

Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

Date : 13 September 2020

Sermon Title : Who Do You Say I Am

Speaker : Rev Eddie Ho

Text : Luke 9:18-25

INTRODUCTION

Two thousand years ago, many people were curious about the identity of Jesus. Jesus, who helped the poor and needy, healed the sick, raised the dead and calmed the storm by commanding winds and water which obeyed Him. Now, after 2000 years many are still debating on who He is and many answers had been offered. He is widely known as the Great Physician as He healed thousands physically; the blind receive sight, the lame walk, those with leprosy cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised and the good news proclaimed to the poor. (Luke 7:22) Miracle workers are still healing people in His name today. Jesus' healing power extends beyond the cure of the physical body as His ultimate goal is the restoration of our whole being; body, mind and soul. (Matthew 16:26) He turns us back to God by transforming self-centred people into 'self-giving' souls. Jesus is not only a Great Physician but Surgeon of the soul. The Jews called Him Rabbi or The Great Teacher as His teachings are not only profound and timeless but radical, aimed to make us see the emptiness and depravity in our hearts to break the chains of bondage of our souls. Jesus radically teaches us to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us. (Matthew 5:44) Many non-believers also know Jesus as a Great Prophet, as He spoke with authority from God and by the power of God performed many miracles just like the prophets Moses and Elijah, and prophesied the future like Isaiah.

Nobody has a definite answer. Peter, Jesus' disciple who had a close relationship with Him said He is "The Christ of God". (Luke 9:20)

The meaning of "The Christ of God"

- Christ is not a title or designation to identify Jesus as the second person of the Godhead or God the Son
- Christ comes from the Greek word "Christus" which means the Anointed One.
- The Hebrew equivalent of the word Christ in the Old Testament is "Messiah" which also means "Anointed One". It is a descriptive noun of a role and not a position. The Messiah plays the role of a deliverer. The prophet Isaiah prophesied that the pagan king Cyrus was in fact a messiah or deliverer, as God had revealed to him that Cyrus would set the Israelites free from exile.

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(Isaiah 45:1) This prophecy was indeed fulfilled 70 years later in 539 BC when Cyrus allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem after the exile.

In the history of the Jewish people, many had been called the Christ as the Jews understood it to be one who will deliver them from foreign power. In 1st century Palestine, most who were called Christ by the Jews had their lives cut short violently. This could be why Jesus commanded the disciples not to reveal His identity to anyone, but more importantly, He wanted to explain His role as the Christ to them.

The role of the Christ - To be rejected and killed (Luke 9:22)

Jesus refers to Himself as the Son of Man and not as the Christ/Messiah or the Son of God. Understanding why Jesus refers to Himself as the Son of Man is key to understanding His role as the Messiah. The title "Son of Man" is a direct quote from Daniel 7.

- Daniel had a nightmare of 4 beasts that tormented the faithful people on earth. (Daniel 7) However in spite of the reign of the beasts, Daniel also saw one like a Son of Man who was given authority, glory, sovereign power, worship and an everlasting kingship (Daniel 7:13-14). This Son of Man was considered to be on par with God and He destroyed the beasts.
- Every Jew at that time understood the juxtaposition of the imagery of beast vs Man. In Genesis, man is made in God's image, is set apart and made to be stewards of God's creation (Gen 1:26-28). But Adam and Eve were deceived by a beast and sold their souls to it. (Genesis 3:1-7) As a result, the beast or sin ruled the world and is in each of us.
- But God intervened and prophesied that the Son of Man will deliver mankind from sin but not before the beast strikes the man. (Gen 3:15) Before the Son of Man is exalted, He will surely die as any man would have to due to Adam and Eve's fall, and only then can He rise on the 3rd day to crush the beast and deliver the children of God from the beast which is a foreign oppressor.

Jesus is the Christ who will fulfill this role as the Deliverer, the Messiah, the Christ who will die on the cross to take away the sins of the world so that whoever knows and believes in Jesus will not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)

Do you know Jesus?

Everybody seems to know Jesus but:

- Knowing Him only as a Great Healer is not enough to lead to freedom. Although many people may have experienced healing from Jesus or had their prayers answered, inside them they remain unchanged. Some may even forget about Him after their physical needs have been met.

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- Many others may know Jesus only as a Great Teacher but that is not enough to life. They may strive to live a morally upright life, but deny the source of that goodness, and denying the truth is as good as insulting it.
- Millions know Jesus as a Great Prophet but do not believe in His prophetic claim as the Son of Man. We either fully believe and trust Him or we will have to call Him a liar, a false prophet. So, these people do not really know Jesus.

Knowing Jesus:

1. It is a personal journey, having a close relationship with Him. It is not enough to just say the sinner's prayer and invite Him into your heart because that is only the beginning.
2. It is about having a deep relationship with Him, growing into His likeness by following Him.
3. Jesus exhorts us to deny ourselves and take up our cross daily to follow Him. (Luke 9:23) To deny ourselves means we need to crucify the sin or the beast within us (Jude 10, Romans 1:21-25, Psalms 32:9). We need to deny our sinful desires, self-centredness, self-righteousness and attitudes of self-entitlement daily.

It is important to recognize that we cannot achieve this purely by self-discipline. Neither can we do so by willing ourselves to be morally upright. We need to bring sin to the cross of Jesus daily; denying ourselves daily and taking up our cross daily.

CONCLUSION

Only the disciples of Jesus could really know Him because they would have a close personal relationship with Him. To those who are close to Him, God will reveal Himself to them. Jesus is the Way Maker. As the Great Teacher, He will show us how to build our spiritual muscle. As the Great Prophet, He will guide us when we lose our way. As the Great Healer, He will restore our whole being.

But Jesus is more than a Great Teacher, Healer and Prophet. He is the Son of Man who took the bite of sin for us. He has also given us the power to overcome the beast by walking with and working in us. As we spend time and build a relationship with Him, we will discover the joy and freedom as we become like Him in humility, servanthood and self-giving love.

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As a group, spend some time to share your success and struggle in fulfilling what you/your group had committed to do at the previous meeting.

A. Review Sermon Content

Purpose: Reflect on one key takeaway.

Appoint someone to read Luke 9:18-25 twice, slowly.

1. At the end of the reading, the reader will say, 'This is the Word of the Lord.'

All to respond, "Thanks be to God." Our response reminds us that this is the Word of the Lord. Just as God had spoken to His people in the past, He is still speaking to us even today, right now."

- a. As God's word was read, what is the key takeaway for you from the sermon "Who Do You Say I Am?"?

- b. How will you align the way you live to your key takeaway?

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B. Relate Sermon Content

Purpose: Relate with the Truth and Resolve for Transformation.

- 2a. (i) Why is knowing Jesus only as either a Great Healer, Teacher or Prophet not enough?
- (ii) How is Jesus' role as the Messiah who is the Son of Man different from that of others whom the Jews had identified as "the Christ"?
- 2b. How does the above knowledge impact how you will relate to Jesus as His disciple who knows Him?
- 3a. Do you find it a struggle to deny your sinful desires purely by self-discipline or by willing yourself to be morally upright?
- 3b. We need to bring sin to the cross of Jesus daily; denying ourselves daily and taking up our cross daily and He has given us the power to overcome the beast, by Him walking with and working in us.
 - (i) What does this mean to you?
 - (ii) What is one thing you need to do to overcome your struggle to deny yourself or be morally upright by your own strength?
- 3c. How can your group members encourage or help you achieve 3b(ii) above, for the next week(s) until your next meeting?

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C. Testimonies and Prayer

Purpose: Give glory to God and seek Him.

4. Share how you have experienced freedom and joy as a result of knowing and following Christ.

OR

Give thanks to God for helping you overcome a sinful desire such as self-centredness, self-righteousness or attitudes of self-entitlement in you.

5. With a prayer partner, commit all that have been shared in 3b and 3c to the Lord, asking for Jesus, our Messiah, to deliver you from your struggle to follow Him whole-heartedly and for each of you to follow through what you and your group have committed to do in the following week(s), until your next meeting.

As a group, pray for each other that you may build a closer relationship with Jesus, know Him in a deeper, more personal way and follow Him so that you may be transformed to be more and more like Him in humility, servanthood and self-giving love.

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