

Sunday, July 3, 2016
Pastor Don Denyes

Introduction to Mark 8:27-31

Every good story has turning points—a point where there is a realization or major event that sets a whole new trajectory for where the story might go. This passage in Mark is the main turning point in the Gospel. To this point, the only ones who have accurately identified Jesus were God the Father (who sent Him) and the demons (1:24; 5:7). And even though Jesus said to the disciples that they would be given the “secret of the kingdom of God” they had not fully realized it (4:11).

In this passage, Peter finally identifies Jesus by the right words, but not with the right meaning. He identifies Jesus as the Christ (or Messiah), but Peter and the disciples still had much to learn about what that means...

Context

In Mark 8:22-26, Jesus healed a blind man in two stages. In the first stage, Jesus healed him partially, so that the man could see, but could not see clearly. He saw men and correctly identified them, but to him they still looked like trees at that point. This story precedes Peter’s confession that Jesus is the Christ to show how Peter clearly saw that Jesus was the Christ, but did not fully understand what that meant.

Jesus will explain that as the Christ He must suffer and die and rise again at this time, then again in chapters 9 and 10 as He makes His way to Jerusalem.

Structure

- I. Jesus asks about popular perception of His identity (27-28)
- II. Jesus asks a pointed question about His identity (29-30)
- III. Jesus instructs them about the meaning of His identity (31)

Read and Reflect *(Use this section to write down any thoughts you had on the sermon. Make sure to note any questions you had about something in the passage or in the sermon.)*

Read Mark 8:27-31

Who is Jesus?

Popular Opinions

- John the Baptist
- Elijah
- Jeremiah (or one of the prophets)
- Positive Responses, but Inadequate

Personal Conviction

- Messiah
- Son of the living God (See Matt. 16)

Jesus

- Who is He? *Great Response!*
- What is His mission? *Lousy Response!*

Discuss

1. Many non-Christians have a positive view of Jesus. Why do you think that is? Where do you think they get that idea from?
2. If you were having a conversation with someone about Jesus and they believe He was a “good teacher” or “moral example,” what would you say to them? How would you explain Jesus’ true identity to them if they had no frame of reference for words like “Christ” or “Son of God”?
3. As the “anointed one” (Christ/Messiah), Jesus has authority over all things. To correctly identify Jesus as Christ is a great first step, but as Pastor Don noted, even the demons acknowledge that is His title (James 2:19). What we need to do is turn from our sin and trust Him. What are some areas in your life where you need to grow in obedience to Him?
4. Peter’s understanding of Jesus as Messiah involved Him conquering Israel’s enemies and establishing His kingdom without suffering and dying on the cross. We often want Jesus to deliver us from our bad circumstances. Yet He doesn’t promise that. How should we view our circumstances in light of what Jesus endured as Messiah? (See Romans 8:24-25 as it relates to deliverance from our circumstances)
5. Pastor Don also mentioned that we are often tempted to rebuke Jesus like Peter, thinking we know what is best. Has there ever been a time in your life where you have done that? Or at least been tempted to do that?

Go Deeper *(This section is especially for leaders to consider as they prepare for the Growth Group meeting)*

Gospel Connections: The fact that Jesus is the Christ, the anointed King whose suffering, rejection, death, and resurrection brought us back into a right relationship with God is the gospel. What's even more amazing was His determination to make this happen. Not only in this passage, but also in chapters 9 and 10, Jesus will reiterate that His purpose in coming to Earth was to save sinners, and that was the only way in which that could be accomplished. Jesus had to suffer, be rejected, die, and rise again. He did that all for us. This is truly good news!

Whole Bible Connections: When Peter identified Jesus as the anointed One, and even as he heard Jesus identify Himself as the "Son of Man," he may have had Daniel 7 in mind. In that passage, Daniel talks about a "son of man" who will be given an eternal kingdom that will never be destroyed. Peter should have kept reading. In chapter 9, Daniel goes on to say that the "anointed one" (Christ/Messiah) would be "cut off" for a time, which implies suffering. Isaiah 53 explains that the Servant of the LORD would suffer many things but in doing so, would make many righteous. Peter was not wrong in thinking that Jesus would establish His kingdom, he was mistaken in thinking he knew *how* Jesus would accomplish that.

Theological Connections: Jesus, as the "anointed one," serves as our King who rules, but also our Priest whose self-sacrifice atoned for our sins, and our Prophet who declares to us the very words of God. It is important to understand what "Christ" or "Messiah" means, because it has so many implications for how we relate to Jesus. Jesus necessarily had to serve in each of those way so that He could accomplish all that was foretold in the Old Testament. Have you ever wondered why Jesus didn't come and die right after Adam and Eve sinned? He could have saved everyone then. No, in the mystery of God's plan, time had to unfold so that we would truly understand who Jesus is. We would not have had any context to understand Him as any of those things. But now that we do understand Him as those things, we ought to glorify Him that much more.