

**The 7<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Epiphany ~ Sunday, February 23, 2025**

**“Manifestations of Glory ~ Who Do You Say That I Am?”**

**Mark 8:27-33**

We’ve been seeking to answer the key question presented in all four gospel accounts: \_\_\_\_\_?

This question is of ultimate significance because how people respond to Jesus will determine their \_\_\_\_\_.

Their hopeful expectation from the beginning was that Jesus was the \_\_\_\_\_.

Over the course of Jesus’ ministry, they’d been amazed by His authoritative \_\_\_\_\_ and awestruck by His divine \_\_\_\_\_. They’d seen His miracles first hand.

The incident recounted in our gospel reading this morning isn’t the first time the Twelve had recognized Jesus’ \_\_\_\_\_ nature. However, it was on this occasion that they, through their spokesman Peter, stated that truth with greater conviction and \_\_\_\_\_ than ever before, against the backdrop of widespread confusion among the crowds and increasing hostility from the religious leaders.

What had begun as a hope-filled expectation had become a heart-fixed \_\_\_\_\_.

This passage marks the \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus’ training of the Twelve.

Their discipleship had been \_\_\_\_\_ over the previous few months, as Jesus increasingly \_\_\_\_\_ from the crowds to focus on mentoring them. And after weeks of concentrated instruction, the events in our gospel reading this morning essentially constituted their final \_\_\_\_\_.

**#1. The Good News: Peter’s \_\_\_\_\_.**

“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?’ And they answered him, ‘John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.’ He asked them, ‘But who do you say that I am?’ Peter answered him, ‘You are the Messiah.’ And he sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him.” (Mark 8:27-30)

At the time of Jesus, Caesarea Philippi was a centre of Greco-Roman culture, known for its \_\_\_\_\_ worship, its prestigious role as the capital city of Herod Philip’s domain, and its significant \_\_\_\_\_ population. Because of this, it was one place within Israel where Jesus and His disciples could enjoy a \_\_\_\_\_

from the oppressive crowds, the antagonistic religious leaders, and the threat posed by Herod Antipas.

Jesus presents His disciples with a “final exam” consisting of only two questions. The first, surveyed \_\_\_\_\_ about Jesus’ earthly identity, the second zeroed in on the \_\_\_\_\_ about who He truly was.

In asking these two questions, Jesus wanted to address a single problem: Had the disciples been paying attention? Did they fully \_\_\_\_\_ who He was?

**Question #1. \_\_\_\_\_?**

Whether we like it or not, we can’t escape the \_\_\_\_\_ that people make about us based on what we say and do, and how we live our lives.

By identifying Jesus with these people, the crowds were paying Him a great \_\_\_\_\_.

However, all of these answers \_\_\_\_\_ the mark in describing who Jesus truly was. In spite of the countless miracles Jesus had performed, all of which testified to Him, the people still didn’t \_\_\_\_\_ in Him.

I’m sure opinions today would \_\_\_\_\_ far more than they did when Jesus originally asked the question.

If you think about it, to ask the question “Who do people say that I am?” puts the disciples in a \_\_\_\_\_ position. They could simply report what they’d heard, without any \_\_\_\_\_ opinions.

**Question #2. \_\_\_\_\_?**

Surveying the crowds may have been an \_\_\_\_\_ exercise for the disciples, however, Jesus’ follow-up question gets to the crux of the matter, as He moves them from simple reporting to personal \_\_\_\_\_.

Like all first-century Jews, the Twelve had been raised expecting the Messiah to \_\_\_\_\_ Israel’s enemies and establish His kingdom in Jerusalem.

When it became clear that the religious leaders had rejected Jesus, and that He wouldn’t use His miraculous powers to overthrow Rome, the disciples must have wondered if He truly was the \_\_\_\_\_.

“When John, while imprisoned, heard of the works of Christ, he sent word by his

disciples, saying to him, ‘Are you the Expected One, or shall we look for someone else?’” (Matthew 11:2-3)

“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” (Matthew 16:16)

**Christ = *Christos* (Grk) = Messiah = *mashiach* (Heb) =**

With clarity and conviction, and without a shade of \_\_\_\_\_ or apprehension, Peter proclaimed Jesus to be God’s “Anointed One,” the Saviour of the world. After nearly two years of following Jesus, the disciples’ doubts about who He was had \_\_\_\_\_. Both His deity and His Messiahship were firmly \_\_\_\_\_ in their minds.

“Blessed are you, Simon Bar-jona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but my father who is in heaven.” (Matthew 16:17)

The disciples couldn’t take \_\_\_\_\_ for this theological breakthrough. They believed only because God, the Father had \_\_\_\_\_ them, God, the Son had \_\_\_\_\_ Himself to them, and God the Holy Spirit, had opened their eyes to the \_\_\_\_\_.

“And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it.” (Matthew 16:18)

The confession that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God is the rock—or \_\_\_\_\_ truth—on which the church will be built.

Jesus’ insistence on their silence was motivated by more than a desire to quell the \_\_\_\_\_ of the crowds. He knew His work was not yet finished, and thus the gospel message was \_\_\_\_\_. It would be \_\_\_\_\_ for the disciples to go into the world and preach the gospel until after His death and resurrection.

## **#2. The Bad News: Peter’s \_\_\_\_\_.**

“Then Jesus began to tell them that the Son of Man must suffer many terrible things and be rejected by the elders, the leading priests, and the teachers of religious law. He would be killed, but three days later he would rise from the dead. As he talked about this openly with his disciples, Peter took him aside and began to reprimand him for saying such things. Jesus turned around and looked at his disciples, then reprimanded Peter. ‘Get away from me, Satan!’ he said. ‘You are seeing things merely from a human point of view, not from God’s.’” (Mark 8:31-33)

The last thing the Twelve expected to hear on the heels of this great moment of revelation was a death announcement, and Jesus’ words must have \_\_\_\_\_

them.

They were convinced of His divinity, but now struggled with the divine \_\_\_\_\_.

A former fisherman had the audacity to \_\_\_\_\_ the Creator Himself—the One he’d just identified as the Messiah. Rather than submitting to Jesus, Peter \_\_\_\_\_ Him.

**rebuke = *epitimao* =**

Not only had Peter presumptuously \_\_\_\_\_ his own authority about Jesus, he also directly \_\_\_\_\_ the redemptive purposes of God.

By opposing the purposes of God and demanding Jesus avoid the cross, Peter had actually become a spokesman for the \_\_\_\_\_.

Satan was unsuccessful in his attacks on Jesus in the wilderness, however, Peter’s transgression provided the perfect opportunity for him to continue his \_\_\_\_\_ of the Lord.

What the disciples considered to be the ultimate bad news that day at Caesarea Philippi, was, in reality, the best news the world has ever received. It’s the very \_\_\_\_\_ of the gospel.

†

There can be no lukewarm, \_\_\_\_\_ option when it comes to Jesus and no comfortable \_\_\_\_\_ between confession and denial. Either Jesus is a liar and a lunatic, or He’s the real thing: the Son of God, the crucified Christ, the Saviour of the world.

†

**“Who do you say that I am?”**

**The choice is yours, but be careful.**

**How you answer this question will have huge implications for your life, now and in eternity.**