

Daily Reading & Meditation

Who Do You Say That Jesus Is?

SUNDAY 12 SEPTEMBER 2021

GOSPEL READING: Mark 8:27-33

27 And Jesus went on with his disciples, to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, "Who do men say that I am?" 28 And they told him, "John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others one of the prophets." 29 And he asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Christ." 30 And he charged them to tell no one about him. 31 And he began to teach them that the Son of man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. 32 And he said this plainly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him. 33 But turning and seeing his disciples, he rebuked Peter, and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are not on the side of God, but of men."

Meditation: Who is Jesus for you - and what difference does he make in your life? Many in Israel recognized Jesus as a mighty man of God, even comparing him with the greatest of the prophets. Peter, always quick to respond whenever Jesus spoke, professed that Jesus was truly the "Christ of God" - "the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16). No mortal being could have revealed this to Peter, but only God. Through the "eyes of faith" Peter discovered who Jesus truly was. Peter recognized that Jesus was much more than a great teacher, prophet, and miracle worker. Peter was the first apostle to publicly declare that Jesus was the *Anointed One*, consecrated by the Father and sent into the world to redeem a fallen human race enslaved to sin and cut off from eternal life with God (Luke 9:20, Acts 2:14-36). **The word for "Christ" in Greek is a translation of the Hebrew word for "Messiah" - both words literally mean the *Anointed One*.**

Jesus begins to explain the mission he was sent to accomplish

Why did Jesus' command his disciples to be silent about his identity as the anointed Son of God? They were, after all, appointed to proclaim the good news to everyone. Jesus knew that they did not yet fully understand his mission and how he would accomplish it. Cyril of Alexandria (376-444 AD), an early church father, explains the reason for this silence:

There were things yet unfulfilled which must also be included in their preaching about him. They must also proclaim the **cross**, the **passion**, and the **death** in the **flesh**. They must preach the **resurrection** of the dead, that great and truly glorious sign by which testimony has borne him that the Emmanuel is truly God and by nature the Son of God the Father. He utterly abolished death and wiped-out destruction. He robbed hell and overthrew the tyranny of the enemy. He took away the sin of the world, opened the gates above to the dwellers upon earth, and united earth to heaven. These things proved him to be, as I said, in truth God. He commanded them, therefore, to guard the mystery by a seasonable silence until the whole plan of the dispensation should arrive at a suitable conclusion. (*Commentary on Luke, Homily 49*)

God's Anointed Son must suffer and die to atone for our sins

Jesus told his disciples that it was necessary for the Messiah to suffer and die in order that God's work of redemption might be accomplished. How startled the disciples were when they heard this word. How different are God's thoughts and ways from our thoughts and ways (Isaiah 55:8). It was through

humiliation, suffering, and death on the cross that Jesus broke the powers of sin and death and won for us eternal life and freedom from the slavery of sin and from the oppression of our enemy, Satan, the father of lies and the deceiver of humankind.

We, too, have a share in the mission and victory of Jesus Christ

If we want to share in the victory of the Lord Jesus, then we must also take up our cross and follow where he leads us. What is the "cross" that you and I must take up each day? When my will crosses (does not align) with God's will, then his will must be done. To know Jesus Christ is to know the power of his victory on the cross where he defeated sin and conquered death through his resurrection. The Holy Spirit gives each of us the gifts and strength we need to live as sons and daughters of God. The Holy Spirit gives us *faith* to know the Lord Jesus personally as our Redeemer, and the *power* to live the Gospel faithfully, and the *courage* to witness to others the joy, truth, and freedom of the Gospel. Who do you say that Jesus is?

Psalm 102:15-22,28

15 The nations will fear the name of the LORD, and all the kings of the earth your glory.

16 For the LORD will build up Zion, he will appear in his glory;

17 he will regard the prayer of the destitute, and will not despise their supplication.

18 Let this be recorded for a generation to come, so that a people yet unborn may praise the LORD:

19 that he looked down from his holy height, from heaven the LORD looked at the earth,

20 to hear the groans of the prisoners, to set free those who were doomed to die;

21 that men may declare in Zion the name of the LORD, and in Jerusalem his praise,

22 when peoples gather together, and kingdoms, to worship the LORD.

28 The children of your servants shall dwell secure; their posterity shall be established before you.

OPENING PRAYER Lord Jesus, I believe, and I profess that you are the Christ, the Son of the living God. Take my life, my will, and all that I have, that I may be wholly yours now and forever. **Amen.**

CLOSING PRAYER:- Dear Lord, I am calling upon you today for your divine guidance and help. We are in crisis and need a supporting hand to keep us well and on the right and just path. Our hearts are troubled, but we will strive to keep them set on you, as your infinite wisdom will show us the right way to a just and right resolution. We thank you for hearing our prayer and for staying by our side. **Amen!**