

**Mark 8:27-33 (Second Sunday in Lent—Series B)**  
**“Speaking Frankly About Jesus”**  
**Lutheran Church of Our Redeemer, Enfield, CT**  
**February 28, 2021**

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Our text is from our Gospel lesson recorded in Mark 8:

<sup>27</sup>And Jesus and His disciples went away into the region of Caesarea Philippi. And on the way, He asked His disciples, saying to them, “Who do the people say I am?” <sup>28</sup>And they said to Him, “John the Baptist, and others Elijah, but others one of the prophets.” <sup>29</sup>And He asked them, “And you, who do you say I am?” Peter answered and said to Him, “You are the Christ.” <sup>30</sup>And He admonished them that they should speak to no one concerning Him. <sup>31</sup>And He began to teach them that it is necessary for the Son of Man to suffer much, and to be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and to be killed, and after three days to arise. <sup>32</sup>And with frankness He was speaking this message. And Peter, upon taking Him aside, began to admonish Him. <sup>33</sup>But turning and seeing His disciples, He admonished Peter and said, “Get behind me, Satan, because you are not thinking the things of God, but the things of people.”

Just think of all the images put on Jesus . . . John the Baptist, Elijah, one of the ancient prophets. Jesus the teacher of liberal morals . . . that was the view of Thomas Jefferson. Or Jesus the hippie . . . think *Jesus Christ, Superstar*. Jesus the Hindu sage? Jesus the Nazi who promoted the supremacy of the Aryan race? Jesus the Marxist revolutionary who will help people overthrow the government and establish communism? Jesus the greatest therapist who will help people get in touch with their inner psyche? And the list goes on and on.

But there is only one correct answer as to who Jesus truly is. And Peter voiced it on behalf of the Twelve, “You are the Christ.” But what does this mean?

“Christ” as you may know is the Greek version of the Hebrew title “Messiah.” Both “Christ” and “Messiah” mean “Anointed One.” In the Old Testament, God set certain people part as prophets, priests, and kings by anointing them with olive oil. Last week, our Sunday School students learned about Saul becoming king over Israel. In 1 Samuel 10, we read, “Then Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it on [Saul’s] head and kissed him and said, ‘Has

not the LORD anointed you to be prince over his people Israel? And you shall reign over the people of the LORD. . . . And this shall be the sign to you that the LORD has anointed you to be prince over his heritage" (1 Sam. 10:1 ESV). At His baptism in the Jordan River, Jesus was anointed, not with oil, but with the Holy Spirit. He is the Anointed One, the Christ, so that He might be our Prophet, Priest, and King.

But just like we might have some difficulty understanding the terminology about being the Christ, the Messiah, the Anointed One, so did the people of Jesus' day. And that's why Jesus was quick to admonish His disciples that they should not tell anyone what they had just confessed, that Jesus is the Christ. Sounds strange, doesn't it? But in the first-century AD, when Jesus was fulfilling His earthly ministry, there were widespread Messianic expectations of a political sort. For many, the Messiah, the Christ, was someone who would be a political figure. He would overthrow the hated Roman government, rescue Israel from Caesar, and set up a new government and bring back the good old days of King David. A good example of this thinking occurs in John's Gospel when, after the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand, the crowd attempts to take Jesus by force and make Him their king (John 6:15).

Now if Jesus is not a political Messiah, if He is not a Christ who will overthrow Rome, what kind of Anointed One is He? Jesus is the Anointed One who will suffer, die, and rise again after three days. He is the Messiah who would bring God's reign and rule breaking into this world by not only proclaiming the Good News of the forgiveness of sins, but by being Himself the Good News as He purchases forgiveness with His suffering, death, and resurrection.

And Jesus is not shy in telling the disciples about His mission as the Christ: "And with frankness He was speaking this message." Jesus wasn't sugar-coating anything. He wasn't

dumbing it down. He was matter of fact, right to the point. Jesus boldly, plainly, and bluntly announced in this first Passion prediction what was to come for Him because He is the Christ, the Anointed One. Jesus is the Messiah, true God and true Man, who is the Suffering Servant of Yahweh. Jesus received the Holy Spirit in connection with His Baptism, even as the Servant of Yahweh does in Isaiah 61, “the Spirit of the Lord Yahweh is upon me.” Jesus as the Servant proclaimed the Good News, announced the acceptable year of God’s favor, and comforted all who were mourning.

But there is more to being the Christ, the Servant of Yahweh. He stands in for the people. He bears their sins. Isaiah 53, “Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. . . . Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors” (Is. 53:4–12 ESV).

It is *necessary* for Jesus to suffer, die, and after three days arise. It has to be this way in order to save humanity from all sins, from death, and from the tyranny of the devil. Jesus

has to be a Christ who suffers and then enters into glory so that all people might receive the fruits of Jesus' labor. Yes, Jesus had to be this Messiah, this Christ. For He was anointed by the Spirit to take humanity's place in His life and in His death and in His resurrection. "For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45 ESV).

But this kind of Christ didn't sit well with Peter. He took Jesus aside and began to admonish Him. Matthew tells us that Peter said to Jesus, "Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you" (Matthew 16:22). This kind of Christ doesn't suit many people in our day and age either. "Who needs a Christ who suffers and dies? That's offensive and scandalous." "Who needs Jesus anyway? It's not like anybody really buys into the notion of 'sin' anymore. It's not like **I** need to be saved from anything." "What rules the world is worldly power and might, the economy, politics, the daily rat race, the kingdoms of the world. That is what calls the shots. Your Christ, your theology is a bunch of nonsense, wishful thinking, made-up dreams. All religions are the same. Forget that religious rubbish. The world and its ways rule, not your god. So conform to the way the world thinks and works!"

Like Peter, many do not think the things of God, but the things of people. Often, we are that way too. We are embarrassed to acknowledge to other people that we confess Jesus to be the Christ, who died and rose again to win the forgiveness of sins for all people. We feel awkward letting others know that we do believe in right and wrong (sin). Sometimes we're ashamed that we trust that the Bible is God's Word without error and seek to live according to it.

But we also have received the gift of the Holy Spirit. In our Baptism, we were anointed with the Holy Spirit who created saving faith in our hearts. At our Baptism, we became

Christians who confess Christ—Jesus Christ is Lord! By the power of the Holy Spirit as He works through the Means of Grace, the Gospel, Baptism, and Lord’s Supper, we grow spiritually, thinking more and more the things of God and not the things of people. And by the grace of God the Holy Spirit, you and I are empowered to be more like our Lord and Savior. We have received the blood-bought forgiveness of our sins because the Christ has suffered, died, and is risen. We have received the new life of faith so that, like our Lord and Master, we can speak frankly about Jesus to others.

Just look at Peter, who wasn’t thinking “God things” when he rebuked Jesus for being the Suffering Servant. In Acts 4, he and John were arrested and taken before the Jewish ruling council: “Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, ‘Rulers of the people and elders, if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed, let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing before you well. This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.’” Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus” (Acts 4:8–13 ESV). And Paul in Rome, who once persecuted Christians and didn’t believe in the Crucified and Risen Christ, “welcomed all who came to him, proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance” (Acts 28:30–31 ESV).

It is now our time to speak boldly, plainly, and clearly about Jesus Christ. This is our calling as baptized disciples. People must know of their sins and their failure to live up to the perfect standard of God's holiness. They must know that their eternal future rests securely only in the nail-marked hands of Jesus who died on a cross for them, winning their forgiveness with His own blood. This is the message of Good News you have received by the Spirit through the Means of Grace. This is the Christ you confess to be your Lord and Savior—the very Son of God made flesh who suffered, died, and rose again, winning forgiveness and eternal life for you and for all. Romans 10:13-15, "For 'everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.' How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!'" (Rom. 10:13–15 ESV).

Bring that Good News of Jesus the Christ—Crucified and Risen—to those in your circles of friendship. Talk honestly and openly about sin, death, and the devil. Talk plainly about God's love for the world that He gave His One-of-a-Kind Son to be our Savior. Speak frankly of the cross and resurrection of Jesus for the forgiveness of sins. Speak boldly about the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. By the power of the Spirit, help others to think the things of God and to believe in Jesus, the Christ. Amen.