

Grace Lutheran Community, 27 August 2023:

Thirteenth Sunday After Pentecost

The sermon text for today is based on

Matthew 16:13-20

Today we have seen and met many characters from books as the year 1 students shared some of these for their book week celebrations.

We know of many characters from the bible also and perhaps we might wonder what it would have been like to meet them. To sit and chat or have a meal and hear their stories face to face.

When it comes to Jesus who do you say He is in your life?

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

Just like the disciples we too can easily say some things about Jesus that we have heard from others or even a few things we think He is yet we may not have really stopped to think who Jesus really is in our own life. We might say well some say Jesus is this or we might even say in the bible it says that Jesus did these things. But as we read this text Jesus asks us.

"But what about you?" Jesus asked. "Who do you say I am?"

Jesus asks you this today. Who do you say I am? Do you say Jesus is my life, my hope, my peace and my strength? Do you say Jesus is my

Lord and the one who has saved me from sin, death and the power of the devil, in Him I have eternal life, and I have forgiveness of sin?

Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." Then he ordered his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

Don't tell anyone rather go and live the truth in Jesus as He sends the disciples out into the world and as He says to us also today as He sends us out in to the harvest. Into the Lord's field we go in Jesus name not to build the church because we are telling people they should believe, they should forgive, they should love. No but rather by the way you and I live out our lives. This is the greatest testimony and witness to whom Jesus is in our life.

Who do you say I am Jesus asks? We say Jesus you are the messiah the one who came to save the lost, including me and to set me free from sin and to send me out into the world as you go with me to participate in your work of witnessing to others God's love in action. When people see the love we show to each other and the good deeds that we do that have already been prepared by God for us to walk in by faith they will know we are followers of the one true Lord and saviour Jesus Christ in His name we have eternal life.

We live Jesus in the world and we know and grow in Jesus by faith. Faith that is a gift to us from God. Faith that receives the gift of

forgiveness of sins, life and salvation in Jesus name. Faith that can say Jesus you are the messiah and you are the son of the living God, but more importantly for our daily life is by faith you can say Jesus you are my lord and saviour and in your name I am yours.

What peace we have knowing Jesus not by way of just thinking but rather knowing by faith. And as we respond by faith to the love of God poured out through His only Son Jesus in us we walk in the good works and actions and words that have been prepared for us to walk in. God builds His church with Jesus the head through our simple but faithful deeds day by day as God's love is lived and shared with others in our community and in the world.

Know that you are made Holy by the very word of God and you are called to participate in the work Jesus continues to do in the world and He is with you until the very end of the age. Amen