

Matthew 16:13-17; 20-26

1. Jesus asks – who do you say that I am? What are the contemporary competing claims of who Jesus is that we hear in our culture?

Read Matthew 16:13-22

2. What does Jesus' question tell us is of primary importance?
3. What does Peter's claim and Jesus' praise of him tell us about who Jesus is?
4. The setting gives weight to this question and its answer. Jesus asks this question in Caesarea Philippi, a setting where Caesar was worshipped as God, where despicable acts of human sacrifice and sexual expression were used to worship idols, a setting of religious tolerance and pluralism. Peter calls Jesus in that setting the anointed one. Only three types of people were anointed – Kings – priests – prophets. Given the setting Peter is saying – you alone are King - sovereign over all – I will not bow the knee to Caesar I will only bow the knee to you. You Jesus are the anointed priest – you alone can deal with human brokenness, the community that bears your name will not be overcome by brokenness. You Jesus are the anointed prophet – you alone reveal the will and nature of God – all other truth claims must be measured against you. How would such a claim impact how disciples of Jesus would respond to their current political climate? The brokenness they saw around them? The competing truth claims in their pluralistic culture?

5. What are the implications of such a claim of who Jesus is in our world today? How would we respond to our current political climate, the reality of human brokenness in us and around us, the live and let live tolerance of seeing all faith claims as equally valid if we echoed Peter's profession?

6. What does it tell us that Jesus doesn't let them tell others about who he is until after his death and resurrection?

7. In Jesus' response to Peter, the church is given its primary calling to reveal who Jesus is. (19) How do you respond to that calling? How has our church responded to that calling?

8. In the sermon Tim reflected on D.A. Carson's observation that the decline of the western church has followed the pattern that – we held onto the gospel (who Jesus is and what he has done for us) and also lived out the social economic and political implications of that – the next generation assumed the gospel and solely identified with the implications – the next generation denied the gospel and the implication became everything – a social gospel. Have you seen this evidenced? Where?

9. Given the setting there are indeed social, economic, and political implications to who Jesus is – but those implications only come where Jesus is king. How can we make who Jesus is and who we relate to him primary to our individual lives of faith, and to the ministry and work of our church?