

4 SEPTEMBER 2016

WHO DO YOU SAY THAT I AM? – GO CHURCH

INTRODUCTION

ANCHOR TEXT:

Mark 8

27 Now Jesus and His disciples went out to the towns of Caesarea Philippi; and on the road He asked His disciples, saying to them, “Who do men say that I am?” 28 So they answered, “John the Baptist; but some say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets.” 29 He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered and said to Him, “You are the Christ.” 30 Then He strictly warned them that they should tell no one about Him.

Matthew 16:

16 Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

PART 1: RATIONALE FOR THE MESSAGE

1. Who say Jesus is will determine how you define him.

- Caesarea Philippi was a stronghold of the ancient demon-gods of Syria, Greece and Rome. As you walked through Caesarea Philippi, you walked past a large rocky cliff, and many idols were actually carved into the rock façade. Jesus deliberately set Himself against this background of religious error and confusion. And here inquired of His disciples about his identity.
- Each response indicates a prophet, in line with one of the popular messianic expectations held in Israel. This goes back to the strand of prediction about a great prophet who would arise.

Deuteronomy 18:15

“The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren.

Malachi 4:5

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.

In Israel mind, Jesus was a resurrected prophet of old, or a new prophet like them.

- The response of the disciples represents Israel’s attempt to understand who Jesus was based on their prior knowledge.

QUESTION:

What is your definition of Jesus founded on?

2. Who you say, see and believe that Jesus is will determine the extent to which you will seize opportunities that will give rise to your miracle.

Mark 10: 46-52 – Blind Bartimaeus

46. Now they came to Jericho. As He went out of Jericho with His disciples and a great multitude, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the road begging. **47 And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”** 48 Then many warned him to be quiet; but he cried out all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” 49 So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be called. Then they called the blind man, saying to him, “Be of good cheer. Rise, He is calling you.” 50 And throwing aside his garment, he rose and came to Jesus. **51 So Jesus answered and said to him, “What do you want me to do for you?” The blind man said to Him, “Rabboni, that I may receive my sight.”** 52 Then Jesus said to him, “Go your way; your faith has made you well.” And immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus on the road.

- Bartimaeus saw in Jesus a merciful healer. Bartimaeus was not going to be hindered or discouraged by a crowd of people who had no idea what it meant to live in perpetual blindness. He could have asked Jesus for coins, food or shelter but he chose the greater possibility, the greater breakthrough. He would not be stilled.
- Sometimes you cannot choose the cards dealt to you but you can choose how you play the game. You cannot choose the direction of the wind but you can choose how you set sail.

Dewitt Jones, a renowned American photo- journalist with National Geographic, in his film “Celebrate what’s right with the world” says something very remarkable: **If you have the right lens, it becomes easy to get the right focus.**

QUESTION:

Does the lens through which you see Jesus enable you to get the right of focus of Him or should you be changing your lens?

- 3. Who you say Jesus is, your discernment of Him will determine the degree to which you will fully embrace Him.**

Matthew 13:53-58

Jesus Rejected at Nazareth

53 Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these parables that He departed from there. 54 When He had come to His own country (Nazareth), He taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished and said, “Where did this Man get this wisdom and these mighty works? 55 Is this not the carpenter’s son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas? 56 And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this Man get all these things?” 57 So they were offended at Him. But Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house.” 58 Now He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

- Those who had the best opportunity to know Jesus rejected Him. Because of their familiarity with Jesus, they failed to recognise Him for who He is. They failed to embrace Him. Familiarity breeds contempt. Their eyes were blinded by their unbelief.

QUESTIONS:

- In which areas of your life have you become blinded you such that you are hindered from fully embracing the person of Jesus Christ.
- What in your mind has to be deconstructed before Christ can take full residence in you?

4. Who you say Jesus is, will determine everything about how you follow Him.

- If you think Jesus was a good **teacher**, you will follow Him like you would a good teacher.
- If you think Jesus merely had some good ideas, then you will listen to what He says every once in a while.
- If you think Jesus was a good **example**, then you will try to follow His example.
- However, if you believe that Jesus was and is the promised **Messiah** who came to the earth to save us from our sins, to conquer sin and death, and to reign and rule over all as Lord, then that should change everything about how you live, move, and how you have your being in Him.

QUESTION:

- **Is what you say of Jesus is, in alignment with how He is portrayed in the WORD?**

- John 6:68-69

68 But Simon Peter answered Him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. 69 Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

Therefore it is against this backdrop that is it crucial for you and me to have an undisputed comprehension of Christ in our lives.

PART II: WHO DO YOU PERSONALLY SAY THAT JESUS CHRIST IS?

Mark 8: 29

“But who do you say that I am?”

- Jesus’ subsequent question to the disciples reveals that their prior response to the question “who do men say that I am”, **fell short of the true estimate of His mission.**
- Secondly, it depicts to you and I that it was of fundamental importance to Jesus, that if this team were to effectively execute mandate of the Great commission to the ends of earth, they needed to fully grasp who Jesus was and to accept Him.
- Neither are you and I exempt from responding to the very same question in our generation, if we too are to accomplish the Great Commission, to which we are no exceptions.

Let us not lose cognisance of a few fundamentals namely:

1. There are many erroneous definitions out there of whom Christ Jesus is.
2. There are innumerable voices fighting for airtime in the ears and hearts of men.
3. There are concerning worldviews that advocate the worship of idols, idols that range from people to animals to suspect objects.
4. There are confused mysticisms that perceive Jesus Christ as some floating being out there in the ether or some imposter or heretic.
5. There are philosophies that after more than 2000 years Christ walked the earth, are still trying to box and define Him.
6. History has even witnessed those who have claimed to be Jesus.
7. There are myriads of religions out there that position Jesus Christ on par with Muhammed, or Bhudda, or Krishna, or Sangomas, or Fortune- tellers or New Age charismas.
8. There are many religions in this world that claim to provide healing to souls of men of the solution to crises faced by the world today. But here is the thing, salvation is not found in any of them. You don't find salvation in a religion, salvation resides in a person - Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, in whom is eternal life.
9. There are many concepts of Jesus in the minds of people throughout the world, but the true Jesus is only portrayed in God's Word.
10. The devil has introduced many false Christ's and false bibles into the world to deceive mankind.
11. Additionally, there are popular movements, trends, and books that feature isolated characteristics of Jesus and dogmas that distort a correct biblical view of Jesus Christ.

IN CONCLUSION:

COULD IT BE THAT:

Unless the question: Who do you say that Christ Jesus is, is firmly resolved in your heart and mind you may fall prey to doctrines of devils.

1 Timothy 4:1

Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of devils.

COULD IT BE THAT :

Unless you are crystal clear in your mind of whom you have believed in, you may end up with an inaccurate interpretation of what Christ is actually able to execute in your own life.

2 Timothy 1:12

... I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that day.

COULD IT BE THAT :

Without a convincing revelation of the person of Jesus Christ, your experience of Jesus Christ may become flattened.

1 Corinthians 2:2

For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

Paul even feared for the believers in Corinth:

2 Corinthians 11:3-4

3 But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. 4 For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted—you may well put up with it!

Paul warns us that some people are dangerous and extremely hazardous to our spiritual health. There are many people today, who preach ANOTHER JESUS - not the Jesus which the Scriptures portray. There are spirits out there contrary to the Holy Spirit and there are gospels in opposition to the gospel of the kingdom of God.

Allow me to ask you one more time:

WHO DO YOU SAY THAT JESUS CHRIST IS?

And more importantly is your response in alignment to how Jesus describes Himself in the WORD? He gives us a couple of hints:

1. "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall not hunger." John 6:35
2. "I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life." John 8:12
3. "I am the gate; if anyone enters through Me, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." John 10:9

4. "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for His sheep." John 10:11
5. "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies." John 11:25
6. "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me." John 14:6
7. "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser." John 15:1

Christ not a fairy tale, of fable, or legend, myth, or fictional hero...He is the Son of the living God.