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| Mark 8:27-30 Psalm 24 | Jesus Questions…Who do you say I am? | Pinelands – 9am – 23/02/2025Thornton – 10:30am – 23/02/2025 |

**Have you ever read through one of the gospels in one sitting?**

 It is worth doing…

 You get to **know** Jesus better

 You **see more clearly** his life unfolding

 **In a nutshell…** you notice things about Jesus and the

 gospel story that you miss if you…

only read a few verses at a time.

***For Example…*** **Marks Gospel…**

You will notice when you read it through at one sitting…

 That it is divided into **two sections…**

 **First 8 chapters** – full of life, energy and action

* miracles and parables
* fruitful ministry

 **Last 8 chapters** – more tense and urgent

* sense of danger in the air
* talk of suffering and death

It is at this point in this gospel that Jesus asks his disciples…

 ***“Who do you say that I am?”*** *–* ***Read Mark 8:27-30***

This question is deeply relevant for us today…

We live in an age where…

 - More books have been written about Jesus…

in the past 30 years than in all the centuries before

 - Movies are made about Jesus – ‘The Passion’

 - People use the name of Jesus when they curse

So Jesus asks us, here today, as he did in Mark’s Gospel…

***“Who do you say that I am?”***

**In order to explore that question…**

**may I suggest the following 3 exercises…**

**First exercise - Keep company with Jesus in the Gospels**

The Gospels are the best place to begin exploring **‘Who Jesus Is.’**

Set some time aside… an hour or two…

 And read through a gospel in one sitting

*(maybe do this a couple of times)*

 - Catch a glimpse of his relationship with his father

 - Become aware of his intimacy with God

 - Notice the way He relates to people…

 tax collectors, prostitutes, lepers

 - Listen to the words He speaks

 - Listen to the message he brings

 - Explore the way he sees the world

 - Watch what he does and how he does it

***How do you respond to Him?***

While you do this wrestle with the question…

 ***“Who do you say that I am?”***

**As you do this…** you will come to see… **Jesus is…**

- the most alive, responsive human being that has ever lived

 - revealing love’s response in the face of evil

 - the transforming force behind the disciples…

 as they moved from…

 - fishermen to disciples

 - fearful, grieving men to bold witnesses

 - fully human while at the same time fully God.

 *(And that discussion will keep us going for a while)*

**So keep company with Jesus in the Gospels.**

Keeping company with Jesus in the Gospels…

Helps build our historical knowledge of Jesus

**BUT…** this needs to be balanced with a personal knowledge

 Of… WHO Jesus really is.

**Second exercise… Develop a personal knowledge of Jesus**

***Illustration…***

You all know Liza…

 She is - Married to Ross, has 2 children, 3 Grandchildren

 - Works as a tax consultant

 - Plays guitar, Bakes really well

 - is the most beautiful woman in the world *(ok I am biased)*

 - Know some of her likes and dislikes

**BUT…** **you do not know** her as intimately as I do…

 You have not experienced…

 - the depth of her love, the extent of her forgiveness

 - loving honesty, willingness to serve

 These things I have discovered because of my ***‘personal’***

 ***Relationship*** and knowledge of her…

 It has happened over a length of time

**Similarly…** Our knowledge of Jesus needs to be both…

 ***Historical and Personal*** *(Both are important)*

 We wont truly Know who Jesus really is without bringing

 ***These two ways of knowing… together.***

As Jesus did 2000 years ago he still calls us today

to be his disciples…

 To follow Him, to know Him, to be like Him.

**Genuine Relationship** takes time, takes effort…

 Learning to trust and love… is a gradual process…

**BUT…** it has to start somewhere.

 If you really want to know Jesus you need to develop

 A personal knowledge of him.

**Third exercise - Experience Jesus as our personal companion**

Something happens when we…

 Keep company with Jesus in the Gospels**… and**

 Develop a personal knowledge of Jesus…

 He becomes real… and more real… and even more real.

He steps out of the pages of the gospel and becomes…

 ***Our Personal Companion.***

 - a living friend today – we are never alone

 no matter what we are going through.

Millions of people can ***testify*** to this reality in their lives

**Let me tell you about** *Joseph Girzone…*

 A number of years ago, due to health reasons…

he had to retire from the Catholic Priesthood

 He chose not to accept any compensation from the church

 - even though he had no income

 No Money… for clothes / furniture…

 …He was genuinely poor

In his autobiography **“Never Alone”** he tells the story…

 One day was taking a walk… wondering what he would eat

 He had **no** money… not even for food.

When he saw some money in a ditch... far from any place.

 Lying there in the ditch….

*Neatly folded was enough money for supper*

In that moment he says… he could almost hear Jesus saying to him

 ***“I told you not to worry, I would take care of you.”***

A short time later he began to write novels about a person called **Joshua…**

 It became a way of *introducing people to Jesus…*

 Millions of his books have been sold

**Now…** Money has become a huge burden in his life…

 *Trying to use it wisely has not been easy.*

**In his book he writes a wonderful dedication to Jesus…**

**Here it is….**

*“I dedicate this book to my friend*

*who is always by my side and in my heart,*

*who is never far when I am lonely and confused,*

*who always gives peace to my soul when I am*

*troubled and frightened, and fearful of the future.*

*I share with Him my deepest secrets, my joy, my sorrow,*

*my accomplishments, my shame.*

*He always understands.*

*He never accuses or criticizes, but often*

*suggests a different way of doing things.*

*When he does, He inevitably prepares the way*

 *so it is not as impossible as I thought it might be.*

*Over the years I have learned to trust Him. It is not easy.*

*I thought that in following him I would have to give up all the fun in my life, but I found that He is the source of all joy and adventure at a time when I thought it was about to come to an end.*

*I would like to suggest that He could become your friend, too,*

 *if you would like Him to be. Do not be afraid!*

*He will respect your freedom and your independence more than anyone you have ever met, because he created you to be free.*

*He just wants more than anything,*

*that you will accept Him as your friend.*

*If you do, I can promise you, you will never be alone.”*

**Jesus asks you…** ***“Who do you say that I am?”***

**Wrestle with that question…**

 Keep company with Jesus in the gospels…

 Develop a personal knowledge of Jesus…

 Make Him your personal companion.

**It is a journey… *In time you, like Peter…***

 Will come to say…

 ***“You are the Messiah.”***

**Mark 8:27-30** **Peter's Declaration about Jesus**

Then Jesus and his disciples went away to the villages near Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, “Tell me, who do people say I am?”

“Some say that you are John the Baptist,” they answered; “others say that you are Elijah, while others say that you are one of the prophets.”

“What about you?” he asked them. “Who do you say I am?”

Peter answered, “You are the Messiah.”

Then Jesus ordered them, “Do not tell anyone about me.”

**Psalm 24** **The Great King**

The world and all that is in it belong to the Lord;

 the earth and all who live on it are his.

He built it on the deep waters beneath the earth

 and laid its foundations in the ocean depths.

Who has the right to go up the Lord's hill?

 Who may enter his holy Temple?

Those who are pure in act and in thought,

 who do not worship idols or make false promises.

The Lord will bless them and save them;

 God will declare them innocent.

Such are the people who come to God,

 who come into the presence of the God of Jacob.

Fling wide the gates, open the ancient doors,

 and the great king will come in.

Who is this great king?

He is the Lord, strong and mighty,

 the Lord, victorious in battle.

Fling wide the gates, open the ancient doors,

 and the great king will come in.

Who is this great king?

The triumphant Lord—he is the great king!