

Summary - Who Do You Say That I Am?

Romans 12:1-8; Matthew 16:13-20

- Life is full of important questions, but Jesus asks perhaps the most important of all:
“Who do you say that I am?”
- Our answer to this question matters, because it shapes how we understand Jesus and how we choose to live.
- People have many views about Jesus:
 - a good moral teacher; a prophet; an important religious figure.
- Peter makes a remarkable declaration:
“You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”
- Peter recognises that Jesus is:
 - God's promised Messiah and King; the one for whom God's people had been waiting; God present among us.
- Jesus tells Peter that this understanding has been **revealed to him by God**, rather than discovered simply through human wisdom.
- The Church is built upon the truth of Peter's confession – that Jesus Christ is Lord.
- The true foundation of the Church is not:
 - its buildings; its traditions; its clergy; or its programmes;
- but **Jesus Christ himself and his saving work**.
- Through Jesus' incarnation, death and resurrection, we receive:
 - Forgiveness; mercy; reconciliation with God; the gift of the Holy Spirit.
- The stories of those recently confirmed were an encouraging reminder that God is still at work, changing people's lives and calling them to follow him.
- Jesus gives Peter “the keys of the kingdom”, a sign of trust, responsibility and authority.
- The Church has been entrusted with the mission of Christ, to:
 - proclaim his message; embody his love; serve the world; discern God's will; and bring people towards reconciliation with God.
- The Church is God's **“Plan A”** – God chooses to work through his people in the world.
- Paul reminds us that, “in view of God's mercy,” we are called to offer ourselves to God as “living sacrifices.”
- Christian commitment is not simply about attending church on Sundays. We are invited to offer God our:
 - thoughts and desires; relationships; resources; successes and failures; strengths and weaknesses; past, present and future.
- We are encouraged not to be **conformed to the world**, but to be **transformed by the renewing of our minds**.
- The values of the world can often encourage:
 - Self-interest; self-fulfilment; self-expression; creating our own truth.
- The Gospel offers a different way of seeing ourselves and the world. We are:
 - Loved; accepted and forgiven; called and given a purpose; invited to love God and our neighbours.
- This transformation requires a daily decision to follow Jesus and surrender ourselves to him.
- Faith is not simply an individual journey.
 - **We belong to one another as members of the body of Christ.**
- Every Christian has a part to play, and the Holy Spirit gives different gifts for the good of the whole Church.
- These gifts may include:

- Serving; teaching; encouraging; leading; giving; praying; hospitality; evangelism; pastoral care.
- **No gift is unimportant**, and every member of the body matters.
- We may sometimes hesitate to step out in faith because we are afraid of failure.
- The challenge is to ask whether the greater failure might be never taking the step of faith at all.
- God may be calling each of us to:
 - Serve; lead; speak; pray; give; encourage; try something new; take a step of faith.
- The sermon ends where it began:
Jesus still asks each one of us, **“Who do you say that I am?”**
- Our answer is not merely something we say with our words – **it is something we express through the way we live.**
- The final challenge is beautifully expressed in Christina Rossetti's words:
“What I can, I give him, give him my heart.”
- **Jesus is worth giving our whole lives to.**

Questions

1. **Jesus asks, “Who do you say that I am?”**
How would you answer that question in your own words? Has your understanding of Jesus changed during your life?
2. **Peter recognised Jesus as “the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”**
Why do you think it matters who we believe Jesus really is?
3. **Eileen reminds us that the Church is built on Jesus Christ, rather than on buildings, traditions or individual people.**
What do you think this means for us as a church today?
4. **Paul encourages Christians to offer their whole lives to God, not just their Sunday mornings.**
What might it mean in practice to give God our everyday lives, including our worries, relationships, successes and failures?
5. **Eileen challenges us not simply to “fit in” with the world, but to be transformed by God.**
In what ways might following Jesus sometimes lead us to think or act differently from those around us?
6. **Paul reminds us that every Christian has a part to play in the body of Christ.**
What gifts, abilities or opportunities might God have given you? How could you use them to serve others and help build up the Church?

Deeper Discussion Questions with Bible References

1. **Peter's confession came through revelation from God.**

Jesus says that Peter did not discover his identity simply by human wisdom, but because it had been revealed to him by the Father.

Read: *Matthew 16:13–17; 1 Corinthians 2:9–14.*

What helps people today to move from simply knowing *about* Jesus to recognising and trusting him personally?

2. **What does it mean for the Church to be built on Christ?**

The sermon emphasised that the Church ultimately depends not on buildings, traditions or personalities, but on Jesus himself.

Read: *Matthew 16:18; 1 Corinthians 3:10–11; Ephesians 2:19–22.*

What are the essential foundations of a healthy church, and what things might we sometimes mistakenly treat as more important than they are?

3. **What does it mean to offer ourselves as “living sacrifices”?**

Paul calls Christians to give their whole lives to God in response to his mercy.

Read: *Romans 12:1–2; Galatians 2:20; Luke 9:23–24.*

What areas of our lives can be hardest to surrender to God, and what might a daily decision to follow Christ look like in practice?

4. **How are Christians to be “transformed” rather than “conformed”?**

Paul contrasts being shaped by the world around us with having our minds renewed by God.

Read: *Romans 12:2; Philippians 4:8–9; Colossians 3:1–17.*

What influences most strongly shape our thinking and values? How can we make space for God to renew our minds?

5. **Every member of the body has a part to play.**

The sermon reminded us that the gifts of the Holy Spirit are given not for personal recognition, but for the common good.

Read: *Romans 12:3–8; 1 Corinthians 12:4–27; 1 Peter 4:10–11.*

How can we recognise the different gifts that God has given to one another, including gifts that may be quiet or easily overlooked?

6. **What might stop us from stepping out in faith?**

The sermon suggested that sometimes we are so afraid of failure that we never discover what God might do through us.

Read: *Matthew 25:14–30; 2 Timothy 1:6–7; Philippians 1:6.*

What fears or doubts can prevent us from using our gifts or responding to God's call? What encouragement do these passages offer to someone who feels hesitant or inadequate?

A personal reflection for the coming week

Jesus asks his disciples a question which still comes to each of us today:

“Who do you say that I am?”

Matthew 16:15

This is not simply a question about what we know *about* Jesus. It is a question about trust, commitment and the direction of our lives.

Peter answered:

“You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”

Matthew 16:16

Take time to reflect

- **Who is Jesus to me today?**
How would I answer his question in my own words?
- **What difference does my faith in Jesus make to the way I live?**
Is my faith something I practise only on Sundays, or does it shape my everyday decisions?

Paul writes:

“Offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God.”

Romans 12:1

Perhaps this week I can consciously place before God:

- my worries and fears;
- my relationships;
- my plans and hopes;
- my successes and disappointments;
- my gifts and abilities;
- my past, my present and my future.

Nothing is too small, too difficult or too hidden to bring to him.

Be transformed

Paul also encourages us:

“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”

Romans 12:2

Each day brings choices. Will I simply follow the pressures and expectations around me, or will I try to see the world through the eyes of Christ?

Perhaps ask each morning:

“Lord, how would you have me live today?”

Remember: you have a part to play

We are not called to follow Christ alone. We belong to one another as members of the body of Christ.

“We, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually we belong to one another.”

Romans 12:5

God has given each of us gifts. Some may be obvious; others may be quiet and easily overlooked. This week, ask:

What has God given me that I can use to serve, encourage or bless someone else?

Do not allow fear of failure to stop you from taking a small step of faith.

A prayer for the week

Lord Jesus Christ,

you are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.

Help me to know you more deeply and to trust you more fully.

Take my whole life—my hopes and fears, my strengths and weaknesses—and use me for your purposes.

Renew my mind, guide my steps, and show me how I can serve you and others this week.

Amen.

“What can I give him? ... what I can, I give him: give him my heart.”