

SERMON: THE SAVIOR'S SURVEY

Matthew 16:13-18

(13) When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked His disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? (14) And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. (15) He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? (16) And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. (17) And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. (18) And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Introduction

Ministry can be draining. For that matter, life can be draining – very draining. Sometimes, you need to be by yourself to recharge. Sometimes, you need to be with a small group to recharge. We all need quiet time with the Lord.

Jesus and the apostles had a demanding schedule. They made long journeys to meet the needs of people. Jesus took them on a ten-day retreat to Caesarea Philippi to recharge. During this retreat, He did conduct a survey. He wanted to know what people thought of Him. He wanted honest feedback. There were two questions on the survey. Who do people in the public say that I am? Who do you personally believe that I am? (I know, totally correct English would use whom instead of who.) The responses were astounding, to say the least. Let's look at this very familiar Scripture and look at it as the feedback from a survey. (This sermon is a carry-over from Antioch-Lithonia's One Hundred Fifty-Sixth Church Anniversary Service. This pericope was part of the morning Scripture.)

Exposition

1. The Public Response To The Survey.

(All Responses Were Either Inaccurate Or Incomplete.)

(Some Of The Negative Responses Were Left Out.)

(Some Said He Was A Glutton And A Winebibber - Matthew 11:19.)

(Some Said He Was Demon-Possessed - John 7:20.)

(Some Thought He Was John The Baptist Resurrected,
Probably Because Of His Strong Preaching Against Sin And Hypocrisy.)

(Some Thought He Was Elijah Resurrected, Probably Because Of His Miracles.)

(Some Thought He Was Jeremiah Resurrected, Probably Because Of His Great Compassion.)

(Some Thought He Was Ezekiel, Isaiah, Or One Of The Minor Prophets.)

2. Peter's Response To The Survey.

(Peter Declared That Jesus Was The Long-Awaited Messiah.)

(Peter Did Not Wait For A Consensus Of The Group To Answer.)

(His Answer Was Prompted By The Spirit.)

(Peter's Response Was Met With A Monumental Response From Jesus-
"On This Rock I Will Build My Church.")

3. Our Personal Response To The Survey.

(The Question In Verse 15 Comes To Us Today.)

(One Correct Answer Is, "He Is My Lord And Savior.")

(He Is The Person And Purpose Of My Worship And Praise.)

(He Is The Center Of My Joy.)

(He Is The Source Of All Of My Blessings.)

(I Believe All Of The Antioch-Lithonia Members Already Have The Correct Answers, And This Is Just A Review.)

Closing Statements

The Lenten season is always a good time to examine our relationship with our Savior. Our personal relationship with Him should get sweeter as the days go by. During this time of the liturgical calendar, we should focus on how God's love for us led Jesus to take on an old rugged cross and die in our places. Let each of us perform a private honest survey and see how much Christ really means to each of us.

Give God Glory! Give God All The Glory!

End Note

You probably already know this. The word "lent" is from the Old English word, *lengten*. It literally means to lengthen, to make longer, or to stretch. Their thinking was: just as the daylight time is increasing each day in the spring time, so should our dedication to God increase as well. This was especially important to them, since Easter was on the horizon. It included the forty week-days prior to Easter, beginning with Ash Wednesday. It was originally a time to prepare candidates for baptism and became a period of penitence for those who had already been baptized. (You know I like to study the origin of words.)

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