

Mark 8:27-35**Who Do You Say Jesus Is?**

- 1) He is the Son of Man who suffered on the cross
- 2) He is the Christ who conquered through the cross

Pentecost 17 B

422 (1-3), 453, 482 (4), 313, 422

September 20, 2015

St. John Lutheran Church

Frankenmuth, MI

27 Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, “Who do people say I am?” 28 They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.” 29 “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?” Peter answered, “You are the Christ.” 30 Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him. 31 He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. 32 He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. 33 But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. “Out of my sight, Satan!” he said. “You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men.” 34 Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. 35 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it.

Prayer: “*Sanctify us by the truth your word is truth*” (John 17:17).

Introduction: A Sunday school teacher wanted her class to be able to apply God’s word to their everyday experiences. So she gave them this test. The first question “Someone says bad words and encourages you to misuse God’s name. What does God’s word say?” One from the class answered, “The Second Commandment: You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.” “Well done,” the teacher complimented. “How about this one: You see another student take someone else’s pencil without permission.” A boy responded: “The Seventh Commandment: You shall not steal.” “Great answer,” the teacher praised. “What about this one: You see your brother pulling the family cat’s tail.” This question caused a bit of a pause. But finally a little girl gave this answer: “*What God has joined together, let man not separate*” (Mark 10:9). That was a thoughtful answer, but the wrong application—Jesus spoke that truth concerning marriage.

Jesus, too, tested His disciples with an application question. The answer was and remains eternally important meaning the difference between heaven and hell. That’s why by God’s grace through the working of the Holy Spirit and in the spirit of St. Paul’s word when he stated, “*For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved*” (Romans 10:10), we answer Jesus’ question:

“Who Do You Say I Am?”

1) You are the Son of Man who suffered for our sins on the cross.

A. Jesus' disciples had been under His tutelage for about two years. Mark relates that they travelled to the villages around Caesarea Philippi, a Gentile area. Certainly, they would notice the idolatry: Baal worship, a “man-made” devil inspired “religion” perhaps similar to Post-modernism today—there are no absolute standards like the Ten Commandments so “right and wrong” are continually changing and relative.

1. So Jesus asked His disciples who witnessing these counter-ideas to Christianity: “*Who do people say I am?*” (v.21)—Matthew in 16:13 asks... “*The Son of Man*” is? Certainly, there were a variety of answers and opinions on Jesus' question: **Jesus is human, a mere man**: “*Isn't this the carpenter's son?*”

2. But He was a special man, since they also wondered: “*Where did this Man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers?*” (Matthew 13:55). In fact, the disciples also added: “*Some say John the Baptizer; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets*” (v.28)—Jesus might be a special son of a man, but He certainly isn't **THE** Son of Man. (Paul wrote about people with this mindset: “*They are the kind who are...always learning but never able to acknowledge the truth*” (2 Timothy 3:7).

B. Jesus then asked His disciples: “*Who do you say I am?*” (v.29)

1. Peter confesses the biblically correct answer: “*You are the Christ*”—Matthew 16:16 adds in the parallel recording of this answer “*the Son of the Living God*” (definite article

used 4xs in Greek stressing: “**THE** Christ, **THE** Son of **THE** God, **THE** Living One!”)

2. Peter had it right: Jesus is true God from eternity who took on a human nature. As to Jesus’ humanity and divinity, Luke records how the angel Gabriel revealed to Mary: “*The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the **Holy One** to be born will be called the **Son of God***” (1:35). Matthew reveals how an angel of the Lord informed step-father Joseph: “*The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel*”—which means, “*God with us*” (Matthew 1:23). Paul writes of Jesus’ mission as true God-man: “*But when the time [God’s] had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons*” (Galatians 4:4-5)

Appropriation: Dear brothers and sisters in Jesus:

- Mark’s gospel poses Jesus’ question to us: “*Who Do You Say I Am?*” Is Jesus a mere **Law Giver** giving nothing more than The Ten Commandments? After all, Jesus did command: “*Be perfect...as your heavenly Father is perfect*” (Matthew 5:48) echoing the words of the Lord’s OT command “*Be holy as I the LORD your God am holy*” (Leviticus 19:2). As true God, Jesus does insist that we be sinless = NO sin of thought, word and deed. Consider how James in our epistle lesson writes of our sinful “**discrimination**” which is evidence that we are guilty sinners

for “*Whoever keeps the law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it*” (James 2:10)

- Is Jesus a **Law Ignorer**? Some foolishly believe: “Jesus really won’t send someone to hell who doesn’t believe that He alone is THE way, and THE Truth and THE Life” (John 14:6) = Hell isn’t pretty, but it’s real!
- But when Jesus asks us, “*Who Do You Say I Am?*” By God’s grace we say with Peter: “**You are the Christ who...** lived the perfection we couldn’t (Matthew 5:17-18); suffered for our sin on the cross (Isaiah prophesied in our Old Testament reading) offering His innocence to God for our sinful sake; rose victoriously to assure death’s demise & sin’s payment satisfaction.

Transition: In fact, while Paul writes how Jesus’ cross is “*foolishness and a stumbling block to those who are perishing,*” Paul also confesses: “*But God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe*” (1 Corinthians 1:21-22). By God’s grace through the Holy Spirit’s working of faith in our hearts, we answer the question: “*Who Do You I Am?*”

2) You are the Christ who conquered our sins and defeated our death through His cross.

A. Jesus provided the details about His work—as our Christ—through the cross.

1. “*He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again*” (v.31).

2. Peter confessed the right thing, but didn't comprehend God's way vs. man's way: “[Jesus] spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him” (v.32). Jesus admonished Peter: “Out of my sight, Satan! You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men” (v.33)

B. Jesus applied the meaning of His cross to our Christian life.

1. Then Jesus said to [His disciples] & the crowd: “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. Whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for men and for the gospel will save it” (vv.34-35).

2. “Deny” self: recognize impossibility of saving ourselves; take up Christ's cross.

Appropriation: Dear beloved by Jesus:

- “Let go and let God!” = “Deny yourself and take up your cross!” Sometimes Satan tempts us to measure God's love by the events of life instead of by the cross of Christ. Truly, there are times we carry a cross as Christians: specific persecution because of our faith in Jesus—God doesn't exempt us from troubles of life caused by sin (like Peter thought would be true of Jesus' saving work). But as God's people, no matter the situation (even in struggles with sin and guilt), Jesus' cross brings grace: we live in the shadow of Jesus' cross through which He conquered our sins and defeated our death.

Conclusion: Dear fellow redeemed: So, are we ready to apply God's word to the “tests” of life? Our faith will be tested. But

the Lord doesn't leave us without the means to stand firm in the truth of Scripture: God's word and sacrament of Holy Communion strengthen our faith and "seal" of God's ownership in our baptisms. That's why we can say with Peter and all of God's faithful people when Jesus asks: "*Who Do You Say I Am?*" "You are the Son of Man who suffered for our sins on the cross...the Christ who conquered our sin and defeated our death through the cross." Amen.