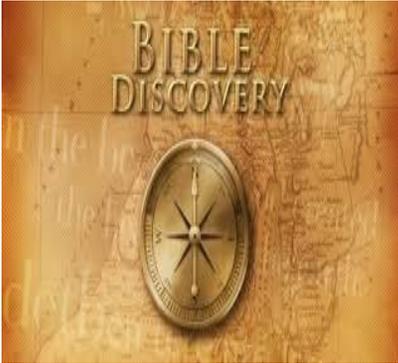


July 17, 2016

Matthew 16:13-20

Who Jesus Is

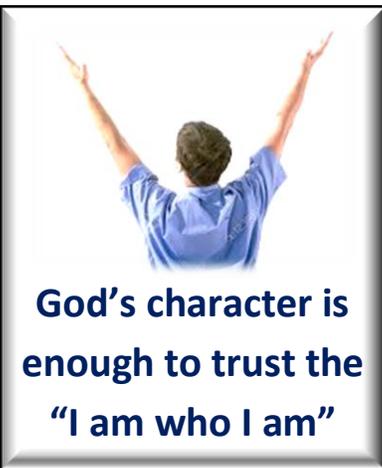


There've been many famous people in the world; some well-known in their community, while others are known worldwide. However, just knowing the legend of someone famous doesn't mean you *know* him or her. It doesn't mean you've intimate knowledge about what they're really like as a person. In fact, setting aside public persona you may not know them at all! Why does simply knowing *about* someone famous mean you may not truly *know* him? Well, where does such information originate? Media often comes with an agenda, information can be edited, manipulated, slanted. The public persona can be created to present a particular image with a particular end in mind. None of these allow you to experience the real person – that takes you spending time with them, learning their likes and dislikes – observing them when things are going well – *and not so well!*

So what does this have to do with our message today, “*Who Jesus is*”? Many around the world have heard something *about* Jesus, even though He lived on earth some 2,000 years ago. Yet, many would admit they're confused about who Jesus really is. Who is Jesus? Some say He's merely a good man. Others claim He's nothing more than a prophet. Still others believe Jesus is God. What do you and I believe? If we believe Jesus is more than a man or a great teacher, more than a prophet, more than a leader to guide us to God who lived 2,000 years ago; if we believe what the Bible says that He is the Son of God, then we must accept that Jesus came to earth to save us from our sins, which separate us from God. By dying on the cross, Jesus paid the price for our sins and made a way for us to live with God forever. We must believe in His promise of eternal life because He rose from the dead to live still today. He wants to be your Saviour and friend.

But may I suggest we can only believe this if we know Jesus – *I mean really know who Jesus is!*

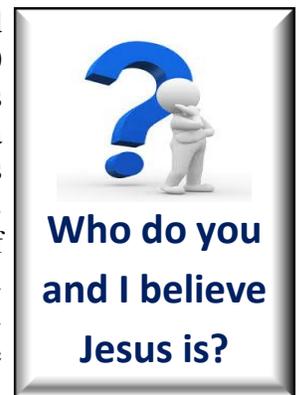
During the First World War, the great Christian writer, Oswald Chambers was walking past a woman's house accompanied by his wife, Biddy. The woman was very sick, and Biddy asked, “I wonder what God is going to do?” Chambers indicated he was more concerned about who God *is* than of what He would choose to *do*. Chambers wasn't indifferent to the suffering of another; he spoke from his total reliance on the *personality* and *character* of God he knew well, rather than merely hoping for what He might do. Though concerned for the woman and her condition, the character of his Creator was enough for Chambers to trust God implicitly for what would happen next.



Our God's the One who summarizes His very character, telling Moses, ‘*I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'*’ [Genesis 3:14] You'd think it'd have been better to give encouragement regarding His power or a revelation of future knowledge to spur His servant on. Yet, apparently this message was enough for Moses! God presented who He is by an intimate name: *the God who Is; the One who is able to deliver, rescue, and keep His covenant with His people*. He gave no promise of health, prosperity, or popularity — just His name! He depended on no public persona, no campaign or long recital of His vast accomplishments. And when Jesus was pressed for acknowledgement of who He is, He didn't consider it blasphemous to pronounce, “*I tell you the truth, before Abraham was even born, I AM*” [John 8:58]. This straightforward association with God wasn't lost on His audience. They were outraged. Clearly they hadn't picked up on the centuries of trailers being put

out by Jesus' eternal, heavenly campaign manager – the Holy Spirit - announcing His coming, His purpose, His position with the Father.

Consider just two prophesies from among so many. First, over 700 years in advance, the prophet Micah foretold the promised One would be born in Bethlehem, a small town in the land of Judah. [Micah 5:2] Guess where



Jesus was born? In that very town! [see Matthew 2:1, 3-9] Second, many centuries in advance, the prophecy recorded at Daniel 9:25 pointed not only specifically to when the Messiah would appear but to His suffering as well. The fulfillment of these and other prophecies proves Jesus is the “*I Am*”, the promised Messiah. If that’s not sufficient, consider the Bible records,

“After being baptized, Jesus immediately came up from the water; the heavens were opened up, and he saw God’s spirit descending like a dove and coming upon him. Look! Also, a voice from the heavens said: ‘This is my Son, the beloved, whom I have approved.’” [Matthew 3:16, 17]



That brings us to Peter’s confession of Christ. Jesus and His disciples had withdrawn to the district of Caesarea Philippi – about 25 miles northeast of the Sea of Galilee because Jesus knowing His end was near needed time alone with the disciples having much to say to them, much to teach them, yet so little time to prepare them. Interestingly, this area was predominantly non-Jewish offering Jesus a place of peace and security to teach. Jesus, never one to skirt an issue, the most pressing concern for Jesus was the disciples understanding of *who He is*. Did anyone understand? Was there anyone who recognized Him for who and what He was? Obviously it was a crucial problem! To put it bluntly – it involved the very survival of Christ’s message – the Christian faith. If there were none who grasped the truth, or even glimpsed it, then all His work went for nothing. Jesus determined to reach the hearts of those closest to Him and seek their understanding – to test the waters of their faith asking who they believed Him to be.

It reminds us what Jesus said and did while on earth help us get to know Him well. More than that, through Jesus we come to know God better. Why does this matter? Because Jesus as the Son is the perfect reflection of His Father He tells one of his disciples: “*Whoever has seen me has seen the Father also.*” [John 14:9] The four Bible books known as the Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—tell us much about the life, activity, and personal qualities of Jesus. Yet nothing is as essential as the response of Peter to this enquiry from Christ.

Having received the pat answers of the crowd – “*Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets*” [vs. 14] – Jesus presses further asking, “*But what about you? Who do you say I am?*” [vs. 15] In response we have Peter’s foundational answer, “*You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.*” What’s even more amazing, as we consider who Jesus is, was the revelation such intimate knowledge and understanding has as its source Christ’s “*Father in heaven*”! It means nothing we do is sufficient for us to fully know Jesus. Jesus knew His message would be carried forward once awareness of that proclamation was accepted in Peter’s heart. He knew Peter would yet be sifted by Satan, would face trials for his faith, would deny even knowing Jesus - but He also knew the revelation which God placed in Peter – as in us - outlasts the temptations and diversions of the enemy.

**Intimate knowledge
and understanding
of Jesus as our
Messiah, the Son of
the Living God, has
as its source Christ’s
Father in Heaven!**

Here we’re given the first of two great truths which I trust you’ll take into your heart today. First is that human categories – even the highest of human categories – are insufficient to adequately describe the Son of God, the Messiah, the Anointed One who came to take away the sins of the world. When others would try to describe Him as “John the Baptist, or Elijah, or Jeremiah or one of the other prophets”, Peter declared Him to be none other than the Messiah. Once Napoleon gave his verdict on Jesus: “I know men”, said Napoleon, “and Jesus is more than a man.” Though whether we’re alongside Peter or Napoleon, whether we’ve attended to studies of theology or philosophical expression, whether we’ve been brought up in the Church or recently accepted Jesus as Lord, we do so in the power and revelation of God through His Holy Spirit on our hearts having no mere human description adequate to describe the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour, the Eternal Son of God. Peter’s declaration of who Jesus is – the Christ and the “anointed one of God” was saying He had been given great insight into truly knowing Jesus and found Him sufficient to meet His need of a Messiah. How about us? Is Jesus enough for you and me?

Two Great Truths!



- Highest of human abilities is insufficient to adequately describe the Son of God
- Jesus can only be found through *personal discovery*

[Colossians 1:15]; John wrote, “*He was with God in the beginning*” [John 1:2]; and Peter would later preach, “*You must worship Christ as Lord of your life*” [1 Peter 3:15], yet Christ makes it clear our knowledge of Him must never be second hand. We might know every word that has been written, every verdict that has been adjudicated, every theological debate presented on Jesus and His life and ministry; we might be able to give a competent summary of the teaching of Jesus as a great thinker and teacher and still miss out on eternity with Jesus by “*this much*”! Christianity never consists – can never be sufficient – in know about Jesus; it always requires that we know exactly who Jesus is!

The Bible is our richest resource to the life and person of Jesus reminds us that Jesus is the living Word of God. John 1:14 says,

“So the Word became human and lived here on earth among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen His glory, the glory of the only Son of the Father.”

What’s your reaction to such teaching?

Is Jesus enough to be Lord of your life? Have you allowed God’s Holy Spirit to impact your heart and draw you to Himself resting in His character, relying on His name – His Word as your source of life? God has given us His Word on it that Jesus is the author and finisher of our faith – and He gave you His written Word to prepare you to live out your faith. Are you ready to profess with Peter, with the Saints of the ages, with your brothers and sisters of faith, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God? Believe me when I tell you there is no other question demanding a more immediate answer – and there is no richer reward for taking a stand than to be found in your life with Christ. May we rest in Him and in His loving character knowing He’s the one and only I AM!

To discuss this further or to obtain more information, give me a call or send an email to Mt Brydges Baptist Church. We’d love to hear from you.

Blessings,

Pastor Dave

Our discovery of a second great truth is found as this passage teaches us that our discovery of who Jesus is can only be found through *personal discovery*. Jesus’ question to you today is, “*You, - what do you think of me? Who do you think I am?*” Remember when Pilate asked if Jesus was the King of the Jews? His response was to ask, “*Is that your own idea, or did others talk to you about me?*” [John 18:33-34] There’s no second hand information that can bring us into an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ. Only having met Jesus on the road to Damascus could Paul write to in Romans, “*Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.*” [Romans 10:17] While it is true others were convinced that Jesus is God and recorded their decisions in God’s Word – Paul states, “*Christ is the visible image of the invisible God*”.

**Knowing Jesus
second hand results
in us missing out on
eternity with
him by this
much...**

