

# Who Do You Say That I Am?

## Welcome

Palm Sunday

## Introduction

Today if we were to take a poll, asking the same question, who is Jesus, we would get all sorts of answers.

Public opinions:

- A good teacher
- A Liar
- A Crazy person
- A fictional person
  - Albert Schweitzer - "Jesus of Nazareth who came forward publicly as the Messiah, who preached the ethic of the Kingdom of God, who founded the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, and died to give His work its final consecration, never had any existence."

The dominant opinion of man is something called Postmodernism - There is no such thing as objective reality. Truth is subjective and up to the person to decide. Live your truth.

Today we are going to see that the opinion of man tells us absolutely nothing about objective reality.

## Luke 9:18-36

Now it happened that as he was praying alone, the disciples were with him. And he asked them, "Who do the crowds say that I am?" 19 And they answered, "John the Baptist. But others say, Elijah, and others, that one of the prophets of old has risen." 20 Then he said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" And Peter answered, "The Christ of God."

21 And he strictly charged and commanded them to tell this to no one, 22 saying, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised."

23 And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. 24 For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. 25 For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself? 26 For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. 27 But I tell you truly, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God."

28 Now about eight days after these sayings he took with him Peter and John and James and went up on the mountain to pray. 29 And as he was praying, the appearance of his face was altered, and his clothing became dazzling white. 30 And behold, two men were talking with him, Moses and Elijah, 31 who appeared in glory and spoke of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. 32 Now Peter and those who were with him were heavy with sleep, but when they became fully awake they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. 33 And as the men were parting from him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good that we are here.

Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah”—not knowing what he said. 34 As he was saying these things, a cloud came and overshadowed them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. 35 And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is my Son, my Chosen One; listen to him!” 36 And when the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and told no one in those days anything of what they had seen.

### **Context/Story**

Okay, here it is... The crowds have gotten too big. Last week there were about 20 thousand. Jesus has some hard things to say today that the crowd, (and us) need to hear. Jesus' words today will undoubtedly shrink his followers. Jesus says some stuff that they didn't want to hear. Keep in mind, that is a guy who spent the majority of his ministry time with twelve men. A guy who, when he left this earth, had only about 120 people who were actually sticking around and doing what he told them to do.

Jesus was known for regularly turning away thousands of people. Whenever the crowd got big, he'd say something like, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me”. Jesus apparently wasn't interested in marketing himself to the masses. His invitations to potential followers were clearly more costly than the crowds were ready to accept, and he seemed to be okay with that.

Before we even stop in, this man is our model for ministry. My model as a pastor. Far too often churches will forsake the hard truths of the bible in an attempt to get more people through the door. If a church is 20 thousand people, (and even if they are not) we have to ask the question, are they really following Jesus' teachings? Sadly, churches will oftentimes preach an entirely different Jesus. A Jesus of their own creation, that will tickle the ears of their congregations.

The text before us today marks a turning point in the Gospel. Luke makes a very important shift from making logical deductions about the identity of Jesus to a factual declaration as to the identity of Jesus. And in our text this morning we will see Jesus is 3 things. Truth, Worthy, Glorious

### **Jesus is Truth (vs 18-22)**

#### 1. Explain

- a. John the Baptist resurrected - He preached the same message as John and had a similar style, so some had the opinion that He was John the Baptist. They were siblings, so they may have even looked similar.
- b. Elijah - Malachi 4:5-6 5 “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes. 6 And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction.”
  - i. Final words of the old testament, everyone is waiting for this person
- c. A prophet - This was probably due to His authority in preaching and due to His power to heal and raise the dead.
- d. Ever had high expectations for something but once you experienced it you were let down? (*a movie, a famous person, a restaurant, a preacher - The key to successful preaching is low expectations*)

- i. Everyone had high expectations for Jesus, comparing him to John, Elijah, or a prophet of old. But the reality of Jesus Christ was far greater than anything they could have imagined. God Himself had come.
  - e. Truth isn't found in the opinions of man, Truth is found in Him!
- 2. Prove
  - a. 1 John 5:20 - And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life
- 3. Apply
  - a. "Our truth" is found in Christ alone.
    - i. Living our truth means we live for Christ.
  - b. Where are we placing our hope in?
    - i. It will all let you down. A husband cannot stand under the weight of
  - c. In order to see this clearly, we must look to Matthew's account of this same story.
  - d. Matthew 16:16-17 Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." 17 And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.
    - i. Ultimately truth is revealed by God! Which brings me to my second point

### **Jesus is Worthy (vs 23-27)**

- 1. Explain
  - a. I want you to think about the beginning of verse 23. So Jesus said to ALL, "If anyone would come after me," so this is introductory teaching about what it means to follow Jesus. This is not for the mature. This is not for a certain level of Christian. This is for anyone who would call themselves a follower of Jesus.
  - b. If you want to be a follower of Jesus that means a few things must happen in your life.
    - i. Self proclaimed Christians who do not do the things prescribed here are not Christians. This is somewhat of a litmus test to determine the authenticity of your faith
      - 1. Deny yourself
      - 2. Take up your cross daily
      - 3. Follow Jesus
  - c. The implication here is massive. It means that, for anyone to come to faith in Jesus means to deny yourself, to die to yourself, take up your cross, to confess your sin before God, to turn from your sin and not just your sin, but from yourself, from your every attempt to earn the favor of God.
  - d. If you are here, and you have never done this. You grew up in church,
- 2. Prove
  - a. Galatians 2:20 - I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

- b. Romans 6:6-7 - We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. 7 For one who has died has been set free from sin.
3. Apply
- a. Why would we do this? Give up our lives, our futures, our dreams, our plans, our vices, and the cost is so much greater in other places in the world! If you happen to live in a muslim country, following Jesus means being ostricized from your family, persecuted for your beliefs, and a general shunning in society.
- b. None of this will make sense unless we think long term
- i. The Cookie Story
- ii. Mark 10:29-30 - Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, 30 who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life.
- c. **No other religion offers the restoration that Christ promises.** Have you lost earthly riches for Jesus? Good news, you get the pearl of great price, and heavenly riches forever. Have you lost family for jesus? Receive God's forever family, the church, both now and in eternity. Have you been persecuted or perhaps even martyred for your faith? Behold! Jesus raises the dead, and gives you a glorified body free of sickness, suffering, and pain. It is this hope that makes **suffering fleeting and momentary!** JESUS MAKES ALL THINGS NEW!
- d. But the greatest reason Jesus is worthy of your affection, and devotion is because of Jesus Himself. And that brings me to my final point this morning.

### Jesus is Glorious (vs 28-36)

1. Explain
- a. 8 days later, Jesus brings Peter, James and John up on a mountain to pray...
- b. As they are praying, their friend Jesus, begins to transform in front of them.
- i. Face altered, Clothes White, Moses and Elijah show up and start talking with him about his departure, Peter says something dumb about pitching a few tents for Jesus, Moses and Elijah. Then a cloud envelops them. And God once again declares Jesus to be His son.
- c. Can you imagine what it would have been like to experience this?! Presence of God the father, Presence of God the son, the two most famous prophets of God, fully glorified. what would you say? Maybe something dumb about tents.
- d. **Following Jesus means we get to experience the Glory of God**
- e. The Glory of God is one of the **great mega-themes of the Bible**. Depending on how you count it, the glory of God is referenced in various ways about 300 times.
- i. Human language strains itself trying to describe it. We cannot fully understand the Glory of God until we experience it first hand on the other side of eternity, but here are some synonyms: **Splendor, Beauty,**

**magnificence, radiance, prominence, preeminence, luminescence, majesty, holiness, purity, worthiness, and superiority.**

- f. Jesus is Glorious. Let me help us grasp this a little more. Jesus is 31 or 32 years old at this point. But he existed long before his birth to the virgin Mary. Jesus is the eternal God. He lives without beginning and end. He created everything that exists. Yes Jesus is responsible for the existence of you, and I. He formed you and I in our mother's wombs, He created the planets, the stars, the mountains, the oceans, the animals. **Like hunting?** You're welcome! **Like the beach?** You're welcome! **Like to cook wonderful food?** You're welcome! You enjoy **music?** You're welcome!
- i. But not only is He Creator, **he is the sustainer.** Hebrews 1:3 - upholds all things by the word of His power. Colossians 1:17 - In him all things hold together
- g. This is a being that is worth following! A Relationship with Jesus Christ is the ultimate prize! If we got everything heaven had to offer except for Jesus, it would not be worth it. And If we got nothing Heaven had to offer but only Jesus, It would be worth it a thousand times over. He is infinitely valuable!
2. Apply
- a. Unfortunately, even as christians, sometimes we fail to understand or even recognize the Glory of God, and **instead we seek out glory for ourselves.** We care about the approval of men.
- b. We were created in His image so that we might reflect and reveal His glory, make much of Him Yet in our sin, we are obsessed with making much of ourselves. We lie so we can look better, we manipulate social media photos so we can look better, we say things, do things to be seen, be noticed, be made much of. We want the glory. This is not a trivial sin.
- c. But that is why Jesus came. **To fix and restore mankind back into image bearers of God. Remedy the problem of Sin, and redeem us from its consequences.**
- d. Jesus is True, Jesus is Worthy, and Jesus is Glorious.

## Conclusion

I'm guessing there might be some who are listening to this right now, and you've believed certain things about Jesus. Maybe even prayed a prayer, but you've never turned from your sin and yourself, died to yourself and put all your trust in Jesus as your life. If that's the case for you, I want to encourage you just right now to let this be the moment.

If anyone would come after Jesus, this is what it means to follow Jesus, just to pray, "Jesus, today I die to myself. I want to turn from my sin, trust in you what you did on the cross for me, to pay the price for my sin. I want to pick up my cross. I want to die to myself, my ways, my thoughts, my plans for my future, it's all yours. I want to die to all those things that are from me and I want to live in you."

## Pray

We say in a fresh way today, "Jesus, we die to ourselves. We don't want to live today according to our ways and our ideas and our thoughts. We don't want to speak our words. We

don't want to plan and dream according to our plans or our dreams. We want to live in you fully. We want to die to ourselves today, to trust in you as our life."

We want to live crucified with Christ today. We no longer live but Christ, you live in us, and the life we live in the flesh, we live by faith in you. So help us we pray, to follow you today, to die to ourselves all day long, to live today in you with you as the Lord of every single detail of our lives. We praise you for this privilege of following you. We praise you for the joy of following you. We praise you for eternal life that is found in you and for the next 10 billion years and even then, we'll just be getting started. So help us not to squander our lives away on meaningless things. But live a life of meaning dying to ourselves and reaching our world for you. God, as we prepare for Easter, I pray that we will not forget exactly who it was that took our place on that cross. The Savior, creator, sustainer of all things. The Glorious one. Jesus Christ.



## LUKE 8:16-21 Light Vs Darkness

**INTRODUCTION** The gospel has the power to save and transform our lives but it must land on receptive hearts. We are reminded in the Parable of the Sower that if our hearts are not tender then the gospel will not take root.

### DISCUSSION

- How is the gospel like a lamp?

### EXPLANATION

- What is the light we are supposed to shine?
- How does hearing relate to hiding or displaying the light of the gospel?
- Why does Jesus take such a strong stance between his earthly family and His spiritual family?
- What does this passage tell us about the connection between faith and obedience?

### APPLICATION

- In what ways can the gospel naturally be on display in your day-to-day life?
- How or when are you tempted to hide the gospel in your life?
- What can we do as a community to encourage one another to be a light to the world?

### THE 5 W's (broken up into gendered groups)

- Word (How have you gotten into the word this week?)
- Wife/Husband/Family (How are you doing with your spouse/family?)
- Wellness (What are you doing to take care of yourself?)
- Work (How are you handling the work God has given you?)
- Witness (Who have you witnessed to, or prayed for this week?)