

Who Do You Say I Am?

Scripture: Matthew 16: 13-20

Date: February 16, 2020

NAME

SEDIN TWINS

The Vancouver Canucks this week retired the player numbers of identical twins Henrick and Daniel Sedin after 17 years of hockey. They were so close in appearance and mannerisms that their first coach admitted it took him 2 ½ years to tell them apart!

I can understand – sometimes it feels like sometimes we needed to wear one of those Hello – My Name Is Tags.

QUESTIONS FROM JESUS

Jesus – in the gospel of Matthew - has already performed many miracles and healings and has already given the 'sermon on the mount'. He's answered many questions but now He asks one back.

This is a little role reversal in our journey here at MCRC@YYC where we've been on a journey through Epiphany looking to see God / Jesus clearer by asking questions. We've looked through the lens of John's disciples and other gospel characters like Zacchaeus, the Rich Young Ruler and Nicodemus amongst others. We've dived into questions like Are you the One? - Am I good enough? -Do I have to change? amongst others. We've been curious about whether Jesus is in charge and in control? and even if Jesus is approachable?

QUESTIONS ABOUT JESUS

So Jesus asks the disciples who the crowds understand Jesus to be. It is significant that this question is raised in the midst of Caesarea Philippi which is renowned for its worship of different gods. Jesus is asking if – in the midst of a pluralistic culture – the crowds understand who Jesus really is.

The reply is that the wonders and miracles have Jesus on par with Elijah, Jeremiah, and other prophets of old as well as John the Baptist of a more current age. All of whom were powerful messengers of God for the people of Israel.

Jesus then ups the ante and moves from the general to the specific - who do THEY understand Jesus to be. After all their discussions, after all that they had seen and after all that they had experienced – what is their understanding of Jesus before them?

FAME

SEDIN IDENTITY

The twin hockey players Daniel and Hendrick Sedin were remarkably similar in their playing styles and in their results (games played – goals – assists etc.). They were (and are) well recognized in Canada and in Sweden – made easier because their name was on the back of their sweater

JESUS IDENTITY

FROM GOD

Peter makes an amazing distinction from the crowd's understanding. Looking beyond the past and into the future where he declares Jesus to be the Messiah – the son of the Living God. Not just a messenger of God but a Messiah who is.

Messiah has in it's understanding as the Anointed One meaning from God and for God. The Greek word used here is Christos – you are the Christ. Truly you ARE God!!

Peter's declaration is revealed by the power of the Holy Spirit and not from an earthly understanding or expectation of what they've seen or heard from Jesus to this point.

FOR THE CHURCH

Peter's declaration will become the core foundation of the church. That Jesus is the Christ – the Messiah and that revelation comes only through the power and grace of the Holy Spirit. A foundation that even the gates of hell cannot defeat!!

REIGN

SEDIN LEGACY

The early years of the Sedin twins playing hockey were average at best. However, their middle years were a light to Vancouver's hopes and dreams of hockey success making it to the Stanley Cup finals. The latter years were not diminished by their ability as they remained the two top fittest players on the team and they contributed greatly even with diminished roles on the ice. However, off the ice their legacy grew and grew as their influence within the dressing room and within the Vancouver community became important not just to them but also by those they impacted. The Sedins become known more than just hockey players but as leaders.

PETER LEGACY

Peter is called the rock upon which – through Christ – the church would grow and develop from Pentecost onwards. He and the disciples will be blessed with purpose and with power.

YET - despite this blessing Peter fails significantly. Peter heroically describes Jesus BUT Peter's next declaration is only a few verses later in Chapter 16 as Jesus is describing the future events including his suffering at the hands of the religious leaders and will

ultimately be killed – only to come back to life again. Peter adamantly denies Jesus' words and he takes Jesus aside and rebukes Him (vs. 22). Jesus very sternly puts Peter in his place - get behind me Satan ---- whoah !!

Only a few verses later than that Matthew records the transfiguration of Jesus before Peter, James and John and Peter wants to put up tents for Moses, Elijah and Jesus so they can bask in the moment! But Jesus calls them to keep moving forward

Now Peter will – eventually - get it. On the day of Pentecost he preaches with power about the truths of Jesus – the Christ – and thousands are saved. Despite his failures he remains one of the key leaders of the disciples

But here and now Peter has just clearly articulated who Jesus is and then has rushed ahead with his own expectations and with his own agenda.

EPIC FAIL

OUR LEGACY

WHO DO WE SEE JESUS AS

This Epiphany season has been a revelation of our questions but it is also a revelation of Jesus questions to us. For those who saw Jesus first hand - His teachings, His miracles and His signs and wonders – they were looking to the past for another messenger.

The Epiphany challenge – the everyday challenge – is who do we see Jesus as. In our questions to God that are reflecting our faith but also in our answers / conclusions that also reflect our faith

What answers do we give academically? Answers that reflect our attitude.
What answers do we give pragmatically? Answers that reflect our actions.

Attitudes and actions that reflect the name of Jesus - a name that we ourselves carry as Christians. Our understanding / expectation of Jesus's name and of Jesus' power or fame is revealed in our attitudes and actions of Jesus' reign

Do we see Jesus – like the crowds of then – as a messenger of God or do we see Jesus – like Peter's declaration – as the Messiah. God incarnate, the Savior of all, the Lord over all. Jesus who has the name above all names.

HOW DOES JESUS SEE US?

But Peter wasn't just asked a question - he was also shown an answer. Regardless of how Peter saw Jesus - how Jesus saw him was more important. Jesus saw the failures – yes but the glory – yes as well!

Because it is only through the power of the coming suffering by Jesus and into the power of the coming resurrection by Jesus that all things are seen as failures and yet that all things can be seen as redeemed by His grace and for His glory

HOW DO WE SEE OURSELVES?

In light of Jesus' vision of us – how then do we see ourselves and how then do we live as ourselves. Do we see ourselves as fans of Jesus or as followers of Jesus? Do we see ourselves as religious people working to follow the rules of religion or as righteous people faithfully following the Lord of our lives?

C.S. Lewis is famous in his book Mere Christianity for articulating a thought perspective of how Jesus is to be viewed. Is Jesus a liar - someone who knew that he wasn't God but talked as if he was. Is Jesus a lunatic - someone who was out of his mind but thought in that mind – that he was God. Or is Jesus – God – the Lord over all things

When we move forward into the Lord's Supper – those questions will strike us deep as we respond to the call of grace. Who IS this Jesus – this great I AM? His name, His fame and His reign in us? What will our response be to those declarations – in us and through us?

Amen and Amen