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Scripture

Mark 8:27-9:1

²⁷ Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" ²⁸ And they answered him, "John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets." ²⁹ He asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Messiah." ³⁰ And he sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him.

³¹ Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. ³² He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. ³³ But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."

³⁴ He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ³⁵ For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. ³⁶ For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? ³⁷ Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? ³⁸ Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." ^{9:1} And he said to them, "Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see that the kingdom of God has come with power."

Devotional

Who is Jesus? Great Prophet, Preacher, Teacher. That is who the people of the villages of Caesarea Philippi say Jesus is. Theologically speaking, "That is just the tip of the iceberg."

Jesus picked this exact moment to announce his true divine self. Through Peter's great faith we discover that Jesus is the anointed one, the Christ, the Messiah. Peter is the first disciple to come to this astonishing realization.

Then Jesus discloses to his disciples that he must endure extreme suffering, humiliation, and torture leading to his death. Peter's faith waivers as he takes Jesus aside to question this shocking declaration. Jesus is angered at Peter and makes it perfectly clear that the disciples are not to dwell on human suffering but on the divine way. He will die human and then rise again three days later in order to win our salvation by defeating sin and death. The Son of the Living God.

"Take up the cross and follow me." To do this, we must deny ourselves and commit fully to Jesus. This is the only way to stand in the glory of the Father and enter his Kingdom.

There is only one answer to the question, "Who am I?" And that is, "You are my Christ!"

Prayer

*Gracious God, help us to overcome our great unbelief.
Let the Holy Spirit fill us with the faith of Peter as he proclaimed Jesus the Messiah.
Make us holy.
Make us people who pray.
Make us people who believe.
Make us like Jesus.
Amen.*