The Answer That Will Change Your Life

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Year A, Thirteenth Pentecost (Proper 16)
Matthew 16:13-20
Calvary Episcopal Church, Flemington, NJ

“Who do people say the Son of Man is?” This is the question that Jesus asks the disciples out of the blue. It is a question that is loaded with meaning. The Son of Man is the anointed one who would have all power and authority to deliver Israel from all its troubles. The disciples respond to Jesus by saying that some people say that the Son of Man is John the Baptist. Others say he’s Elijah or Jeremiah or one of the other prophets. More importantly, Jesus wants to know what *the disciples* think. Jesus asks them point blank, “Who do you say that I am?” They have been following Jesus for a while and have seen him in action, so it’s an appropriate question to ask.

Just then, Simon answers him, and without hesitation, says, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” Simon’s answer is unique. He had seen Jesus at work. He saw the blind receive sight, the deaf hear, the lame walk, the dead raised, and the sick cleansed. He witnessed the poor receive the good news of salvation and heard Jesus teach with authority. After witnessing these things, through faith, he concluded that Jesus was more than a rabbi.

He was God’s Son. The very face of God.

This answer would be life changing. Simon would get a new name, Peter, which means “rock.” And his confession would be the foundation for the church, the movement that Jesus started.

Just like in Jesus’s day, there are many answers today to the question “Who is Jesus?” Some say that Jesus is a healer, or a teacher, or a sage. Some say he is a prophet. Others say he was a misunderstood or even a reluctant messiah. Others even ask the question, “Did Jesus really exist?” Jesus is truly a figure that captivates. But there is only one answer that can change your life. It’s an answer passed down by the church. It’s an answer saints and martyrs died for. It’s an answer that serves as the foundation of the church since Peter’s confession. Jesus is more than just a good teacher or a prophet.

Jesus is the Son of the living God. He is the very face of God.

Jesus is God who became flesh to relate to us so we could relate to him. Through Jesus, God offers an invitation into a relationship that transforms our lives. The more we pattern our lives after Jesus, the more we will be like God. Understanding this answer, that Jesus is the Son of God, only comes through faith. And by faith, I don’t mean just wishful thinking. By faith, I mean trust; trust in God, trust in Jesus and in who he says he is.

Do you have this faith? Do you have this trust? If not, pray for it. Seek it. Wait for it. Do this by coming to church, studying Scripture, and being around others who believe that Jesus is God's Son. Having this faith with turn Christianity into something life changing. Amen.