

“Who Do People Say That I am?”

March 1

Read: Mark 8:27-30

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Is it not odd that Jesus asks his disciples to keep his identity a secret? This is the good news, yet Jesus wants to keep things secret. When he heals people, Jesus asks them to “say nothing to anyone” (e.g., 1:43-44), and when he casts out demons he commands them not to speak “because they knew him” (e.g., 1:34). It begs the question: why does Jesus “sternly” order that his identity be kept secret?

In contrast to others who might seek power, fame, and earthly kingdoms, Jesus is one who embraces submission, weakness, and God’s kingdom. Mark suggests we most clearly see Jesus’ identity at the moment of his death on the cross – along with the Roman Centurion we look upon Jesus’ death and realize: “Truly this man was God’s Son” (15:39). Why all the secrecy? Perhaps it is because the identity of Jesus is *a secret that is only revealed in the cross*, not through miraculous acts or supernatural exorcism. To understand Jesus’ identity means seeing him as one who suffered and “gave his life as a ransom for many.”

If Jesus were to ask you today, “Who do people say that I am,” what would be your response? Would you focus on answered prayers, on his work in your life, or maybe on some radio preacher’s message? Mark suggests that the truest expression of Jesus’ identity *is* his suffering and death on the cross, and further that Christ’s example invites us to deny ourselves, take up our own cross, and follow him daily (8:34).

Prayer: Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want. AMEN

Take a moment to both pray and reflect on Jesus prayer in Gethsemane (Mark 14:36)