

Small Group Notes.11.6.17

Who do you say I am?

Reading: *Matthew 16:13-16*

Welcome: Do you have a favourite fictional character?

Sermon Outline.

Jesus isn't asking the disciples if they know his name. This isn't just a "What's my name question" He was asking if they knew What, Who and Why he was there – a sort of "Do you get it yet? Question.

We think we know who Jesus was because we have read the book. But imagine that you are trying to explain Jesus to a non-Christian and that person asks you "Who was this Jesus? He's just a fairy story, a character from a book isn't he?" what do you say to them? Who do you say that he is?

Time Magazine a few years ago had an article to rank the 100 most influential people of all time. They got an army of researchers, lots of maths, and analysed countless articles, books records etc trying to find out who the most influential people of all time were. All the people below Jesus in the list said Jesus was much more than a man –but how can a carpenter from a backwater no one had heard of, who only preached for 3 years become this man who influenced all the others and who became the most influential in history?

Jesus stands out in so many ways as someone who was very unlikely to have any significance on the world. Even the place he lived – Israel was a bit of a backwater at the time, the major civilizations had all been somewhere else. And to cap all of that there of course was no mass media, no conferences, no twitter, no Facebook – no reality TV.

We saw the video and the question was asked, "Was Jesus even a real person"? N T Wright, a historian said "The historical evidence for Jesus existence is extraordinarily good. From time to time people try to suggest that he never existed but virtually all historians now agree that he did." Richard Dawkins said "I alluded to the possibility that some historians think that Jesus never existed. I take that back. Jesus existed."

The impact of this ministry is still felt today and has influenced many throughout the ages, founding schools, health services, charitable institutions etc. etc.

So when Jesus asks us, "Who do you say that I am?" hopefully we all reply as Peter did – You are the Messiah. The problem is then what we do with that? Are we changed by the knowledge that Jesus is God, from God, the only way to God as he himself says?

The answer to Jesus's question isn't just words – it is much more than that and it is what changes us, it is what makes us who we are as Christians and it is why we still follow a carpenter from Nazareth over 2000 years after his death.

Questions of Application

1. What is it about Jesus that attracts you to him?
2. How would you explain Jesus to a non-Christian?
3. How does following Jesus change the way you live your life?
4. How can we guard against being like Peter in recognising the Messiah but not wanting to allow Jesus to fulfil his mission?