

August 23 Worship
Readers- Thom Daoust/ Wayne Stacy

Announcements/Joys

Time Of Quiet Meditation- *"We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose."* Romans 8:28

Opening Scripture- Psalm 124(page 537)

Opening Chorus- 116- God Is So Good

Responsive Call To Worship-

Leader: Blessed be the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth!

People: Praise be to God, the Giver of many gifts!

Leader: Our help is in God's name, the One who calls us here.

People: We come with songs of praise, with prayers too deep for words.

Leader: Blessed be the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth!

People: Blessed be the Lord!

Hymn of Praise- 225- When I Survey The Wondrous Cross

Unison Prayer/Lord's Prayer- Lord God, Maker of heaven and earth, we gather together in Your name. We come as living sacrifices, to offer You our worship and thanksgiving, our praise and our prayers. Come among us, living Lord. Through the power of Your Holy Spirit, transform our hearts and minds so that we may recognize Your presence, hear Your voice, know Your will, and walk in Your way. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, who taught us to pray, saying...*Lord's Prayer...*

"Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen."

Gloria Patri- Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. World without end.
Amen, Amen.

Old Testament Scripture- Isaiah 51:4-6(page 632)

Special Music- *“I Then Shall Live”* Carl Flinkstrom, Ben, Cathy & Ken Johnson

Gospel Scripture- Matthew 16:13-20(page 850-851)

Special Music *“Somewhere Over the Rainbow”* Cheyenne Racine

Hymn- 30- Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing

New Testament Scripture- Romans 12:1-8(page 986-987)

Message

“Who Do You Say You Are?”

When Jesus asked His disciples the question; “Who do men say the Son of man is,” was He asking so that He could hear what people had to say about Him? Was He trying to build up His self-esteem by finding out what others thought of Him? Jesus did not and does not need to hear what anyone thinks about Him, He is the Son of God after all. He knows exactly who and what He is and, being God, does not require outside confirmation of His status. Why then did He ask the question? In fact, Jesus asked His disciples two questions; “Who do men say that the Son of man is?” and “But who do you say that I am?” He was asking to find out if the disciples had their own opinions or were the just going along with what others had to say.

The disciples named other prophets such as Elijah or Jeremiah or even Jesus’ cousin, John the Baptist, referring to the first question. Only one of them, Simon Bar Jonah, which means son of Jonah, said that Jesus was “the Christ, the Son of the living God,” answering the second question. Why did the others not say this? Were they allowing Simon/Peter to answer for them? They had seen what Jesus did and how He spoke, they knew, first hand of His miracles. Only Simon answered from his heart, while the others said nothing. Then Jesus changed Simon's name, He called him Peter, the rock, and titled him the rock on which His church was to be built.

Each of us needs to answer the second question in our own way. Who is Jesus to you, to me? Is Jesus just a casual friend or companion through life, or is He the most important friend we will ever have? Where Jesus stands in our life is way more important than we think. When we accept Him as Lord and Savior, we are supposed to acknowledge that He is just what we say, Lord. The definition of “Lord” in the Merriam/Webster dictionary is; “One having power and authority over others.” We understand that in order for someone to have power and authority

over us, we must allow it. It is purely voluntary and we do have the ability and the right to reject anyone's power over us. So, I will ask the question again; who do you say that He is?

Is Jesus someone we call out to when we need help? Is He someone we think about every now and then? Is He someone we pray to every Sunday when we go to church? If, and this is a big if, Jesus is our Lord and Savior, shouldn't we have a very special relationship with Him, a relationship where we have Him in our hearts and thoughts all the time? Now I know that our lives are complicated and it is impossible to put all of our attention on one thought, but Jesus should influence what we do and what we think more often than not.

There are other questions that we need to consider when we think about where Jesus stands on our list of priorities. Once we have solved the problem of who Jesus is to us, we need to consider who or what we are to Him. When we consider Jesus, we also need to remember God and the Holy Spirit as well since they are all one. Who do we say we are when it comes to not only the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but to those who matter in our lives? The New Testament scripture this morning from Romans reminds us that we all have different roles or talents that have been gifted to us by God. We are told that we should discover those God given talents and use them to God's glory. The trick here is to figure out if we are following God's calling or our own.

There are those of us who seem to know early on what their calling is and jump right in and live their lives doing exactly what they are supposed to do. Then there are those of us who jump from one thing to another, never seeming to find satisfaction or meaning in what they choose as their occupation. I can tell you that sometimes it takes a long time to find that special thing that drives you into what God wants. I think that I have had jobs in more categories than most people. I have gone from being an auto mechanic, machinist, farm hand, musician, mail carrier and more. I never was able to discover the one thing that would I could settle down and be happy with. It wasn't until I retired from the Postal Service that I found my calling.

I remember when I was 17 or 18, the minister of my church, Rev. Lawrence Jaffa tried to convince me that I should go to seminary. He and my grandmother began a campaign to try and get me to go. Rev. Jaffa was a teacher at Harvard Divinity and said he could help me get in. He thought that I had what it took to be a minister. I thought otherwise. I was 17 and knew it all. Looking back, I think God was on my side. I was not ready at 17. God spent the next 45 years preparing me to do what Rev. Jaffa thought I should do. I do not regret those years in between since they were obviously my training time. When my call finally came, I was ready and here I am. Now, it did take God some work to get me to understand and finally give

in but I thank Him for not giving up on me.

One of the most often quoted and deeply treasured New Testament Bible verses is the meditation scripture this morning, Romans 8:28; “We know that in everything God works for good with those who love Him, for those who are called according to His purpose.” As we live our lives, we will have times when we feel spiritually adrift, going along just to get along. We are going through the motions of living but we have this feeling that there has to be something more. This is the time to shut up and listen to the Holy Spirit, find out what God wants not what we want. It is my opinion that what God wants for us is usually what we want **IF** we stop and think about it. I do realize that many times, what I wanted was probably not the best thing for me and it took a good kick in the butt to get my attention.

God is acting in every circumstance of life. His will and purpose control everything in His eternal plan. Those who love God and are called according to His purpose can know that not one thing in this life escapes Him. When we belong to Jesus, nothing can happen to us outside God’s plan for our good. God is continuously working in the hearts and lives of people who love Him and are called according to His purpose. The Lord is causing everything to fit together for our good and His glory. Standing on this solid truth reframes our difficulties. We can face them with confidence, trusting that every challenge is part of God’s ultimate plan to transform our old nature into what He has purposed for us to be: “And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit” (2 Corinthians 3:18)

Every Christian has a calling on his or her life. We were designed before the foundation of the world to be His workmanship, glorifying Him as we bring forth the fruit He desires. God’s specific call to service usually begins with a burden for a particular need that relates to the kingdom of God. Some are called to the political arena or to end human trafficking. Others are called to be pastors, teachers, worship leaders, Bible translators, or to a host of other avenues that honor the Lord. Each one utilizes the gifts the Spirit has given. Whatever it is that God has called us to do we should do with God's glory in mind. Answer this question honestly and have no doubt God is working in your life; Who do you say that you are in God's plan. Praise Be to God. Amen.

Prayers of the People- God you have given each of us many gifts, but sometimes we cannot recognize what gift we have to share, so we hide it under a bushel. God you remind us that all gifts are needed, but sometimes we let ourselves be convinced that some gifts are more special than others. God you call us to work, to live, to love together as parts of one body, but sometimes we decide that

membership in the body is limited by our understandings. God, for the times we have ignored or mislabeled Your gifts, for those times we have cut another off from the body, We offer words of repentance, we ask for forgiveness and grace. God is the giver of many gifts. God is the Creator of the one body. God is slow to anger and quick to forgive. God helps us to share and honor the gifts of all, God helps us to heal the wounds and reunite the body. We are forgiven, loved, and accepted. Thanks be to God! Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Closing Hymn- 631- I'd Rather Have Jesus

Benediction- Go now and follow Jesus in the way of the cross. Rejoice in hope, hold fast to what is good, persevere in prayer. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. As far as is possible, live peaceably with all. And may God hear your cries and deliver you; May Christ Jesus repay you with fullness of life; And may the Holy Spirit be with you always, nourishing you in love and hope. We go in peace to love and serve the Lord, In the name of Christ. Amen.