

Mark 8:27-38 Sept 15 2018

The gospel of today is interesting and troubling. We have been reading of the miracles that Jesus has done for the past few weeks. There was the instance of bringing a daughter back to life. Jesus said she was just sleeping-my comment is that she was sleeping in death. He healed the blind man and the man who couldn't speak or hear. Jesus cured a woman by her just touching the hem of his clothes and others. Now did you notice that after each miracle of healing he says not to tell anyone? Many of us would like to be praised or even just recognized when we do something note worth or even something nice. But not Jesus. He doesn't want a word of his healing miracles to leak out. So, I wonder why would he not want to be recognized?

We are looking at these stories from a perspective of 2000 years later. We have the advantage of hind sight. Jesus could see the whole picture of his mission on earth-but not the people of his time. They only saw the healing.

The people of his time wanted to be rid of the rule of the Romans. The Romans were cruel and harsh. There was no love lost between the conqueors and the conquered.

So here appears a man who they hope will overthrow the Roman rule. After all, if he can return life to the lifeless, walk on water, feed thousands with a little bread and a few fish, heal so many of the diseases surely overthrowing the Romans is something easy.

Healing the sick and overthrowing the Roman occupation were not the task that was Jesus' mission. His mission was to bring the word of God

and redemption to the people. Jesus knew the whole story before the story played out.

I need to step back from story but will come back to it. I want to borrow something from Pastor's sermon of last week. It has to do with chili and here begins the analogy. What is chili? You take some onion, beef, beans, celery, and tomatoes and put them in a pot to cook. Is it chili yet? No up to now it's just a collection of meat and vegetables. It doesn't become chili until you add the spice cumin. With this addition, it becomes chili. You have to add that last ingredient.

Now back to Jesus. Jesus didn't want to be the savior of the world by just doing good health care and removing the Romans. He knew that the healings and the feeding of the people would get their attention but the last ingredient was that he would die on the cross and rise from the grave for the sins of all. Without his death on the cross and rising from the grave, there would be no redemption of sin. That was what he was there for. Even when he explained it to his disciples, they didn't understand. The disciples couldn't see the whole story, especially Peter. Brash Peter who rebuked Jesus. Peter was looking at the situation from only his perspective not the whole mission. Peter humanly did not want to lose his friend.

So I ask you, how do you see the mission of Jesus? I think Jesus summed it all up with his question "Who do you say that I am?" This is a question from 2000 years ago that we answer on a daily basis today. We answer that question in our prayers and indeed, even in the way we live our life.

"Who do you say that I am?" Amen