

**Mark 8:27-30**  
**THE MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION**

The final piece falls into place for these men who have left everything to follow Jesus. They have seen some amazing things – people healed, multitudes fed, Jesus calming the storm, Jesus walking on water, Jesus bringing deliverance to those held in bondage by demons, etc, etc.

Jesus has used some of the miracles as teaching tools for the disciples – such as the blind man who receives sight in stages, just as we do in the spiritual realm

**27 Jesus went out, along with His disciples, to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way He questioned His disciples, saying to them, “Who do people say that I am?” 28 They told Him, saying, “John the Baptist; and others say Elijah; but others, one of the prophets.” 29 And He *continued* by questioning them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter *answered and said* to Him, “You are the Christ.” 30 And He warned them to tell no one about Him.**

Jesus prompts this discussion with two key questions:

This is like a pop quiz for the disciples. Normally the students would question the rabbi, but here Jesus interrogates the students. He gets right to the core issue with his two questions.

This morning these questions are brought to US, and make no mistake, they are of ETERNAL IMPORTANCE.

**v. 27 - v 29**

this passage marks a turn from Galilee to Judea, i.e. to Jerusalem; from rapid fire ministry – “immediately”.

The first half of the gospel comes to a climax

Fewer parables to the crowds and more focused teaching to the disciples.

Fewer displays of power and more focus on His mission.

Ch 8-12 Mark says, “On the Way” nine times – they are going somewhere..... Jerusalem.

**v. 27 Who do the people say I am?**

Not a question out of the blue. It has been asked by the people at different times – ch 1,2,6,

**The question of his identity has been a theme in his ministry.**

Now, Jesus asks the question to provoke thought. Questions are valuable for our learning. They cause us to reflect and process what we’ve seen or heard.

Ch 6 we see the same response with Herod – category of a prophet John the Baptist, Elijah, or one of the Prophets. Deut 18 spoke of a great prophet to come so there was anticipation among the people.

They rank Jesus in the ‘hall of fame’, right?

NO, they deny his unique identity. They put Jesus in their preset category where they can control him.

We do the same thing. People in the culture do the same thing.

“a moral teacher; model of spirituality’ taught us to love; a guru, etc’

**All human categories that seem to honor Jesus as a great man or teacher will ultimately DISHONOR him by putting him in a category of our making.** A teacher, leader or guru made in our image will be flawed because he/she will be just like us – flawed and sinful.

Jesus was like us, yet without sin. He could identify with us, but he didn’t carry our baggage of sin – until he took it upon Himself at the cross.

Beware of putting Jesus in a nice comfortable place where he can be admired at a distance.

EX: France – “le petit Jesu” - the baby Jesus

Where is he in your life?

Is he an accessory? On the shelf with other areas of interest? A tool for finding or holding on to a relationship? Are you examining Him or is He examining you? Are you using Him to serve your interests or are you serving His, even if it costs you some social capital?

**Question Two v. 29 "Who do you say that I am?"**

Cf : Matt 16

**15 He \*said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" 16 Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." 17 And Jesus said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven.**

Now away from the crowds, he asks this question to get them to ponder, commit and confess. They are going to need to be convinced to hold firm for what is coming.

As we get to the later part of this chapter, we'll see that things are going to get very serious.

Lk 9, Matt 16 and Mark 8 all have this pop quiz and in each version Peter's confession is followed by the warning of what awaits Him in Jerusalem. This is the first time he has given such information.

The question and their answer will divide them or unite them. It was a key moment for the disciples AND it is a KEY MOMENT for us. We will all stand before God one day and will face that question. Since we don't know when that day will be, we'd best have a settled answer TODAY.

EX: It is one thing to be in a group where people are talking about faith, God, religion, and even Jesus in general terms. People are expressing their various thoughts and raising their questions or telling what their favorite author or speaker has said.

And then someone points to you and says, "Who do YOU say Jesus is?" IT JUST GOT UJP CLOSE AND PERSONAL. The room goes quiet, and everyone is staring right at you. The topic has gone from theoretical to confessional.

Jesus may have meant the question this way: "Do you see yet who I am? Have you finally perceived my identity? Or am I just a dim, blurred, walking tree to you? Who do you say that I am?"

Peter answered for the whole group, "You are the Christ."

The fuller version reads this way: **"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus responded to Peter on that occasion and said, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah, flesh and blood hath not revealed this to you but my Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 16:16-17).**

Peter's answer was short, concise, deeply theological and full of meaning.

The Christ = Messiah = the promised anointed one foretold by the prophets to come and save God's people from their sins.

Peter's answer connects the dots from Gen 3 to Abraham, Moses, David, the Psalms, and the prophets all the way to John the Baptist who proclaimed that Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

Peter's answer draws together all the hopes and aspirations of the Jewish people for the one who would come and reign with righteousness. The hope of the Messiah was seen in Lk 2:25ff when Joseph and Mary took the baby Jesus to Jerusalem to be presented to the Lord and they encountered Simeon. He was a devout and righteous man who was looking for the consolation of Israel. Simeon took Jesus in his arms and said,

**29 " Now Lord, You are releasing Your bond-servant to depart in peace, According to Your word;**

**30 For my eyes have seen Your salvation,**

**31 Which You have prepared in the presence of all peoples,**

**32 A Light of revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel."**

Peter wasn't there for that, yet his answer summed up the hopes of Simeon and all who were waiting for the consolation of Israel.

NOTE: In response to Jesus' question PETER did NOT say, "I like to think of you as \_\_\_\_\_  
i.e. GOOD DOCTRINE OF Christ IS IMPORTANT.

It's not a question of "Who would YOU like Jesus to be?" or "How do YOU like to think of Jesus?" or "How does Jesus make YOU feel?"

Those questions are rather subjective and are YOU centered and permit a broad spectrum of opinions and interpretations.

But Jesus asks, "WHO DO YOU SAY THAT I AM?"

This goes beyond our subjective feelings. It goes to our CONFESSION of who Jesus is. Based on all that they know and have seen, "Who do you say that I am?"

If we give the same answer as Peter, then we get the response from Jesus that Peter got. The same benediction that Jesus pronounced upon Simon Peter is your benediction as well. For Jesus would say, "Blessed are you," because this is not something you learned in kindergarten, or even SS or church. This is not something you learned from the newspaper or from the secular media. Flesh and blood do not reveal this kind of information. If you believe in your heart that He is the Christ, you are blessed among people because God has enabled you to see His Son. Don't ever lose sight of YOUR miraculous conversion.

When the trials and difficulties of life come, remember that you have been given access to the greatest treasure and knowledge of all – That Jesus is your Messiah, your Savior, your Wonderful Counselor, your Prince of Peace.

If God never bestows His favor on you again in this life, you have already received a deposit that gives you what you need for these pilgrim days and for all eternity.

**v. 30 He strictly charges them to tell no one – a strong word of admonition.**

Why?

Because the common view of the Messiah was a political or military leader and Jesus didn't want his mission to be hijacked or short circuited by a crowd. The disciples also had some mistaken views as we'll see in the next section.

This profession of Peter that Jesus is The Christ disappears for a while until Mark 14:61

The high priest asks a direct question to Jesus and the Title returns and the announcement is made boldly in public.

The announcement triggered the movement toward the cross, or we might say it necessitated the Cross because the lead role for the Messiah / Christ was to be the sin bearer, the ransom for sinners.

Mark 10:45

**45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."**

The rest of the Gospel narrative will spell out what Messiah really means.

**This text today brings all of Jesus' previous teaching and ministry into focus.**

**He is the anointed Messiah who has come to bring redemption.**

His miracles served to point to the great ultimate miracle – the Resurrection

His life and ministry reveal that he is the true Prophet, the true Priest, the true King. He is the Good Shepherd, the True Vine, the Living Water, the Bread of Life. That's what the gospels teach us about Jesus.

They also teach us that we must prepare for the day when we will face God and hear the question, **"Who Do You Say Jesus is?" That is the most important question that you will ever confront.**

Over the years there have been debates about the person, nature, and work of Christ. There have been those who have argued that the important thing about Jesus was his teaching about the social or political consequences. They might call this a 'wholistic' view of the gospel. Typically, when that happens, the centrality of Jesus as THE CHRIST, i.e. the 'anointed Messiah', the Lamb of God, the sin bearer, the ransom for many gets obscured. Cults and heresies get started when people try to hide behind a Jesus of their own making.

He is no longer proclaimed as The Christ, the Son of the Living God but he is seen as a vessel for some sort of man centered social or political movement.

EX: We see this in Liberation theology, Mormonism, David Koresh, Jim Jones (People's Temple), Prosperity Theology, and the social gospel movement.

Ex: If you want to know what happens when right doctrine about Christ goes off the rails, then Union Seminary in NYC shows what it looks like to be "tossed here and there by waves and are carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men and the craftiness of deceitful scheming. And in the face of that, we are to speak the truth in love..." – Eph 4:14-15 Oct 30 Chapel service

They had a Drag Queen Last Supper event reducing the sacred act of Communion to a flamboyant costume party hosted by LGBTQ activists (Marge Erin Johnson and Chad Manley)..

This was their corporate "Call to Worship:"

Friends, heretics, country folk, lend me your ears  
We have come to bury the empire and free Britney Spears  
Fems, leather daddies and those jumping free from the closets,  
we remember our lineage of queer saints and prophets  
in remembrance of Jesus here at the last supper  
Gathered as friends in this second-floor fixer upper.  
Grant us the courage to greet our betrayers with a kiss  
Until it's heaven on earth, we aren't ever calling it quits.

It went downhill from there with a heretical explanation of the Last Supper. Friends, these are seriously broken people who NEED OUR PRAYERS and ears to hear and eyes to see.

Jesus had religious leaders of his day distorting his identity. Today we have elite institutions and even denominations respected by the world who suppress the truth in unrighteousness.

It may seem absurd and extreme, but it is simply the natural flow of culture when it lets go of the Word of Truth.

The Biblical identity of Jesus, The Christ, is the central issue of the Gospels and the other NT writings. It was a life and death issue for the earliest believers and remains so in parts of the world today. The historic orthodox Biblical faith orients around the identity and work of the person of Jesus. Every book of the NT directs our hearts and minds to Christ and his saving work. Every book of the OT POINTS TO HIM – Luke 24

You can be right about the identity of everyone else without an eternal consequence, but you'd BETTER be RIGHT about Jesus.

You can be wrong about the identity of everyone else without an eternal consequence, but you better NOT be WRONG about Jesus.

This MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION is not one that preachers make up so they can have an altar call or get people to pray a prayer.

This is a question that Jesus Himself presses on the disciples and ultimately all of us.

John 8:23,24

23 And He was saying to them, "You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world. 24 Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins." 25 So they were saying to Him, "Who are You?"

What you believe about Jesus will determine whether you die in your sin or not.

It would be sheer arrogance and folly for me to say that about myself or for you to say that about yourself. But Mark shows that Jesus has earned the right to be heard, believed, worshipped, and followed.

The disciples weren't ready for it yet, as we'll see in the next section, but Jesus, the Messiah was going to humble himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. – Phil 2:8

Phil 2:9 For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The TABLE

Discussion questions

Why do you think Jesus asked these two questions at this time?

When were you ready to answer the “pop quiz” question in your life?

Were there ways that you had identified Jesus in a different way?

If so, how did you keep Jesus at a safe distance?

What prompted you to seeing the correct answer?

Why was a right view of Jesus so important for the disciples?

What happens when we get fuzzy about the Biblical identity of Christ?

AGREE – DISAGREE: Why?

If God never bestows His favor on you again in this life, you have already received a deposit that gives you what you need for these pilgrim days and for all eternity.

Union Seminary Full event

<https://www.facebook.com/UTSchapel/videos/470603602027338>

short clip

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iWeCgUOg-cg&t=60s>

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