



‘Now!’ Sermon Series

Sermon #30

‘The Most Important Question of All Time!’

Mark 8:27-33

Sunday, November 24th, 2024

Last week in ‘NOW’ sermon series:

- I don’t know about you, but last Sunday’s sermon sure felt like a ‘marathon’ to me.
 - We went through 26 verses that all discussed miracles that Jesus did, that were similar to one’s He had done before.
 - *One of the main ideas of last Sunday’s sermon was to not forget what God has done.*
- I preached a sermon entitled *‘The Folly of Forgetfulness!’* from *Mark 8:1-26*.
 - I asked the question: *How can we see the Folly of Forgetfulness that the Disciples fall into here and avoid the same trap?*

- **Truth #1:** *Jesus Feeds, Again. (vv. 1-10)*
- **Truth #2:** *Jesus Fights, Again. (vv. 11-13)*
- **Truth #3:** *Jesus is Flabbergasted, Again. (vv. 14-21)*
- **Truth #4:** *Jesus Fulfills Needs, Again. (vv. 22-26)*

- Based on last Sunday’s sermon, have you fallen into the folly of forgetting what God has done in your life this past week?

‘The Most Important Question of All Time!’

Mark 8:27-33

Sermon in a Sentence:

When we examine the request, the responses, the revelation, and the rebukes, we can find the most important question of all time.

Intro:

- Questions are something that some people ask more than others.
 - *As a Child, my mother said that I may have set the world record for the most questions asked by a child.*
- When we are children and we are learning and taking in so much, it’s easy for questions to roll off the tongue like...
 - *Are we there yet?*

- *Where do babies come from?*
- *Why is the ocean so big?*
- *Why does the preacher preach so long?*
- *Sometimes there is a tendency that as we get older and become adults, that we will sometimes stop asking questions as much as we used.*
 - Sometimes folks think they've 'arrived' and that they know all there is to know.
 - *On the opposite side of this, to some, questioning everything in humanity is their goal.*
 - In our text this morning, Jesus is going to ask His disciples a question. And it is one that every person must answer. One way or the other.
- Several years ago a New York Times author shared his thoughts about the most important question in life.
 - *Keep in mind this is from a secular perspective...*
 - He provided the following two questions that he felt were the most important questions for a person to be able to answer in their life...
 - *What pain do you want in your life?*
 - *What are you willing to struggle for?*
 - *The writer used these questions to set the stage to discuss the American dream and how those*

questions would set someone up to be able to succeed.

- Have all the money, the perfect relationship, house, all those things.
 - *Sometimes even as God's people, we are asking the wrong questions when it comes to God...*
 - God why are you putting me through this?
 - God do you not see my pain?
 - God do you not understand me?
 - *We ask silly questions to a Holy, Sovereign and perfect God who knows us intimately, because He made us...*
 - The confession you have about the most important question in the world, determines your eternal destination. It really is a matter of life and death.
 - The most important question in the world 'Who do you say Jesus is?'
 - *Let me ask you two things as we get ready to jump into this text:*
 - *Who do you verbally confess that Jesus is?*
 - *Does your life depict that Jesus is Lord?*
- *Read Mark 8:27-33**

Question to Ask:

How is the most important question of all time revealed in these verses where Peter and Jesus get into a heated discussion?

Truth #1: *The Request.* (v. 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 is always trying to get His Disciples to think more deeply about the things of God.
 - *In verse 27 we are told that Jesus takes the disciples north for a private time.*
 - And during this time, he is going to ask them a question.
 - I believe there are **2** things to point out concerning the request that Jesus makes...
- *Unlikely Location.* (v. 27a)
 - ‘And Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi.’
 - *Jesus and His disciples are in route to Caesarea Philippi which was 25 miles north of Bethsaida.*
 - *This city represents the outer regions of paganism, idolatry, and hostility to the jews.*
 - This morning we get to see progression with the disciples in what we touched on Wednesday.
 - *Just as Jesus brought physical sight to the blind man in bethsaida, He is bringing spiritual sight to the disciples and that is revealed in their answer the question Jesus is about to ask...*
- *Unexpected Question.* (v. 27b)

- ‘And on the way he asked his disciples,’
- Notice just how odd this question is that Jesus asked His disciples.
 - *Most of the time people ask what someone does and not necessarily WHO they are.*
- *Back in Mark 4:41 the disciples said ‘who is this? Even the wind and waves obey Him?’*
 - Much time has passed since then, and Jesus asks, ‘Who do you say I am?’
- James Edwards said *‘There is a difference between judgment and confession: we may be instructed by the judgements of others, but the declaration that Jesus is the Christ depends on a believer’s personal confession.’*

Truth #2: *The Responses.* (vv. 28-30)

- ‘And they told him, “John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets.” **29** And he asked them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered him, “You are the Christ.” **30** And he strictly charged them to tell no one about him.’
- Jesus had asked them the question ‘Who do people say that I am’ as they traveled.
 - *Now in verses 28-30, we get their answers!*
- *The disciples’ response to Jesus’ question is a good representation of all the opinions that people had of Him at that time.*
 - The disciples had heard the gossip and the conversations that had surrounded Jesus.

- But the same situation is still prevalent today. Which is why we must share the ‘most important question with everyone we know.’
 - *If we were to go to downtown columbia this afternoon and ask people who do you say that Jesus is? We are going to get a myriad of different answers.*
- Let’s look at the **2** specific responses that we find here...
- **The Disciples Respond. (v. 28)**
 - ‘And they told him, “John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets.”’
 - **John the Baptist.**
 - When we read that people mistaken Jesus for John the Baptist, I can’t help but agree with what W.W. said...
 - *‘That some thought He was John the Baptist is especially perplexing, since John and Jesus had been seen publicly together.’*
 - These individuals would have agreed with Herod Antipas that Jesus was some form of reincarnation of John the Baptist.
 - **Elijah.**
- ***In the minds of most Jews, Elijah was probably the most popular of all the OT characters.***
- It wasn’t necessarily the deeds of Elijah that were so impressed on the hearts of the Jews, but rather the fact that in **2nd Kings 2:11**, he was taken to Heaven.
 - ‘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.’
- So many gave the answers that would have been popular, John the Baptist or even Elijah.
- **One of the Prophets.**
 - One of the prophets is a vague term here, so we can’t know exactly which ones were being named in comparison to Jesus.
 - But Matthew 16:14 reveals that some thought it was Jeremiah, the Weeping Prophet.
 - ‘And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”’

- *Jeremiah was known to call people to repentance and Jeremiah was rejected by people, just like Jesus.*
 - But Jesus was about to counter and ask not what people thought, but who they thought that He was. Setting up his first passion prediction.
- ***Peter Responds. (vv. 29-30)***
 - ‘And he asked them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered him, “You are the Christ.”’
 - **30** And he strictly charged them to tell no one about him.’
 - ***Already in Mark’s Gospel we have seen the identity of Jesus already given.***
 - In Mark 1:1, Mark 1:11, Mark 1:24, Mark 3:11, Mark 5:7 and Mark 15:39.
 - ***I don’t think it’s by accident that Peter’s answer ‘you are the Christ’ is in the very middle of Mark’s Gospel.***
 - Peter gave the only right and acceptable answer.
 - The answer that Peter gives here is the one that you and I must also give if we wish to be with Him in Heaven.
 - ‘because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.’ Romans 10:9

- *Nothing in that moment was more important than how the disciples would answer that question, and nothing is more important than how you and I answer that question.*
- Matthew records Peter's full statement in Matthew 16:16...
 - ‘Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”’
- ***Before you leave today, you have to answer this same question Jesus asked His Disciples. Who do you say that Jesus is?***

Truth #3: *The Revelation. (vv. 31-32a)*

- ‘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. 32 And he said this plainly.’
- ***In Mark’s Gospel, Mark 8:31 is the first of three what scholars call ‘Passion Predictions’.***
 - (Mark 9:31, Mark 10:33-34)
- ***The revelation that Jesus shared with His disciples here was so shocking to them because they had expected Him (most Jews did) that the Messiah would have royal dominion, reestablish and purify the temple and then expel all gentiles from Jewish life.***

- Many of the Jews missed the mark on the forgiving nature of Jesus and WHY He came.
- Like us, they wanted Him to fit their box...
- What's even more shocking, is the OT scriptures prophesied that the Savior would have to come and die for our sins...
 - ***So often we elevate our own opinions over scripture...***
- ***Isaiah had prophesied 7 centuries earlier that Christ would be pierced for our transgressions in Isaiah 53...***
 - But, the disciples were no doubt shocked when Jesus revealed this news to them...
 - In the Greek text there are **4** verbs that Jesus uses to describe His mission that He knew...
 - ***All 4 of these verbs are infinitives in the Greek which means they are dependent on the word MUST***
 - Let me share with you the 4 things that had to happen to Jesus in order for you and I to be able to say today 'Jesus, you are the Christ!'
- ***Suffer.***

- 'And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things'
- ***As we will see in a moment Peter didn't like the sound of this at all.***
 - ***But Jesus would have to suffer and experience ill treatment and bodily harm.***
 - Jesus is the epitome of the suffering servant. Being killed for the ones He was trying to save.
- ***Rejected.***
 - 'and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes'
 - ****Word Study****
 - The word rejected comes from a Greek verb '***Apodokimazo***' which literally means to declare useless.
 - The elders, chief priests and scribes were the ones from Judean society who were rendering this verdict concerning Jesus.
 - ***They were the experts of the Mosaic law.***
 - This is the first time in Mark's Gospel that the chief priests are mentioned, but after Mark 10:33, they are mentioned more than any other group.
 - ***Jesus is letting His disciples know, that things are getting serious.***
- ***Killed.***

- ‘and be killed,’
- The rejection by the Jewish leaders would not just be social alienation or exile, but would lead to the worst kind of physical death a person could experience in that day.
 - Crucifixion.
 - *Jesus does not yet tell the disciples the method of execution He will have to face...*
- **Rise Again.**
 - ‘and after three days rise again.’
 - Here and in the other two passion prediction passages in Mark (Mark 9:31 & Mark 10:34), Jesus’ ends with the prophecy of His own resurrection.
 - *Jesus had spoken about His death already in Matthew 12:40 and in John 2:19, but they weren’t entirely clear. They were ‘veiled’ so to speak.*
 - Mark says here (probably with the eyewitness Peter over his back), that Jesus made it very clear.
 - The disciples don’t understand it yet, they are about to be confused and concerned.
 - *The Disciples knew the Divine nature of Jesus, but they would struggle with the Divine plan that Jesus just explained to them.*

Truth #4: *The Rebukes.* (vv. 32b-33)

- ‘And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. 33 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.”
- A former fisherman with a bold personality, does not like the truth that Jesus just revealed about Himself and His future.
 - *Peter was good with Jesus being the Messiah, but Peter was not okay with Jesus going to the cross to die.*
 - JM said *‘Incredibly, a former fisherman had the audacity to contradict the Creator Himself, the one he had just identified as the Messiah and the Son of God.’*
- Before we get too carried away with scolding Peter, I want you to think how often you and I are guilty of this same thing:
 - *We verbally confess Jesus as Lord in our prayer time and to our friends. But then Jesus does something in our lives we weren’t expecting or that we don’t like...*
 - *This is a friendly reminder for all of us today, we must let God be God.*
 - Jesus had just revealed to His disciples that He came with a mission from the Father to come and die for the sins of humanity.

- I believe we must look at both rebukes that occurred to fully understand...
- ***The First Rebuke. (v. 32b)***
 - ‘And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.’
 - I am by no means saying that Peter was right in rebuking our Lord, but here is what he was probably thinking...
 - ***The Jews had been brought up with the popular stereotype of a ‘Triumphant Messiah’***
 - ***Meaning that He would take over Rome and the Jews would be on top of the social & political ladder.***
 - This is yet another example that His thoughts are not necessarily our thoughts.
 - ***In verse 31, we are told that ‘He (Jesus) began to teach them’.***
 - ***In verse 32, Mark uses the phrase in regards to Peter ‘began to rebuke Him’***
 - Scholar James Edwards said ‘Peter is clearly paralleling the words of Jesus.’
 - So **why** did Peter Rebuke Jesus going to the cross?
 - I think Peter genuinely loved Christ and did not want Him to be rejected and murdered.

- Also, Peter and the other Disciples had sacrificed a lot to follow Jesus.
 - ‘Then Peter said in reply, “See, we have left everything and followed you. What then will we have?” Matthew 19:27
- ***So there is a sense that their hopes for Kingdom Glory (the nationalistic Jewish perspective), would not be possible if Jesus died on the cross.***
- ***They also depended on Jesus greatly, since they left everything to follow Him.***
- At the end of the day ***Peter forgot his place and put his own selfish desires over and above the plans and purposes of God.***
 - Peter is so much like you and I. He was shortsighted and did not allow himself to see the plans and purposes of God. All he could see were his own selfish desires.
- The first rebuke was selfish, but the second was Sovereign!
- ***The Second Rebuke. (v. 33)***
 - ‘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.”
 - ***Jesus sternly and swiftly rebukes Peter.***

- *Peter was offering something to Jesus that satan had offered Jesus back in the temptation in the wilderness in Matthew 4:9-11.*
 - *Both Peter and satan had tried to offer Jesus the crown without the Cross.*
- *Jesus rebukes this so strongly because He knows the plan that His Father has sent Him to earth for, and Peter thinks He has a better plan that God in human flesh!*
 - Dr. Daniel Aiken said ‘Peter wants a Jesus who fits his agenda. He thinks he knows the kind of Messiah Jesus needs to be and attempts to reshape and redefine Him to fit his conception.’
 - *Does this not describe our mindset?*
 - *We want Jesus to do and be what we desire and what will best benefit us. But this is not how we should be.*
 - *Stop trying to conform God in who you want Him to be and be Transformed in who He has made you to be.*
- *Jesus says ‘Get behind Me, satan’ because Peter had become a spokesman for the devil.*
- According to Hebrews 12:2 Jesus knew that in order to redeem us it would require suffering and death.
- While Peter was a pawn for satan that day near Caesarea Philippi, it wouldn’t be the end of the line for him.
 - *See Jesus was not rejecting Peter as a person, He was rejecting satan who was speaking through Peter.*
- *Less than a year later Peter would comprehend and believe in the Cross of Jesus.*
 - On the day of Pentecost Peter would boldly stand in Jerusalem and proclaim the Gospel and 3,000 would get saved. (Acts 2:22-24).
 - In his older age Peter would write to believers in Asia Minor and explain the significance of why the crucifixion mattered in [*1st Peter 3:18*](#)...
 - ‘For Christ also suffered[a] once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit,’
- *There may have been times in your life where you’ve allowed the devil to have too much of an influence on what you say and how you act.*

- Don't let Satan fool you any further to thinking that Christ (through His death on the Cross) can't still redeem you and set you back on the right path. He can. He did that for Peter.

Conclusion:

- ***As we begin to close, allow me to ask you the two questions I asked you before we dove into our text this morning...***
 - ***Who do you verbally confess that Jesus is?***
 - ***Does your life depict that Jesus is Lord?***