

August 16, 2020

## **"Who do you say that I am?"**

**"Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, "Who do people say that 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 that I am?"**

Mark 8:27-29

Last week we talked about Jesus as teacher and this week we want to take a look at Jesus the Master of the Seas. After spending some time near Capernaum on the Sea of Galilee teaching and healing, Jesus and the twelve decide to go across to the other side.

The west side of the Sea of Galilee was a part of Judea and fairly populated, but the east side of the Sea was not very settled. The Sea of Galilee is surrounded by mountains especially to the west and so storms brewing on the Mediterranean can come on quickly and with little forwarning.



Just such a storm caught the little group of boats traveling with Jesus and the winds threaten to swamp the small craft. Jesus, even in the midst of this severe storm, was asleep in the stern of the boat. Finally, the disciples cry out to him, **"Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"** Jesus rebuked the winds commanding them, **"Quiet! Be still!"** Then turning to his followers he challenges them, **"Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?"** Of course, the disciples are awed by his power just as we would be.

With this single miracle Jesus reveals himself as the all powerful force of creation that he is. But the real lesson in this account focuses more on the faith of his followers, both those who witnessed this display and those of us who follow Jesus today. Do we, like the disciples of the first century **"...still have no faith..."**?

That is, I think, the real challenge all of us must constantly face. Do we really have faith in Jesus? As we have often discussed, faith is ultimately a choice to believe that actually changes our lives in tangible ways. So, when we measure the reality of our own faith we really need to consider the tangible changes our faith makes in our lives.

It is easy to proclaim our faith in Jesus when everything is going well, but what is the reality of our faith when we are facing overwhelming challenges? When those challenges come our way are we filled with fear and dread or do we trust Jesus enough to be at peace despite them?

The real question is, I think, do we trust that the outcomes, no matter what they are, will still reflect our caring Savior and our loving Father? In his letter to the believers in Rome the Apostle Paul wrote, **"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."** (Romans 8:28)

In the face of the most severe trials and challenges does our faith still hold on to that promise? Do we still believe that God is in control; that God is and will work everything out for our good? That's a tough question isn't it?

Most of us would, I believe, react to a severe threat to our existence much like those disciples did. We would, maybe we already have, cry out to Jesus, **"Don't you care...?"** Of course the real challenge for all of us is that we cannot see what God's plan for us is moving forward. In

the face of injury or illness or a threatening new virus we are filled with fear. We are not sure what God has in mind. We don't understand his purpose. We cannot see what is coming or why it might be coming.

So, in the face of those trials do we have faith or don't we? Can we trust that no matter what our lives bring day by day, God is still in control and his plan for us is still moving forward? The challenge of faith, real faith, is a struggle for each and every one of us and like the disciples all those years ago it is still easy for us to be overwhelmed by fear and cry out, "...*don't you care*..."? In the end faith chooses to believe that he does care and that he always will.

Be Still  
AND KNOW  
THAT I AM GOD  
-PSALM 46:10