

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

“Who do you say that I am?” That’s the question Jesus asked of his disciples. In a pagan, a Gentile area in the district of Caesarea Philippi, away from the crowds, Jesus and his disciples. He’s asked them who people say he is; some say John the Baptist, others Elijah or Jeremiah or one of the prophets. But then comes the question: “Who do you say that I am?”

Peter, the unofficial, unelected, un-appointed spokesman for the Twelve answers “you are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Now note that this answer did not come from some intellectual effort on the part of Simon Peter, nor did it come from another person, flesh and blood. Instead the answer was revealed by God the Father, as Jesus says, by “my Father in heaven.”

So for our discussion this morning, let’s rephrase the question a little bit, so that it comes from your pastor instead of our Lord Jesus. So let me ask you: who do you say that Jesus is?

When Simon Peter answered Jesus’ question, Jesus called him “blessed” and said to him words to the effect of you will be called Peter and “on this rock I will build my church...” Now it is incredibly important to note that Peter was the beginning of the church, but the church is build upon Peter’s confession of faith: “you are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” That simple statement, that confession, revealed and inspired by God the Father, is the foundation of our church, that statement of faith is our faith, that’s what we confess in the words of the Apostle’s Creed: I believe in God the Father, I believe in Jesus Christ God’s only Son, I believe in the Holy Spirit. That’s it, two thousand years of the church, the assembly of God’s people, rests securely on that statement.

So let me ask you again, who do you say that Jesus is? You, singular and plural, you as individuals, you as the assembly of God’s people in this place, who do you say that Jesus is? Maybe I should rephrase the question yet again. Let’s try it this way. Who does your life say that Jesus is? You confess that foundational statement “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” So are you, so is your life, passionate about that statement, that confession, that particular creed? Are they distinctive in your life? You believe those words, but do they require all of you, heart, soul and might? Is there a fire in your heart, is it reflected in your eyes, your smile, your welcome and words and deeds for others?

Ask yourselves these questions brothers and sisters, ask yourselves, reflect upon them, reflect upon your lives. Is it simply duty that brings you here on Sunday morning? Personally I think it’s more than that, perhaps much more than that. But you know, so many of us being stoic northern Minnesotans of whatever ethnic persuasion we find ourselves, we get caught up in those moments of privacy, of not interfering with others, not imposing upon them, being Minnesota nice even though

we might talk about them behind their backs, not sharing our faith, and not living our faith.

So ask yourselves what other people might be picking up from your life. Exactly who do you think Jesus is in respect to your life? Ask yourself if your answer to any or all of these questions indicates that you might be a lukewarm Christian, the kind of Christian who is neither hot nor cold, but lukewarm, the kind of believer the angel of the Lord spits out of his mouth in the Book of Revelation.

Trust me on this, my friends, you don't want that kind of faith, you don't want a faith that is anything other than hungry, burning for God. And you may well indeed have that kind of faith, but I'm asking again, who does your life say that Jesus is? How would you answer if Jesus were standing in front of you right now asking you "who does your life say that I am?" What answer would come from your life, your love, your money, your passions, your decisions, your humility?

Let us pray.

You are the Christ, the Son of the living God, the author and perfecter of my faith, who has commanded me to love God, to love my neighbors as myself, to love one another even as you love me, that all will know I am your disciple, you are my Savior who gave himself for me out of incredible, unconditional love, that I and all who believe may have eternal life, you are my God who gives me his body and blood that my sins be forgiven, that I be strengthened and nourished for this life and the life to come, you are my Lamb who washes me in water and the Holy Spirit through your holy and innocent blood. Let my life be your answer and your witness O Lord my God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. AMEN