

**Series:** I Have Decided

**Sermon Text:** Mark 8.27-33 | **Title:** Who do you say Jesus is?

**Date:** 8.30.2020

MPT: Jesus is the Messiah

MPS: Who is Jesus?

### Intro

Welcome to Mercy Church. If you are newer to us, we have a simple vision that compels us here. We are asking God to bring a gospel awakening here to Charlotte that will be carried to the ends of the earth. That awakening is one person at a time seeing and embracing Jesus for who he really is. We have a simple message that Jesus is the savior who loves you and wants you. Some of you don't recognize people here...lot's of new people. 70 new people.

ONLINE COMMENT? – Hey if you haven't made it back or weren't aware, we've started an outdoor 10am worship gathering at our Providence Rd campus. We'd love to see you there.

Get your bible and get over to Mark 8. This is part 3 of a 4 part sermon series walking through Mark 8 called "I have decided." In this chapter Jesus brings his disciples to a moment of decision where they have to consider the cost of following him and then go all in or all out.

But before they say yes, there is still one little problem in the gospel of Mark. Up to this point the disciples aren't really clear on who Jesus....IS.

They've been walking with him for about a year now and they've seen him do some amazing things. When he calms a storm they say "Who is this that the winds and the waves obey him?" They call him teacher and master and revere him but they haven't had THE CONVERSATION yet.

Kind of like when you are dating someone and its going pretty well and you need to have the DTR. You know what that is? The conversation where you Define The Relationship. Where she goes from that girl you went on a few dates with to "girlfriend" or from "girlfriend" to "fiancé." Pastoral side note: Some of ya'll are long overdue for that conversation.

That's what is happening in Mark 8. Jesus and the disciples have been together for some time and now its about to get real. It's define the relationship time. That's this week and next. And listen I'm giving you an intro for two weeks because there are a lot of you that need to define your relationship with Jesus.

In fact if I had to summarize the next two sermons they would be two critical questions Jesus asks every person:

1. Who is Jesus?
2. Where do you stand with him?

Some of you are here legitimately seeking help. Seeking love and acceptance. Seeking a sense of purpose from a higher power. And what today is all about...what Mark 8 has already been clear about for two weeks...what scripture is all about and what God's people called the church are to be all about...is Jesus. And maybe you've heard *about* him but have

not actually met him. Maybe you know some stories but don't know him.

Some of you have been with Mercy all five years we've been here and you are growing in your faith...and what you need today is not some secret extra level of Christianity...you need more of Jesus. Today he is front and center and with the Lord's help all the hope that comes with him will fill our hearts today.

So if you are newer to Christianity, maybe a friend sent you this message as a way of introducing their faith to you... the great thing about this week and next is we are going to get crystal clear on who Jesus is and we are going to be brought to a decision point on where we stand with him.

27 Jesus went out with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. And on the road he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?"

This is Jesus' gentle way of getting to the real heart of the matter. And it's an important question because he's setting up a distinction between the disciples and "people." Starts with who do "they" say that I am.

And by the way this is the plot shift in the gospel of Mark. If this had a soundtrack, it would get real quiet during verse 27-28. Like no music. And then when Peter speaks the answer in verse 29...that's when the deep pensive close-up intense music kicks in. Cause it's ON.

Even the setting here – a road near Caesarea Philippi...This is as far north as Jesus ever goes. And he is beginning his descent south to Jerusalem. To his death.

Who do people say that I am? What's the consensus out there? What are people saying about Jesus?

28 They answered him, "John the Baptist; others, Elijah; still others, one of the prophets."

Go back to Mark 6 and you'll read there were rumors circulating that John the Baptist, whom Herod had beheaded, had somehow been resurrected in the form of Jesus. Maybe it's him? According to the OT Elijah never died. He was taken up into heaven so maybe God sent him back in the form of Jesus? Maybe he's one of the other prophets?

John the Baptist & Elijah were both prophets...Their job had been to prepare people for the arrival of God's Anointed One. That is the job of all of the prophets in the Old Testament. To speak God's word to the immediate context **and** to prepare people for the anointed one. God's promised savior king.

God's chosen prophets do this throughout the entire Old Testament. They are appointed by God at different times and regions to ANNOUNCE a promise of a savior king.

- Genesis 3 – God himself announces one of Eve's descendants will overthrow God's enemy. He will conquer evil with good.

- Genesis 15 – God himself tells Abraham one of his descendants will be a king that will bless every nation on earth.
- Genesis 49 – Jacob blesses his son Judah. Whole story makes you think its gonna be Joseph but Judah...the scepter will not depart from his line until he whose right it is comes and the obedience of the peoples belongs to him.
- Exodus – There is a Passover lamb sacrificed in order to save God’s people from their sin. But they would sin again. They remained in need of a lamb who could die once for all sin.
- Deuteronomy 18 is going to say a greater Moses is coming one day.
- 2 Samuel 7 – David the King hasn’t lived up to these hopes. And the Prophet Samuel says a king will come one day whose reign will be characterized by justice, peace, and prosperity. Will reign forever.
- Isaiah 9 & 11 – David’s descendants are failing and so the PROPHET says one will come... unto us a child is born, a son is given. He will be called wonderful counselor, mighty God, everlasting father, prince of peace...and he will sit on the throne FOREVER.
- But the PROPHETH Isaiah also says that one will suffer. He will be killed. And by his WOUNDS we will find our healing.
- A thread of prophecy in the Psalms about a future king in the line of David. The Anointed one of Psalm 2, The one all kings bow to in Psalm 72, The forever king whose throne shines like the sun in Psalm 89

- The Prophet Daniel tells the story of 3 of God’s followers were thrown into a fire and then a 4<sup>th</sup> appeared in there with them that kept them from burning up. And a couple chapters later Daniel PROPHECIES that one day the SON OF MAN is going to come rolling in and will be given everlasting dominion over the cosmos.
- The Prophet Ezekiel talks about a Savior king who will carry the power of God that breathes life into an entire valley of dry bones.
- The prophet Zephaniah tells of God as the warrior king who will come to redeem his people from their sin and bring them back to himself.
- The prophet Malachi talks about the day when a sun will rise with healing in its wings.

The entire story of scripture is pointing to ONE who is to come. It is groaning and waiting for the Savior King, The Suffering Servant, Kinsman Redeemer, True Lamb, Wisdom, Ancient of Days, Son of Eve who can bring victory over sin and death and with it hope to a weary people.

And it’s the one we instinctively as humans FEEL we need in our moments of honesty. When the world is sweeping over us we need a close shepherd who will cover & protect us. Give us life and love that can’t be betrayed or taken away. When success doesn’t satisfy and we admit we need one who can. When escapes stop numbing the insane pressures around us and we need one we can cast our burdens on.

And by the time of this encounter on this dusty road in the

first century the anointed one had become known by one title: **Messiah. Which translated into English is CHRIST.**

The people are saying he is another prophet. Another one sent by God to say “one day the guy is coming.” And listen to me...these disciples...they know this history. They’ve been learning this inside and out since they were old enough to sit on a knee and hear this passed down. They know there are prophets...and then there is the messiah they prophecy about.

29 “But you,” he asked them, “who do you say that I am? ”

This is the question on which Christianity hangs. This is the define the relationship question. Is he just another prophet? Or is he more. Is he God’s Promised Savior King?

Peter answered him, “You are the Messiah.”

Want you to understand the avalanche of excitement and emotion that had to be sweeping over Peter and the disciples right now. YOU ARE...HIM. YOU ARE THE ONE! Man I’ve been hearing about you since I was born. Our people have been talking about you for a LONG TIME. Jesus says you gotta keep quiet because I have a plan here that doesn’t involve shouting from the rooftops.

This is the confession of every true Christian. **Jesus is the Messiah – God’s promised Savior King.** So let me break that down for you:

**Jesus is our God** – He’s not just the one God sent. He is God the son. Sent by God the father as the savior king promised to bring redemption to God’s people. And one of the more

offensive parts of the gospel is that he does not claim to be one among many gods. He claims to be God alone. Emmanuel. God with us. And this should bring comfort to us because when God planned for your life...he knew you would need a savior. And his love is so intense for you, and your need is so great, that he didn’t leave it up to a prophet to save you. No GOD HIMSELF came for you. To rescue and redeem you. To heal you and lift you out of the shame and darkness you were bound up in. He didn’t send another David because David could mess up. No HE himself came. Just as he promised. And listen, If he’s God...you can trust him to be faithful to you now. That the steadfast love of the Lord that never ceases Lamentations 3 says. GREAT is his faithfulness. All this is true if Jesus is God.

**Jesus is our Savior** – A savior is only sent when a people need saving. Recent LifeWay Study found that 76% of Americans believe Jesus is the Savior of the World. That same group was asked a follow up question and 56% said they do not think they need saving from their sin. And I think this is INCREDIBLY accurate about the American Psyche. **Our culture feels a holy reverence for Jesus but not a need for him.** And maybe you’ve been there for a while. “Jesus is great but what’s the big deal.” Listen to me...This claim...that he is the MESSIAH...if you are going to join Peter and the Disciples and the church throughout history...what you are saying is Jesus you are the savior and if you are the savior...then I must be in need of saving. And that right there is where you have to get to. When Paul says “All have sinned” – do you count yourself in that “all?” The payment for sin is death but the GIFT OF GOD is a savior. Who while we were still in our sin...died for us. So that

we might be reconciled to God. You receive it! That brings me right to the last part.

**Jesus is our King** – Listen the reason our sin matters is because it is against the king of the universe. If Jesus has authority over us then we have to give an account to him. This is where the Gospel starts.

A number of years ago a famous pastor did a survey about why people didn't go to church. #1 answer was that they found it boring and irrelevant. Many pastors assumed that the corrective was to show them how the Bible was relevant to their lives. But what happened is that for many churches God became nothing more than a means to an end—He's a way to a better family, better sex, a more fulfilling career, your best life now, or a way to know for sure that when you die you'll go to heaven. All these things are good but they have one thing in common—they are all about you. God has become like the ultimate spiritual Super Walmart. "He's got everything! You name it, you can get it all at one-stop God-mart." You go to him when you need something, and you live your life without him the rest of the time. \*\*Some of you he's more like the fire department. Only call in extreme emergency.\*\* Same problem.

But that's not where the Gospel starts. The Gospel is about the fact that Jesus is Lord, but you and I have lived in rebellion against Him. We have traded His authority and His prominence in our lives for our own prominence and authority. We have become Lord. Because of that His righteous anger burns against us. We stand justly condemned and are in need of a Savior.

Everything else we talk about is built on the foundation of Jesus is king. Think about it: If Jesus is not the king, then what is sin? If there is no understanding of sin, then no need of

salvation. We say "be saved" and they say "from what?" Well, if God doesn't exist and Jesus isn't the Promised Savior King then they have a great point. But if he is...then we must join with Peter and say YOU ARE THE MESSIAH.

Listen I know from emails and calls that there are people watching who do not identify as Christian. I'm honored you would open yourself up to even listen. Thank you. What you will run into a lot, I imagine you have...is that the Christian faith ends up getting attention around things like gay marriage, abortion, creation v evolution...and these become the arguments for the validity of the Christian faith.

But NONE OF THAT MATTERS if Jesus isn't the Messiah! I'm not saying they don't matter at all, I'm saying deal with Jesus first. And if he IS NOT THE MESSIAH...then don't worry about what Christians say about everything else. But if he IS the messiah then we must submit to him and trust that in his goodness he has created an abundant life for us now (John 10.10) that is better for us than what we would build for ourselves.

The question of whether or not Jesus is the Messiah is everything. If he isn't, we Christians are fools. But if he is...then he is Lord of ALL. And he's either Lord of ALL or not Lord at all. We can't pick and choose what we follow...then we are just consumers back in the aisles of God-Mart.

- Some of you are like Jesus is King...but my money is mine. You don't tithe even though it's a clear directive from your Lord. Why? Because he's not really King.

- Some of you are like Jesus is King but his sexual ethic is outdated so I'm in charge there. Well then he's not king.
- Jesus is King but I'm not letting my children become missionaries unless its to a really nice place where everyone loves missionaries and poops ice cream. OK. So Jesus is your King...but not theirs?

Christian it isn't easy to put your full yes on the table. This is why C.S. Lewis said we do not come to God as bad people wanting to become good people. We come as rebels laying down our arms.

But the promise is God receives us as sons and daughters and welcomes us into a life far greater under his reign than we could ever have without him.

Here's what happens when we join the disciples and with our whole hearts declare Jesus is Messiah. When we believe we are sinners and that he DIED in our place as a payment for our sin. the burden of trying to make other things our savior starts to lift.

- Your career doesn't have to be your savior anymore. Doesn't have to define you.
- Your social media footprint doesn't have to define you. You don't have to troll for likes anymore.
- Your KIDS success doesn't have to be your savior anymore. They can mess up and you can just be their parent. Because the weight of the world that you handed to them...doesn't belong there.
- Your body image doesn't have to be your savior

- Your bank account doesn't have to be your savior
- Your addiction doesn't have to be your savior.

When Christ is your savior, everything else starts to find healing and purpose and clarity around him. Because he's able to carry the weight of your soul and nothing else is.

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Close – This changes everything.

- Surrender
- You are the Messiah. I'm Yours.