



ENCOUNTER

"Who am I?"

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Discussion Notes

The Crossing Church

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OPENING

This week, we are continuing our series called *Encounter*. We are walking through the life of Jesus using the Gospel of Mark as the backdrop. Instead of just doing something new in 2017, let us become something new – let us become more like Jesus. Mark's agenda in writing his gospel is to establish Jesus' identity as the King with authority over all things, including the Sabbath, and His purpose of dying on the Cross. So, we're on a journey that has the potential to change our lives. We are getting up close and personal with the life of Christ. Remember, the closer we get to Him, the more our lives will change.

SCRIPTURE¹

Mark 8:27-29 (NLT) Jesus and his disciples left Galilee and went up to the villages near Caesarea Philippi. As they were walking along, he asked them, "Who do people say I am?" "Well," they replied, "some say John the Baptist, some say Elijah, and others say you are one of the other prophets." Then he asked them, "But who do you say I am?" Peter replied, "You are the Messiah."

Mark 8:31-33 (NLT) Then Jesus began to tell them that the Son of Man must suffer many terrible things and be rejected by the elders, the leading priests, and the teachers of religious law. He would be killed, but three days later he would rise from the dead. As he talked about this openly with his disciples, Peter took him aside and began to reprimand him for saying such things. Jesus turned around and looked at his disciples then reprimanded Peter. "Get away from me, Satan!" he said. "You are seeing things merely from a human point of view, not from God's."

Matthew 4:4 It is written, "Man does not live on bread alone."

Luke 4:8 It is written, "Worship the Lord your God and serve Him only."

Matthew 4:7 It says, "Do not put the Lord your God to the test."

Hebrews 12:2 (NLT) We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, on whom our faith depends from start to finish. He was willing to die a shameful death on the cross because of the joy he knew would be his afterward.

Luke 9:51 (LB) As time drew near for his return to heaven, he moved steadily onward toward Jerusalem with an iron will.

1 John 3:1 How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called the children of God!

OBSERVATION

It is a question of identity - His and ours. He asks His disciples, "Who do you say that I am?" and they give answers such as prophet, Elijah, and John the Baptist until Peter steps up and says, "You are the Messiah." But Peter didn't understand the full meaning of His identity. Jesus didn't come to defeat the Romans and

¹ All scripture is NIV unless otherwise noted.

set up a new world order here on earth, at least not yet! He came to teach the world about His Father. He came to suffer, be reviled, and die a horrible death on a cross, so that our sins would be forgiven and we would inherit eternal life! That was, and is, His identity! And no temptation of Satan was going to sidetrack Him from His purpose.

Question: If someone were to ask, “Who are you?” what would you answer? Who is the Messiah other people see in you?

APPLICATION

So who is Jesus to you? God loves honesty and is open to honest dialogue. He wants to hear our questions and He invites us to dig and research and probe and experience Him. He’ll show us and help us find our answers because He loves us. The question is no longer whether Jesus is the Messiah, but now what kind of Messiah is He.

Question: What kind of Messiah is Jesus to you? How much time do you spend with Him? How much do you trust Him? What do you talk about with Him?

Question: Have you asked yourself, “Who am I in Jesus’ Kingdom?” What did you answer?

We know that Satan wants to distract us from this journey and he puts doubts in our minds to confuse us. He hits us where we are the most vulnerable: pride, sex, finances, lack of self-esteem, for example. He is not omniscient or omnipresent – but he keeps excellent records and knows our weaknesses and hot buttons! Shame is the language of this thief – grace is the language of Jesus. We are tempted to define ourselves by our pasts. Shame attacks who we are and Satan, the accuser, uses it to steal our true identity. We stop believing in our God-given worthiness and start striving, performing, pleasing, proving and perfecting ourselves. We need to tell Satan, “We are interested in only one Kingdom and that’s the Kingdom of God. There is only One who is worthy of our worship, only One worthy of our allegiance, only One who is worthy of our adoration and you certainly aren’t that one!”

Question: Describe a time when Satan really turned you astray? How did you defeat him?

Question: In what area are you particularly vulnerable to Satan’s wiles? How do you deal with that knowledge?

Question: What in your past is causing shame and stealing your God-given worthiness?

So we see how important inner character is in the face of such an enemy. Knowing God and His truth, pursuing an intimate relationship with Him, and knowing who we are in Him is crucial. If we settle who we are, then the why and what get settled as well and we can move through our lives like Jesus, with a laser focus. We can serve other people, love our families, and use our gifts. We can move through life with courage, compassion, and unconditional love. We can make an eternal difference with this one and only life and we can do it with steadfastness and hope.

Question: What is your purpose? Are you approaching it with an iron will?

Jesus tells us we are worthy now! Not if. Not when. NOW. Our identity is a much loved child of the Most High God – that’s who we are! We are already accepted, secure, and significant in His eyes!

Question: What does it mean to you to be a child of God? How does this knowledge impact how you live?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we just want to look, love, and live like Jesus. We know our vulnerabilities and we often allow our pasts to distract us with shame and guilt. However, we know that You have saved us out of all of that and that we are worthy because of Jesus’ sacrifice. We also wish, above all, to act justly, love mercy, walk humbly with You and be thankful in every circumstance. In Jesus’ name. Amen.