

We have followed Jesus around through the northern reaches of Judea, in Galilee, and over these months we have seen many things—We’ve—

- Watched as he calmed a storm with a word.
- Witnessed him bring a little girl back from death.
- Seen him heal the lame and lepers alike.
- Heard him teach the crowds.
- Seen him feed a multitude from scraps.
- Watched as he has dispatched demons.
- Witnessed him bring sight to the blind.

And all the while one question has hung heavy over the book of Mark. One question dominates the beginning of this narrative—Who is this man?

Up and to this point the crowd, the Pharisees and the disciples don’t really know who he is. Today that changes.

The question—Who is Jesus?—that question is not just the most important question in the book of Mark but it is also the most important question anyone can answer.

Who do you say that he is?

“And Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. And on the way he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that I am?” <sup>28</sup> And they told him, “John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets.” <sup>29</sup> And he asked them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered him, “You are the Christ.” <sup>30</sup> And he strictly charged them to tell no

one about him. <sup>31</sup> And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again. <sup>32</sup> And he said this plainly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. <sup>33</sup> But turning and seeing his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind me, Satan! For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.” Mark 8:27—33

## PRAY

This morning we have three simple points—two questions and a rebuke.

### 1. **Question #1—Who do THEY say I am? (8:27-28)**

Vs. 27,

“And Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. And on the way he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that I am?”

Jesus asks—who do the crowds of people that throng around me think that I am?

He knew that everyone was talking about him. He knew that everyone had an opinion. He knew the crowds had been sharing their opinion about who he is with the disciples.

We already know who Jesus is because Mark (the narrator) told us right in the beginning who Jesus was—

“The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.” Mark 1:1

We as the reader know who Jesus is but those participating in the story don't really understand who he is.

We've also witnessed God in heaven pronounce who Jesus was at his baptism,

"And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. [11] And a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased." Mark 1:10–11

And three times demons as they were being exorcised disclosed the identity of Jesus—

"What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God." Mark 1:24

We as the readers know who Jesus is—but the crowds there on site—don't.

Vs. 28,

"And they told him, "John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets."

The opinion polls are split between John, Elijah and other. It makes sense. The crowds see Jesus all that he has done and how he speaks and say that he is some great man, even a prophet.

Herod wondered aloud if Jesus was John the Baptist back to life. Others were taken with Elijah because he did not die. He was whisked away to the skies—

“And as they still went on and talked, behold, chariots of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.” 2 Kings 2:11

And, maybe the crowd surmises Elijah rides the same chariot of fire back down.

Others say—maybe a prophet—because any good Jew would know that prophets spoke for God. Jesus seems to be doing that.

Jesus is being compared to the great prophets of Israel’s history. He—according to popular opinion—ought to take his place among the greats in history. He should be inducted into the nation’s hall of fame.

That seems like a good notion but it is debasing. In saying that Jesus was merely on par with the greats denies his uniqueness. He is not one among many. Jesus stands alone. To say that he is merely a good man—even the best of men—is to demean him.

He is more than a good man.

He is the good God who became man.

But Jesus wants to hear what his closest followers think—now that I have heard what others think—what about you guys?

## **2. Question #2—Who do YOU say I am? (8:29—31)**

And Peter speaks for the group—

<sup>29</sup> And he asked them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered him, “You are the Christ.” <sup>30</sup> And he strictly charged them to tell no one about him.

You are the Christ. This is the first confession by a human in the book of Mark as to Jesus' identity.

When Peter says, "You are the Christ," he is saying much more than we might see at first blush. Christ is not Jesus' last name it is his title. We Americans don't go in for many titles, but we give Medical Doctors their due.

We would say Dr. Jones.

All of us know that Dr. is not a name but a title. Jesus is his name and 'Christ,' is his title.

What does Christ mean?

Christ in English means—anointed one. Christ in Hebrew means Messiah. So to say Messiah and Christ is to say the same thing.

But Peter does not say that Jesus is an anointed one—did you notice—he says Jesus is 'THE Christ.' Meaning you are the one and only anointed one.

We don't use the word anointed often, if we do, it is kinda churchy but in the OT, priests and some prophets were anointed.

When the word 'anointed' was used people thought—king. Peter is not saying you are a king. He is saying you are THE King.

In other words, Peter is calling Jesus the King that Israel has been waiting for. For centuries the nation of Israel had been looking for a king to come to restore all things. The nation had been looking for a super-human type man who was going to come and make all things right.

They are thinking of—

1500 years prior Moses said—watch for a man to arrive—Listen to him! He is unique. He speaks for God as God. .

The Anointed one.

1000 years we have this promise from God to David—

“When your (David) days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. [13] He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. 2 Samuel 7:12–13

The Anointed one.

300 years after that the greatest of the prophets Isaiah said,

“Behold my servant, whom I uphold,  
my chosen, in whom my soul delights;  
I have put my Spirit upon him;  
he will bring forth justice to the nations.  
[2] He will not cry aloud or lift up his voice,  
or make it heard in the street;  
[3] a bruised reed he will not break,  
and a faintly burning wick he will not quench;  
he will faithfully bring forth justice.  
[4] He will not grow faint or be discouraged  
till he has established justice in the earth;  
and the coastlands wait for his law.” Isaiah 42:1–4

Fast forward as Jesus and the disciples walk along the way to Caesarea Philippi—when Jesus asks—who do you think that I am?

He asks THE question. The most important question ever put to them or anyone else.

When Peter says you are the Christ he is saying much more than we might think. All Israel had been waiting for the anointed one. All Israel has heard that the Lord would one day send a King to make all things right.

And Peter says—‘You are the Christ he is saying...’

- You are who everyone has been waiting for.
- You are the one who is going to make all things right.
- You are the king to surpass all kings.
- You are come from God to bring justice.
- You are to rule forever. You are the anointed one of God.
- You are the one my great grandmother told me about.
- You are the one to inaugurate a kingdom without end.
- You are the one who will defeat all our enemies.
- You are the one who will destroy all evil.
- You are the one to release the captives.
- You are the one that generations have waited for and not seen.

You are Christ.

Peter was exactly right. Jesus is not ‘an anointed one’ but THE anointed one. Jesus is the one and only Christ. Peter and the others were exactly right.

They understood WHO Jesus was—but they still didn’t understand his mission. In other words, Peter and the others were exactly right about WHO he was—but exactly wrong about WHAT he was to do.

And that leads to

### 3. An explosive misunderstanding (8:30-33)

“And he strictly charged them to tell no one about him.”

That is a strange way of confirming what Peter had to say about his identity. Don't tell anyone—why? Because like Peter and the others they may understand WHO he was but not WHAT he was to do.

If the disciples were unable to understand what the Christ was to do—the crowds would too. Remember, they are expecting a conquering King. Israel and the crowds was expecting a King with power, position and prestige.

Jesus would offer none of those things on his first trip to earth.

What then?

Jesus begins to teach what it means that he is the Christ—the anointed one. Now he teaches them what it means that he is the Christ.

Vs. 31,

<sup>31</sup> And he began to teach them that the Son of Man *must* suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again. <sup>32</sup> And he said this plainly.”

‘Must’ is the key word in Jesus’ response. Jesus is not merely predicting what will happen with his superhuman powers—he is giving his very reason for coming.



Jesus is giving them a roadmap for the rest of his time in Israel—he is giving them his plans.

He is not saying, I'm going to do my best, but I'm telling you the forces arrayed against me are too many. They are going to kill me.

He is also not saying, "I Might die.'

He is saying I have come to die. I must die. There are some things I must endure.

What are they?

That the Son of man:

- Must suffer many things.
- Must be rejected by the elders, chief priests & scribes.
- Must be killed.
- Must rise again.

They surely didn't understand that business about rising again because they were stuck on the anointed one dying. At this point in the Jewish mindset—the anointed is expected to rule and reign NOT die.

The shock of all this was too much for the disciples. Jesus saying that he is planning on dying. Or that he has come to earth for the express purpose of dying.

What king does that?

Who wants to follow a leader whose purpose is to suffer and die?

Strange.

Peter never the shy type jumps right in—

**“And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.”**

The conversation was not, soft and civil—Peter was fired up and even angry. He would have said something like,

“What are you talking about? No more death talk. None, do you hear me? I refuse to stand by and say that you must suffer many things and die. Refuse. None of us will.”

We give Peter a hard time because of what Jesus says next but before we hear that harshest words that ever came from Jesus’ mouth—lets take a breath.

No one expected a suffering Christ.

No one.

Not a soul.

Even when Jesus says that the ‘son of man’ must suffer they disciples would have been confounded. They knew Daniel had predicted the coming of the Son of Man. See what kind of suffering you read from Daniel’s words—

[13] “I saw in the night visions,  
and behold, with the clouds of heaven  
there came one like a son of man,  
and he came to the Ancient of Days  
and was presented before him.

[14] And to him was given dominion  
and glory and a kingdom,  
that all peoples, nations, and languages  
should serve him;  
his dominion is an everlasting dominion,  
which shall not pass away,

and his kingdom one  
that shall not be destroyed.” Daniel 7:13–14

How much suffering do you read into that account?

None.

It makes sense.

What if at the inauguration a future president says, “My great goal for my administration is for me to suffer many things and die.”

No one is going to cheer after that pronouncement. Both sides of the aisle will sit stunned and dumbfounded. And we would be left scratching our heads.

What?

More than that—Peter and the rest quit their jobs, left their homes and changed everything about their livelihood to follow Jesus. They left everything and he says—I Must die.

What?

Why are we following you? What king comes just to die?

More shocking than Peter’s response to Jesus is Jesus’ response to Peter—

<sup>33</sup> But turning and seeing his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind me, Satan! For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.”

Get behind me Satan?

What is Jesus saying? That Peter was somehow possessed by the devil?

No.

Peter was parroting not just the words but the sentiments of Satan. Peter's thought is so utterly foreign to Jesus that the idea comes from the pit of hell.

That is why Jesus responded that way—

Jesus had heard this before. When was being tempted by Satan in the desert, Satan offered Jesus a way to be king without suffering.

All Jesus had to do to avoid—

Suffering  
Rejection  
Death

Was to serve Satan.

So, when Peter says—no anointed king of ours is going to suffer, to be rejected and die—he is saying without knowing it—you should do whatever you can to avoid death.

What?

You see, at the moment of this conversation the king of the earth is Satan. He was unquestioned prince of the air. For Jesus NOT to live, die and rise would necessarily mean that Jesus would have to be subservient to Satan.

Jesus didn't come to be anointed as Satan's second. He came to destroy Satan and all evil. Jesus came as the anointed king to destroy Satan.

How?

*“And he began to teach them that the Son of Man *must* suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again.”*

What Peter and the disciples did not understand was why Jesus had to suffer, be rejected and die. They did not understand what Jesus was anointed to do. Peter and all Israel expected Jesus to put all things right with the nation.

Jesus came to make all things right between God and man, first. Jesus was anointed by God to be the king who could save all men and women and boys and girls from their sins.

Jesus would suffer many things and die but rise to everlasting, eternal life. Jesus would reign as the anointed one not just over Israel but over all of the universe.

All humanity needs Christ to save us from our greatest enemy—sin. The reason Jesus had to suffer, be rejected and die is to pay for the sins. So that the door of forgiveness might be open to any who come and ask.

You might wonder—why was it necessary for Jesus to die? Why did he say he **MUST** die?

For forgiveness.

Real forgiveness is never free. It is never easy. Real forgiveness is always a costly proposition. Authentic forgiveness always involves some degree of suffering.

Think about it.

If someone at work or school spreads a malicious lie about you—you are going to feel that sting. The pain is intensified if the person spreading the lie is someone you thought was your friend. Any normal person is going to hurt at that betrayal.

Further imagine that the person comes to you and says—I've been spreading lies about you. I've told many people things about you that are not true.

I am so sorry, will you forgive me?

Now, what cost does the person asking for forgiveness have to pay? Just a difficult conversation with you, right?

If you respond and say, I freely forgive you. As you extend forgiveness you are saying, “you have wronged me greatly but I will chose to endure that pain and overlook what you have done.”

There is always a cost associated with forgiveness.

The same thing is true with Jesus. The reason Jesus had to suffer, be rejected and die is to pay the cost of forgiveness.

The costly side of forgiveness falls on the anointed one, on the Christ and not on you or me. That is why Jesus had to die.

Peter did not understand the great and terrible cost of forgiveness. Peter and the others did not understand why

“he began to teach them that the Son of Man *must* suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again.”

Jesus was the Christ anointed to suffer, be rejected and be killed and rise again.

For the penalty of Peter’s sin to be paid in full—For God to overlook my sin and your sin—someone had to pay. That someone was Jesus.

The victory that Jesus the anointed one wins seems like a devastating loss. This king faced great enemies and was destroyed.

Death will swallow Jesus.

But on the third day he rises. Do you see what that means?

The reason that Jesus was anointed to suffer many things, be rejected and be killed is for us. In other words, he came to suffer, be rejected and die so that all who trust in him—

Might suffer—but only for a short time. The anointed one has purchased for us forgiveness meaning that we will one day reign on earth with Jesus, the anointed one.

He was rejected—so that we might never suffer the rejection of God the father. Any who come to him and ask for help he gladly welcomes.

He died—so that any who come to him—though they die do not taste the bitter substance of death. We will live forever.

He rose from the dead—so that any who trust in him rise and reign with him forever.

He is the anointed one, the King of Kings who has come to save us from our sins and restore mankind to God.

So let us put the question Jesus asks his disciples to ourselves.

**“But who do you say that I am?”**

It is not enough to respect Jesus. It is not enough to say that Jesus was a good man who taught great things. It is not enough to say that Jesus was the best of men. It is not enough to say that he was a good example.

Do you know why?

A Jesus who is merely a good man is easy to be admired not worshiped. Someone we admire we take on our own terms—someone who is anointed we take on his terms.



He is the anointed one.

Anointed to suffer many things, be rejected and die.

Now this may be hard to see. You may have to work a lot of things out. So often this happens through unhurried conversations with a Christian friend. Just as last week the man was touched twice by Jesus to be healed, it might take a while to see why you need a savior.

The savior you need is Jesus.

Christians,

Who do you say that he is?

The anointed king?

Aren't you glad that he did not avoid suffering many things, being rejected and death?

If he did not we would have nothing but eternal suffering—eternal rejection and eternal death awaiting us.

But that is not what awaits us now. Praise God.

PRAY

[24] The LORD bless you and keep you;

[25] the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you;

[26] the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace. Numbers 6:24–26

