Who Do You Say Jesus is?

Matthew 16:13-20

Who is Jesus to you? How important is Jesus to you? Do you really depend upon, or seek Jesus in a time of need? Or do we go to Jesus with a wish and a hope that I am connected to Jesus?

"Who do men say that I am?" Jesus asked this question of Peter. It was a very important question. However, it is important that we look at Chapter 16 in Matthew to gain context on why Jesus asked Peter this question.

In Chapter 16, Jesus is confronted by a Canaanite Woman who wants her daughter healed of demon possession. She approaches Jesus in faith that Jesus will heal her daughter. Jesus insults to a degree by not answering her. His reason for ignoring her is that she is not an Israelite. She is not from the lost sheep of Israel, yet she approaches Jesus anyway. She approaches Jesus with boldness and gets into a debate with Jesus. Jesus lets her win. She says, "Even puppies get to eat crumbs that fall from the master's table." Jesus says to her "your faith is great! Your request is granted." Jesus then heals this woman.

Next Jesus feeds the multitude; the four thousand with seven loaves and a few fish. The disciples picked up seven baskets of broken pieces that were left. Jesus shows them that He always provides more than enough. Jesus and the disciples go to Magadan/Magdala where He encounters the Sadducees and the Pharisees who ask Him for a sign. The meaning of verses 2-4 is this: You learned people can read the signs of the weather. You know when a storm is coming. You know when the weather is going to be good, yet, you are unable to read the signs of the times. You are unable to recognize the Messiah has come.

What disappointed Jesus the most is that His disciples did not understand what He was talking about when He was talking about the yeast in the bread. They witnessed the miracles of the healing and the feeding of the four thousand, but they did not understand who Jesus was. This is why Jesus is asking Peter "who do men say that I am?" Jesus' response to Peter is the key to our understanding of who Jesus is. It is the

vehicle through which Jesus is known and perceived. Peter answers Jesus. He says, "Thou art the Christ Son of the Living God," and Jesus responded, "Flesh and blood did not reveal this to you. It was super-naturally revealed to you."

I want to mention a scripture that I lift up often because of its importance. John 3:3, "Unless you are born again, you are unable, (you do not possess the ability the power, the intelligence to see the things of God) to see the kingdom of heaven." Our perception, the way we see Jesus, colors our faith, our prayer life and every aspect of our spiritual life. It is crucial that we view Jesus as the Son of the Living God. That Jesus is our answer to the problems of life. Those who do not grasp the fullness of who Jesus is cannot participate in the power of Jesus Christ.

Jesus is the Author and Finisher of our faith. Our faith comes to us as a result of Jesus Christ sending the Holy Spirit to convict us of our song. Jesus is the Balm of Gilead, Jesus calms and brings peace to the suffering soul. Jesus is the Word of God whose word gives us the guidance needed to navigate our lives. This is the Jesus that I encourage you to pursue into the new year. This is the Jesus that can and will make a difference in your life.

The songwriter said it best for me: "On Christ the solid Rock I stand all other ground is sinking sand. I dare not trust the sweetest frame but wholly lean on Jesus' name." Won't you examine your perception of Jesus? Do you think it's time to make Jesus not only your savior but your Lord?

Blessings

Pastor Gool