read it weekly. Most professing Christians have no more regard for the Bible than junk mail - they don't even read it!

Who is Jesus to you? Is He just along for the ride? Is He in your life so you can enjoy that warm fuzzy feeling when you need to feel better? Who is Jesus to you? Is He your Lord? Where's the proof?

He wants to bring you joy! He wants to bring you peace! He wants to bring you healing and wholeness! You cannot go around making Jesus fit into your little box of convenience and comfort. He will not fit. He will not conform to your image. You are the one who must conform. It is you that must change. It is you that must surrender.

Who is Jesus to you? Is He your magic genie or is He the Christ, the Son of the living God in your life? Is He your sugar daddy in the sky? Or is He God, the Lord and Master of your life? You call on His name – you talk about Him with favor, but is He really part of your everyday life?

There is a point when we must move from the words of our mouths to showing our faith in our daily lives. Jesus wants to be the one you talk to when things are going well and when they are tough. He wants to be our friend and daily companion. He wants to be the one you tell other friends about. He wants to be the love of your life, as close as those we keep in our hearts daily.

To really get to know Jesus starts with two simple questions that we each must struggle with, “Who is he?” and “How do I live out that relationship?”

We need to ask ourselves what we believe, and what we do not believe. My job is to be your guide. But just because we are friends, does not mean I am going to let you off the hook easily. Push yourself this year and don't be afraid of the answer you get. Because when we grow together, we become a stronger influence for Christ. Amen.