

WHO IS HE -- TODAY?

Mark 12:35-40

There is only one lesson that is burned deeply into my heart this morning from this text.

It is this:

What you think of Jesus Christ today will determine everything for today and forever.

*If Christ is not divine,
Then lay the Book away
And every blessed faith resign
That has so long been yours and mine
Through many a trying day;
Forget the place of bended knee
And dream no more of worlds to be.*

*If Christ is not divine,
Go seal again the tomb;
Take down the cross, Redemption's sign,
Quench all the stars of hope that shine,
And let us turn and travel on
Across the night that knows no dawn.
Walter Maier Lutheran Hour*

Mark put it a little differently, v. 35-40, sharpest public conflict. Christ hit their attitude about the Word of God, motive service, denial of His deity.

Who had Jesus Christ claimed to be? God in the flesh.
What response did He desire? Self-denial worship.

To help you establish a clear portrait in your heart and mind today, let me invite you into a study I did in Mark's gospel in 1982. Ten years ago it has never stopped impacting me.

I looked for three pieces of evidence:

- | | |
|------------|--------------------------------|
| A,B,C,D | 1. Actions of Christ |
| I, II, III | 2. Self-descriptions of Christ |

I, II, III 3. Description/testimony of others

From them there is only one conclusion we can draw -- Jesus Christ wants to have:
your passion
your focus
your attention
your spare time

today

1. HIS ACTIONS

- A. Forgives sin, 2:5
- B. Heals, 2:11
- C. Master of nature, 4:39
- D. Power over weather, 6:51
- E. Deity shines out, 9:3
- F. Omniscient, 9:33

2. SELF-DESCRIPTION

- 2:19 1. Bridegroom - one you were made for and waited all your life to marry - Mr. Perfect
- 2:28 2. Lord Sabbath - sovereign of all laws
- 3:14 3. Founder of the new people of God
- 4. Judge of all, 8:38
- 5. Analytical knowledge of the future, 9:33

3. DESCRIPTION OF OTHERS

- 1:7-8 "Divinity"
- 1:24 "Holy one of God"
- 2:11 "Son of God"
- 5:7 "power of eternal destruction"
- 8:29 "summation of all the Old Testament prophets"

To close: three life-changing questions:

- 1. First, what place does God's Word have in our lives? Do we know it? Do we read it? Or are we being bound by our culture so that the Word is not going to our hearts? Do we want the Bible to really do its work? This calls for a resolve to be carefully, even painfully, Biblical in our Christianity.
- 2. The second question is, why do we serve God? Do we like parading around in our pinstriped Brooks Brothers power combos? Do we sit on the platform and look holy for all to see? God help us if that is our motivation--whether we are preachers, youth workers, Sunday school teachers, Bible study leaders, or nursery workers! God have mercy on us if piety is used as an avenue for gain.
- 3. Finally, there is the biggest question of all: "What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?" (Matthew 22:42). This is the question which the Synoptics indicate Jesus used to get the whole discussion going. If you answer only that he was the Son of David, you have made an eternal error which will separate you from life now and forever. If you answer that he was the Son of David and the Lord in the

flesh, you are on the right track. If you believe this, resting your soul upon it, you have eternal life.

The very health of your soul will rest on what you think and understand about Christ. Unworthy thoughts being soul sickness. Narrow notions narrow our love.

If you believe:

That he was with the Father and the Spirit from all eternity--
That, out of love, he came in the flesh, as the Son of David--
That he lived a sinless life--
That he never sought his own prestige, power, or wealth--
That he is your model--
That he died for you--
That he was resurrected from the dead--
That he ascended to the right hand of the Father where
"The Lord said to [him]...
Sit at my right hand
Until I put your enemies
under your feet"--
That he prays for you now--
That he prays that you will model his character--
That he loves you infinitely--
That he cares about the smallest details in your life--
That he is coming again for you--
That he will judge the world--
That you will be like him--
Then you will be eternally joyful.

R. K. Hughes

If you believe all this, you are thinking rightly about Christ. And the more you believe it, the healthier and more joyful you will be!