

“Thou Art the Christ”  
Mark 8:27-29; Matthew 16:13-20  
(Preached at Trinity, August 17, 2011)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. As we come to this passage we reach the midway point in Mark's Gospel and a passage that is of great importance. In the very first verse of this Gospel Mark gives the identity of Jesus as the Messiah.  
**Mark 1:1** – “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.”  
Yet, between **Chapter 1** and the passage before us tonight in **Chapter 8** there are no other statements to this fact, until now.
2. After the healing of the blind man and in the previous passage we find Jesus traveling to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. Apparently Jesus is now alone with His disciples and He takes the opportunity to ask questions regarding His identity, “who do people say that I am?”
  - A. The disciples begin to share the popular opinion concerning Jesus.
    1. At this point of our Lord's ministry public opinion was high. They were impressed at His teaching considering Him to be a great prophet, even a dead prophet brought to life like John the Baptist, or Elijah or one of the other prophets. It was only later when the demands of discipleship were pressed that the people began to hate Jesus.
    2. This is clearly seen in **John 6**
      - a. Multitudes were following after Jesus. They believed Jesus was the Prophet promised by Moses:  
**John 6:14** – “When therefore the people saw the sign which He had performed, they said, “This is of a truth the Prophet who is to come into the world.”  
**Deuteronomy 18:15** – “The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him.”
      - b. As Jesus taught, however, more and more of these followers departed.  
**John 6:66** – “As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew, and were not walking with Him anymore.”
    3. This is true even today. People don't mind a Jesus that doesn't make demands. They love a Jesus that meets their felt needs. They despise any teaching, however, that make any demands upon their lives.
  - B. Then Jesus asks them ultimate question. He asks them emphatically. Literally it reads, “But you, who do you say that I am?” It is a very personal question demanding a very personal answer.  
Peter's answer is the most important answer that a man can give. “You are the Christ.”

We can see the same thing in **John 6**

**John 6:66-69** – “As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew, and were not walking with Him anymore. <sup>67</sup> Jesus said therefore to the twelve, “You do not want to go away also, do you?” <sup>68</sup> Simon Peter answered Him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. <sup>69</sup> “And we have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God.”

3. Jesus is the only way to life. There are many religions today. Many people make the mistake of believing all are acceptable ways of approaching God. Our society teaches and our legal system protects the right for all men to choose which ever religion they choose. While the law protects your right to be theologically wrong, God does not. He demands truth.
4. Jesus asked the question to the entire group. Peter, however, was the one to speak forth this great confession
  - A. This was consistent with Peter’s personality. He often demonstrated self-assurance and confidence. He was often quick to speak.
    1. It was Peter who stepped out of the boat and walked on the water
    2. It was Peter who pledged his allegiance to the death  
**Matthew 26:33** – “But Peter said to Him, “*Even* though all may fall away because of You, I will never fall away.”
    3. It was Peter who at first refused to allow Jesus to wash his feet  
**John 13:8** – “Peter said to Him, “Never shall You wash my feet!” Jesus answered him, “If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me.” <sup>9</sup> Simon Peter said to Him, “Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.”
  - B. But Peter also seems to have been the spokesman for the disciples. We see this both in the gospels and in Acts.  
So Peter speaks up here and volunteers the answer to Jesus’ question.
5. Peter’s declaration - “You are the Christ” – Christ appears 555 times in the N.T. The N.T. rests in Christ.  
By calling Jesus Christ Peter knew that He was the long-awaited Anointed One who was ordained by the Father – The Messiah promised by God, prophesied by the prophets, and expected by the people.
6. To this Jesus commands the Disciples to maintain secrecy concerning His identity.
  - A. Because nothing was to keep Him from His appointed task  
Too much publicity concerning Jesus as the Christ might fan the flames of enthusiasm posing a threat to the Roman rule and bringing an untimely end to Jesus’ public ministry. Jesus always made it clear that everything in His earthly ministry was in accordance with the will of the Father and there was a stipulated moment for everything.
  - B. Because the disciples still did not have a full understanding of it. A man must not preach the gospel until he is prepared to do so.  
The Apostles would not be prepared until after Pentecost. Until this time they were told to stay in Jerusalem and wait.

7. As we've gone through the Gospel of Mark there have been many times I've used a harmony of the synoptic Gospels to bring out the full meaning of a passage. Perhaps there is no other passage where this principle of interpreting the Gospels is needed more than Peter's confession.
- For some reason Mark's account is extremely brief. Perhaps it's because Mark's source in writing his Gospel was Peter and in humility Peter chose not to give the details that followed his confession. But we should note that Luke's Gospel is equally brief –
- Luke 9:18-21**
8. This is one of the times I think it will be essential for us to look beyond our current Book of study in order to glean the full force of the passage. I want to direct your attention to **Matthew 16:13-20**.
9. The first thing we find is the addition of the phrase, "The Son of the Living God"
- A. There were many opinions as to the designation of Messiah in the first century. The popular expectation was that of a national royal figure. This can be seen clearly with the Triumphal Entry of Christ into Jerusalem as the multitudes received Him as the promised King.
- Peter added an astounding statement to his declaration that Jesus was the Christ. "The Son of the Living God"
- B. Although at this point of our Lord's ministry Peter perhaps didn't have a full understanding of the nature of Jesus as the Christ (clear in **Verses 22-23**), his understanding far exceeded that of the multitudes. That which Peter was attributing to Jesus could not be applied to mere mortal man.
- C. By declaring that Jesus was the Son of God Peter is declaring that Jesus Christ is of the same nature and being as God. Peter was declaring the Divinity of Christ. Peter's words here are emphatic. The definite article occurs 4 times in the Greek. Literally it reads, "You are *the* Christ, *the* Son of *the* God, *the* living One."
- D. Peter's answer in Matthew is also significant in light of our Lord's question: **Mark 8:27** - "Who do people say that I am?"
- Matthew 16:13** - "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?"
1. Jesus asks the question with a focus on His humanity. And this is the way most saw Him—born of a woman with brothers and sisters. Even perhaps a gifted teacher, an inspired prophet, even a healer and miracle worker.
  2. But Peter answers with a focus upon the Deity of Christ. Jesus is God and worthy of our worship.
10. In **Verse 17** - Jesus shows Himself well-pleased with Peter's confession.
- A. He refers to Peter as Simon Bar-Jonah or Simon, son of Jonah.
- In **John 1** we are told that Peter's father was named John
- John 1:42** – "Jesus looked at him, and said, "You are Simon the son of John; you shall be called Cephas " (which is translated Peter)."
- Either the Greek word for Jonah is a contraction of the word for John or John was referred to by both names: John and Jonah
- B. But Jesus says that he was blessed – in what way?
1. He was blessed in being chosen as one of God's elect.
    - a. We must not dismiss the fact that multitudes held an inadequate view of Jesus and so few confessed Him to be the Christ.

- b. It is a blessing to be one of Christ's disciples and the benefits of His work as our Redeemer.  
**Romans 4:7-8** – “Blessed are those whose lawless deeds have been forgiven, And whose sins have been covered. <sup>8</sup> “Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will not take into account.”
  - c. Peter was blessed not by his first birth, Simon bar-Jonah but by his second birth.
2. He was blessed in being taught of God that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.  
**Matthew 13:16** – “But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear.”  
**Matthew 16:17** – “Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven.”
- a. Peter did not simply come to this realization
  - b. Neither was it taught to him by another man  
“flesh and blood did not reveal *this* to you”
  - c. God disclosed this knowledge to him – Saving knowledge and saving faith are a gifts from God  
**1 Corinthians 2:14** – “But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.”  
**Acts 16:14** – “A woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul.”
  - d. The Gospel is not given according to any discovery of man or work of man. It is completely the work of God.  
**1 Corinthians 2:9-10** – “but just as it is written, “Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, And *which* have not entered the heart of man, All that God has prepared for those who love Him.” <sup>10</sup> For to us God revealed *them* through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.”
3. It must also be understood that all who agree with Peter are blessed in the same way. (See the Beatitudes)

#### Conclusion:

1. The Gospel is a revelation from God. God has plainly revealed Christ in the Gospel. This is the outward call. The Gospel goes forth to all men and commands all men to repent.
2. It is true, however, that the Gospel is also veiled from the eyes of men.
  - A. It is veiled through the blinding work of Satan  
<sup>KJV</sup> **2 Corinthians 4:3-4** – “But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: <sup>4</sup> In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”

- B. It is veiled through the depravity and blindness of the heart of the lost man.  
**Romans 1:18-22** – “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,<sup>19</sup> because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.<sup>20</sup> For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.<sup>21</sup> For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks; but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.<sup>22</sup> Professing to be wise, they became fools,”
3. Have you heard the Gospel? Do you see your need of Christ? Do you see just a glimmer of light? Then flee to Christ.  
 Bunyan’s Pilgrim’s Progress:  
 “I looked and saw him open the book, and read therein; and as he read, he wept and trembled; and not being able longer to contain, he brake out with a lamentable cry, saying, “What shall I do?”  
 Now I saw, upon a time, when he was walking in the fields, that he was (as he was wont) reading in his book, and greatly distressed in his mind; and as he read, he burst out, as he had done before, crying, “What shall I do to be saved?”  
 I saw also that he looked this way, and that way, as if he would run; yet he stood still because (as I perceived) he could not tell which way to go. I looked then, and saw a man named Evangelist coming to him, and he asked, “Wherefore dost thou cry?”  
 He answered, “Sir, I perceive, by the book in my hand, that I am condemned to die, and after that to come to judgment, and I find that I am not willing to do the first, nor able to do the second.”  
 Then said Evangelist, “If this be thy condition, why standest thou still?” He answered, “Because I know not whither to go.” Then he gave him a parchment roll, and there was written within, “Fly from the wrath to come.”  
 The man therefore read it, and looking upon Evangelist very carefully, said, “Whither must I fly?” Then said Evangelist, (pointing with his finger over a very wide field,) “Do you see yonder wicket-gate?” The man said, “No.” Then said the other, “Do you see yonder shining light?” He said, “I think I do.” Then said Evangelist, “Keep that light in your eye, and go up directly thereto, so shalt thou see the gate; at which, when thou knockest, it shall be told thee what thou shalt do.”  
 So I saw in my dream that the man began to run. Now he had not run far from his own door when his wife and children, perceiving it, began to cry after him to return; but the man put his fingers in his ears, and ran on crying, Life! life! eternal life! So he looked not behind him, but fled towards the middle of the plain.