

Who Do You Say I Am?

Mark 8:27-29 Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them “Who do people say I am?” They replied, “Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and still others, one of the prophets.” “But what about you?” he asked, “Who do you say I am?” Peter answered, “You are the Christ.”

What if we were asked this question by Jesus? When we stand before the throne, what would our answer be? He is my Savior. Our Christ, the one who died for our sins. Would he say, “Welcome, my beloved child?” Have I deserved that? Truth is we can never earn or deserve it, he earned it for us on the cross. Doesn’t mean we should stop trying, that we get a free pass. James 2:12 “Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action is dead.” We are to carry on the work started a long time ago, we are to help the poor, to feed the hungry, to love our neighbors, to be kind to others, to welcome the stranger and to spread the word of God to those who have never known it and to carry Jesus in our hearts and minds. I remember how I was welcomed to a church as a 15 year old. When I walked in the door they acted as if they had been expecting me and when I looked around and didn't quite know where to go a woman came up to me and said "Sit by me." She showed me where to find the hymns listed and how to find them in the hymnal. She was not intrusive but helpful and kind. In that small church with those kind and generous people a journey was started that still continues today, 72 years later. What if I had walked in that church and been ignored, had not known how to find the hymns (back then the numbers were on a wooden board at the front of the sanctuary, no bulletins). Would I have returned? Would my journey have been ended before it began? I thank God for those kind people that took me in and nurtured me and showed me the love of Christ. I was hungry for the word of God and they fed me, I was a stranger and they took me in. Thanks be to God.

Exodus 20:2-17 You shall have no other Gods before me. You shall not worship false idols. You shalt not take the Lord’s name in vain. Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy. Honor your father and Mother. You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor. You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife or anything that belongs to your neighbor. John 13:34-35 A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have love you, so you must love one another. By this all will know that you are my disciples if you love one another

Lord, help us to be all we can be. May we be your children and may we lead others to you. Be with those who are suffering through an unconscionable war in Ukraine. Help the people to survive and to heal. Be with those who are grieving the loss of loved ones, the loss of homes. Be with those who are ill and who grieve in our own midst, may we comfort them. Bless our Pastor and his ministry. Be with his family. Be with our staff and leaders, may they strengthen and bless our church. We thank you Lord for the gift of the day, for the food on our table and the safety of our homes. Be with our church as we seek to be the hands and feet of Jesus Christ, may we welcome the stranger and feed those who are hungry for your word and for the love that only Christ can bring into our lives and it is in his name we pray. Amen

Grace Epperson