

BUT,,, WHO DO YOU SAY,,, I AM?

WHILE DOING RESEARCH ON THIS WEEKS HOMILY,,, I READ A STORY ABOUT A PASTOR,,, WHO HAD A MAN WALK INTO HIS PARISH OFFICE ONE DAY.

HE NEVER SAW THIS MAN BEFORE. HE HANDED THE PASTOR A PIECE OF PAPER,,, WITH A MESSAGE SCRIBBLED ON IT AND HE TOLD THE PASTOR THAT:

HE WAS THE MESSIAH!

AND THAT HE NEEDED TO COME TO THE LOCAL MALL,,, ON SATURDAY,,, AT 4 PM,,,

BECAUSE JESUS WAS COMING BACK,,, AT THAT TIME,,, AND,,, AT THAT PLACE.

THE PASTOR'S 1ST THOUGHT,,, WAS;

I'M NOT SURE JESUS GOES TO THE MALL MUCH,,, THE PASTOR SAID NOTHING,,, AND THE MAN LEFT,,, WITHOUT A WORD,,, NEVER TO BE SEEN AGAIN!

IN THE CITY OF JERUSALEM,,, PSYCHIATRISTS SAY THAT THIS IS A FREQUENT OCCURRENCE,,, AND IT HAPPENS ON A WEEKLY BASIS. SOMEONE,,, USUALLY A VISITOR TO THE AREA,,, WILL COME FORWARD,,, CLAIMING TO BE THE MESSIAH!

IN JESUS' DAY,,, THERE WERE MANY FALSE MESSIAH'S FOR EXAMPLE;

ONE MAN,,, TOOK THE PEOPLE OUT,,, TO THE JORDAN RIVER,,, PROMISING TO SPLIT IT IN TWO,,, WELL,,, IT DIDN'T HAPPEN!

AND AN EGYPTIAN MAN,,, CLIMBED UP A MOUNTAIN CLAIMING THAT HE WOULD FLY OFF,,, FROM IT,,, WELL,,, HE DIDN'T AND HE'S DEAD!

EACH OF THEM,,, AND MANY,,, MANY MORE,,, OFFERED PROMISES,,, THAT THEY COULDN'T FULFILL.

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,,, THERE COMES A TIME IN ALL OF OUR LIVES,,, WHEN WE HAVE TO ANSWER THE QUESTION:

WHO DO YOU SAY,, THAT JESUS IS!

THIS WEEK,, JESUS BRINGS THAT IMPORTANT QUESTION BEFORE US!

JESUS HAD BEEN MINISTERING TO THE CROWDS,, HEALING THE SICK,, CASTING OUT DEMONS,, AND CHALLENGING THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS. OUT OF THE 1,000'S,, WHO HEARD AND WATCHED JESUS:

ONLY 12 BELIEVED & STOOD FAITHFULLY WITH HIM!

JUST ABOUT EVERYONE HAD A VIEW ABOUT JESUS.

- (*) SOME HATED HIM,,
- (*) SOME ADMIRED HIM,,
- (*) SOME SAID HE WAS FROM GOD,,
- (*) OTHERS SAID HE WAS A DEMON!

THEN JESUS ASKED HIS DISCIPLES THIS QUESTION:

WHO DO PEOPLE SAY,, THAT I AM?

THEY ANSWERED;

- (*) SOME SAY; JOHN THE BAPTIST,,
- (*) OTHERS SAY; ELIJAH,,
- (*) YET OTHERS,, SAY; ONE OF THE PROPHETS.

THEN JESUS GOT PERSONAL WITH THEM AND ASKED;

BUT,, WHO DO YOU SAY,, THAT I AM?

BROTHERS & SISTERS,, THAT'S THE IMPORTANT QUESTION TO US,, 2000 YEARS LATER.

BECAUSE OF CHRIST'S DEEP LOVE AND ETERNAL CONCERN FOR US,, HE LOOKS AT US,, JUST AS HE DID HIS DISCIPLES,, AS JESUS ASKS US:

WHO DO YOU SAY,, I AM AND WHAT DO I MEAN TO YOU?

PETER SAID;

YOU ARE THE CHRIST,, MEANING THE MESSIAH!

JESUS SAID TO PETER:

YOU ARE CORRECT,, IN FACT,, YOU ARE BLESSED,, BECAUSE THE FATHER IN HEAVEN,, HAS REVEALED THIS TO YOU!

THIS IS AN AWESOME MOMENT IN TIME,, BECAUSE THE TWO NATURES OF CHRIST,, ARE REVEALED BY WHAT JESUS SAID.

THE HUMANITY OF JESUS,,, IS WITNESSED,,, AS HE SPEAKS A BLESSING,,, FROM THE FATHER,,, AND JESUS' DIVINITY IS AFFIRMED,,, BY PETER'S BOLD DECLARATION *WHEN HE SAID; YOU ARE THE CHRIST! THE WORD OF GOD,,, THAT WAS GOD,,, AND BECAME FLESH. THE SON OF GOD,,, THAT LAID ASIDE HIS GLORY AND DWELT AMONG US,,,* BEGAN TO TEACH HIS DISCIPLES,,, THAT THE "*SON OF MAN*" MUST SUFFER,,, BE REJECTED BY THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS,,, BE KILLED,,, THEN RESURRECTED AFTER THREE DAYS. JESUS,,, THE SUFFERING MESSIAH!

BUT THERE WAS A PROBLEM,,, PETER,,, WAS STILL LOCKED IN THE MINDSET OF THE JEWISH IDEA,,,

- (*) *THAT THE MESSIAH SHOULD BE A DELIVERER,,, WHO WOULD KICK THE ROMAN'S OUT OF THE COUNTRY,,,*
- (*) *A MESSIAH,,, WHO WOULD INSPIRE THE PEOPLE TO A GREATER GLORY,,, A KING,,, THAT WOULD RESTORE ISRAEL,,, AND THE LAND,,, AS A NATION,,,*
- (*) *A PRIEST,,, WHO WOULD LEAD THEM TO GOD AND WHO WOULD RULE WITH JUSTICE AND MERCY.*

A SUFFERING MESSIAH,,, WAS NOT WHO THE PEOPLE WERE LOOKING FOR!

PETER WAS LOOKING FOR A POLITICAL SAVIOR,,, WHO TOOK NO PRISONERS! HE DIDN'T WANT A MESSIAH,,, WHO WOULD BECOME A PRISONER!

ONE MAJOR SOCIETAL PROBLEM THAT WE HAVE TODAY,,, IS; *KNOWING WHO SOMEONE IS,,, AND WHAT THEY MEAN TO US!*

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,,, WE AS HUMAN BEINGS,,, PLACE EXPECTATIONS ON PEOPLE.

WE PLACE ON THEM,,, OUR WISHES,,, OUR DESIRES,,, THAT THEY HAVE TO LIVE UP TO!

WE TEND TO SEE OTHERS,,, THE WAY WE WANT TO SEE THEM,,, NOT FOR WHO THEY REALLY ARE!

THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED TO PETER!

WHO JESUS WAS,,, AND WHAT PETER WANTED JESUS TO BE,,, WERE COMPLETELY DIFFERENT.

SOMETIMES,,, WE'RE DISAPPOINTED,,, BECAUSE THE JESUS WHO WE WANT AND WHO WE EXPECT,,, DOESN'T ARRIVE,,, OR,,, DOESN'T ANSWER OUR PRAYERS,,, THE WAY WE THINK HE SHOULD!

SO,,, THE JESUS,,, WHO IS FULL OF GRACE,,, MERCY AND PEACE,,, WHO KNOWS WHAT'S BEST FOR US,,, SOMETIMES GETS PUSHED AWAY BY US,,, BECAUSE HE DIDN'T DO IT,,, OUR WAY!

PETER HAD THE NERVE,,, TO TAKE JESUS,,, BY THE ARM,,, LEADING HIM AWAY FROM THE OTHER DISCIPLES,,, TO REBUKE (SCOLD) HIM,,, FOR TELLING THEM ABOUT HIS MISSION OF SUFFERING.

BUT JESUS TURNED HIS BACK,,, AWAY FROM PETER,,, FACING THE OTHER DISCIPLES,,, AND WHILE LOOKING AT THEM,,, JESUS SCOLDED PETER,,, SAYING; *GET BEHIND ME SATAN,,, YOU ARE THINKING NOT AS GOD DOES,,, BUT,,, AS HUMANS DO.*

(IN OTHER WORDS,,, AS AN UNBELIEVER)

FOR YEARS,,, WE'VE REPEATED **THE PROFESSION OF FAITH** TOGETHER,,, AND IT'S THE BASIC FOUNDATION OF OUR FAITH,,, IN THE TRINITY AND THE FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST,,, AND WHAT GOD'S DONE FOR US.

OVER THESE YEARS,,, YOU'VE HEARD THE CLERGY SAY,,, MANY,,, TIMES;

THAT JESUS,,, HAS PAID THE PENALTY FOR YOUR SINS AND; THAT THE FATHER HAS SAID:

I WILL FORGIVE THEIR WICKEDNESS AND WILL REMEMBER THIE SINS NO MORE. (HEBREW'S 8:12)

GOD DOES THIS,,, IF YOU'VE CONFESSED YOUR SINS,,, WITH A HUMBLE,,, AND CONTRITE HEART AND HAVE RECEIVED HIS GRACE,,, LOVE AND FORGIVENESS INTO YOUR HEART BY FAITH. AS A RESULT,,, YOU'VE BE COME THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST.

SOMETIMES,,, AS I LOOK INTO YOUR FACES,,, I DON'T SEE "***THE JOY OF THE LORD***",,, OR,,, I HEAR SOME SAY; "***I DON'T GET IT!***" AND IT MAKES ME THINK DEEPLY ABOUT THAT! THEN I REALIZE WHAT JESUS MIGHT HAVE BEEN THINKING! SOMETIMES:

WE'RE THINKING LIKE HUMANS AND NOT LIKE GOD!

HEY,,, IT'S NOT ALL BAD,,, WE'RE HUMANS,,, JUST LIKE PETER.

THERE ARE SEVERAL REASON FOR WHY WE THINK THIS WAY. PERHAPS;

- (*) YOU'RE LISTENING TO THE FATHER OF LIES,,, THE GREAT DECEIVER,,, SATAN AND HIS DEMONS,,, OR,,,
- (*) YOU'RE LISTENING TO ALL OF THE SELF-TALK GOING ON IN YOUR HEAD,,, THAT BREAK YOU DOWN,,, LIKE; THE SINFUL EMOTIONS OF BITTERNESS,,, UNFORGIVENESAS,,, RESENTMENT,,, STORED UP ANGER,,, PREOCCUPATION WITH THE THINGS OF THE MODERN WORLD,,, OR,,,
- (*) THE DESIRE TO BE IN CONTROL OF YOUR LIFE. ANY OR ALL OF THESE THINGS CAN HINDER YOUR LOVING RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS.

THE STATEMENT OF JESUS,,, BRINGS FREEDOM TO US WHEN HE SAID;

"IF ANY MAN WOULD COME AFTER ME,,, LET HIM DENY HIMSELF AND TAKE UP HIS CROSS AND FOLLOW ME. FOR WHOEVER WOULD SAVE HIS LIFE,,, WILL LOSE IT,,, AND WHOEVER LOSES HIS LIFE,,, FOR MY SAKE,,, AND THE GOSPEL,,, WILL SAVE IT!"

ST CLEMENT WROTE;

"TO LOVE GOD AND THE WORLD EQUALLY,,, IS TO LOVE NEITHER GOD,,, NOR THE WORLD!"

TO FOLLOW THE LORD,,, WE CAN NOT,,, BE DOUBLE MINDED. WE MUST PLACE OUR HEARTS AFFECTION,,, FIRMLY ON CHRIST AND HIM ALONE!

IT MIGHT SEEM LIKE A HARD SAYING,,, TO PICK UP OUR CROSS AND DIE TO SELF.

BUT,, THE ONE WHO ASKS US TO DO THAT,, IS ALSO THE ONE WHO ASKS US,, TO CAST ALL OUR BURDENS ON HIM!

HOW FREEING IT IS,, TO FINALLY LET GO,, AND TRUST JESUS,, WITH OUR LIVES. GIVE HIM THOSE EMOTIONAL SINS AND BURDENS,, THAT YOU'VE BEEN CARRYING AROUND THESE MANY YEARS,, AND LEAVE THEM AT JESUS' FEET.

DYING TO SELF,, IS:

(*) SUBMITTING TO JESUS,, ALL THE UNHEALTHY ATTACHMENTS,, TO THE PLEASURES OF THE WORLD,, THAT WE'VE PICKED UP,, DURING OUR LIVES,, AND IT'S,,

(*) SUBMITTING,, THE NEGLECT OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH,, AND LIFE IN THE KINGDOM TO COME.

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,, JESUS SET ASIDE HIS GLORY,, *TO BECOME ONE LIKE US,, SO THAT WE MIGHT BECOME LIKE HIM.* WHEN HE ASKS US TO SET ASIDE OUR LIFE OF PRIDE,, EGO AND CONTROL ISSUES,, SO THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT CAN WORK IN OUR LIFE,, TO CONFORM US,, INTO THE IMAGE OF CHRIST,, AS NEW CREATIONS,, IN HIS KINGDOM. IT'S NOT A BURDENSOME TASK,, BECAUSE JESUS'S LOVE AND GRACE ARE GIVEN TO EACH OF US,, TO CARRY OUT HIS SANCTIFYING WORK,, WITHIN US.

ST. AUGUSTINE WROTE;

THE VERY THING HE (JESUS) REQUIRES,, MAY BE ACCOMPLISHED. FOR WHATEVER SEEMS TO BE HARD,, IN WHAT IS REQUIRED,, HIS LOVE MAKES EASY".

BEARING THE CROSS OF CHRIST ISN'T SUFFERING UNDER CIRCUMSTANCES LIKE,, ILLNESS,, A BAD JOB,, OR EVEN YOUR MOTHER IN LAW,, IT'S DENYING WHAT WE WANT,, ALL THE TIME,, IT'S SUBMITTING TO GOD AND RESISTING THE TEMPTATIONS OF THE EVIL ONE.

IT DOESN'T MEAN DEPRIVING YOU OF HAPPINESS.

**RATHER,,, IT MEANS TO FIND TRUE FULFILLMENT,,,
JOY,,, AND PURPOSE IN LIFE,,, AS GOD INTENDED FOR
YOU,,, AS YOU FIND IN CHRIST,,, THE PERSON HE
CREATED YOU TO BE,,, WHILE YOU PLACE YOUR LIFE
FIRMLY IN JESUS' HANDS!**

(PROVERBS 3: 5,6) SAYS:

***TRUST IN THE LORD,,, WITH ALL YOUR HEART AND
LEAN NOT,,, ON YOUR OWN UNDERSTANDING. IN ALL
YOUR WAYS,,, ACKNOWLEDGE HIM,,, AND HE WILL
MAKE YOUR PATH STRAIGHT”.***

***THE NAME OF THE FATHER AND THE SON AND THE HOLY SPIRIT
+++ AMEN+++***

(1,587) WDS,,, 7 PGS