

# Bear Witness: Know

## *But Who Do You Say That I Am?*

Imagine you're one of the disciples walking north of Galilee with Jesus when he asks you what the word on the street is about Him. A fairly simple answer to rattle off - people say this or that so it's easy to give the feedback. But then, he stops talking about others and intentionally asks you a question, "but who do you say that I am?" How would you answer Him at the foot of Mount Herman on the walk into town?

As we learn to engage in intentional questions about God and others and bear witness to the gospel, we must also answer this underlying question that the Lord asked Peter. How we answer this foundational question affects our relationship with Him and those around us. A.W. Tozer has said, "What I believe about God is the most important thing about me." Belief affects our behavior - so what do you believe about who God is?

## Start with Scripture (Observe):

Read Matthew 16:13-16. How did Peter answer the personally direct question? Peter is not the only one to claim that Jesus is the living God. Read David's questions in 1 Samuel 17:24-26. Both Peter and David were faced with a decision - to believe what the culture was saying about God - or to believe what God says about who He is. David claimed that He was the living God. But how was he so sure?

Read 1 Samuel 17:31-37. Specifically in verse 37 David proclaims how he knows the Lord can save him. David had experienced God's protection and deliverance in times of trouble on a regular basis as a shepherd. What seemed like just a meaningless job was really his training ground for what the Lord had in store for him next. He learned to trust God through the trials. He experienced God personally and because of who He believed God to be, he was able to take courage in the midst of a battle.

## Personal Reflections (Interpret):

He is a living God - active, present, able. More powerful than the law-making Pharisees in Peter's day and more powerful than the warrior Goliath. Do you have an intimacy with the Almighty that you, too, could claim that He is the living God in the midst of a battle? How is that evident in your life?

When the voices of culture are loud and causing us confusion and fear, how do we discern truth and know wisdom that comes from our living God? Read Proverbs 2:1-6. Do you seek Him and His word like a hidden treasure? If not, what can you do to cultivate that in your own life to stay battle-ready?

## Gospel Approach (Application):

Let's go back to Matthew 16. Just after Peter confessed his personal belief in who God was, his view of God was challenged. Read Matthew 16:21-23. Jesus said he was going to purposely go to Jerusalem to suffer many things. How did Peter respond to that plan? How did Jesus respond to Peter?

Wait. In Matthew 16: 17-18, the Lord calls Peter blessed and says that he is a rock that will help build the Lord's church. Just a few verses later he calls Peter, Satan, because Peter is a hindrance to his mission. How can poor Peter be both a rock and a hindrance to the church?

The Lord uses broken vessels to do His work. It's not that we are called to be perfect - we are called to trust the one whose Word and character are perfect. We need to learn the person of Jesus, the attributes of God, not worry about the method or the plan.

The Greek word for church is "called out ones". Like Peter, we are called to join the Lord in the work He is doing all around us. It may not be our vision or our plan, but we are called to trust Him, even if it takes us out of our comfort and includes suffering.

Let's finish by going back to David one more time. Read 1 Samuel 17:45-47. What did David say was his purpose for fighting the Philistine? Fame? To make his brothers mad? No, to proclaim the name of God to a lost and dying world. Like David, we are to bear witness to the gospel so others may know Him. He proclaimed that the "battle was the Lord's".

On Sunday, Eugene reminded us from Revelation that we are on the winning team - the final battle has been won. He challenged us to defeat the lies of Satan with the truth of our testimony to what the Lord has done. Again, we are to bear witness to who God is in the midst of confusion and fear - just like David did.

Now, how would you answer the question, "but who do you say that I am"? Learn to experience God in the trials and through His word so you, too, can be battle-ready and proclaim what you know to be true - that "He is the Christ, the Son of the Living God".