

# Questions God Asks Us

## Chapter 7: Who do you say that I am?



### Welcome

- What question or insight from the last gathering have you continued to think about or wonder about (if any)? Have the readings or discussion changed how you connect with God or with others in any way?

### Opening Question

- Have you ever asked someone for their autograph or been in the same location with someone famous? Who is someone famous that you'd like to meet?
- What is something that has helped you to get to know a co-worker or friend?

### Responsive Reading

One: We gather in the name of Jesus as we seek to put on his mind, share his heart, and extend his hands in loving service. If there is any encouragement in Christ, any sharing in his Spirit...

All: *Make his joy complete by having the same love and living in full accord with one another.*

One: Jesus, remind us that you are already present with us in this gathering. May we be signs of your presence for one another.

All: *Amen.*

### Bible Text

#### Read Mark 8: 27-33

<sup>27</sup> Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi, and on the way he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" <sup>28</sup> And they answered him, "John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets." <sup>29</sup> He asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Messiah." <sup>30</sup> And he sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him.

<sup>31</sup> Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes and be killed and after three days rise again. <sup>32</sup> He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. <sup>33</sup> But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."

## Questions

1. What did you notice in the Bible reading or in the chapter? What spoke to you or surprised you? What resonated with you? What was a new idea?

*Allow for a few minutes of silence as you gather your thoughts.*

2. How is knowing someone directly different from knowing what others say about them?
3. How has your understanding of Jesus changed across your lifetime? What has brought about those changes?
4. What is the most interesting thing you have learned about Jesus recently? How has this recent learning affected your life and relationships?
5. Peter says that Jesus is “the Messiah,” but what do you think he meant by that? What did the disciples expect the Messiah to be and to do?
6. What are some of the other titles or words used to describe or tell us who Jesus is - along with *The Messiah*?
7. In the teaching that follows Peter’s confession, Jesus paints a picture of a humble, suffering Messiah who will be rejected and killed. Peter pulling Jesus aside to rebuke him illustrates the disciples’ struggle with this description, as it looks very different from their own expectations. Nevertheless, Peter shows us the importance of being honest with Jesus and he grows from this learning experience. In what way do you most struggle with Jesus and his message? How easy is it for you to be honest with Jesus about this?
8. Based on your experience, what would you say to someone who wants to know how they can cultivate a personal knowledge of Jesus in their own life?
9. How would you today, using your own language, respond to Jesus’ question, “Who do you say that I am?” Who do you say Jesus is? And what does that say about who you are, as a disciple?

## What’s Next?

- At the end of the small group or between gatherings, spend some time in silent reflection using “Answering God’s Question” at the end of the chapter.
- Make two columns on a piece of paper. In one column write down words you used to describe Jesus or God at an earlier time in life. In the other column write down words that describe your understanding of Jesus or God now. How does this shift in understanding change your prayer life or your relationship with Jesus?
- Think of one word that resonates with you about the nature of Jesus or describes something about Jesus for you. How does Jesus want you to live out that word in your

own life this week? Spend some time talking to Jesus about this or in silent prayer repeating this word as a focus for your prayer time.

- How do we develop a personal relationship with someone we can neither see face to face nor community with directly? Does talking to God ever feel like reaching into the fog and wondering if you will ever touch anyone? Try praying in a new way and see what you discover. For example:
  - Imagine Jesus sitting across from you and engage in a conversation, as with a friend.
  - Pray in a different physical position (with your palms lifted up or your arms reaching out or kneeling).
  - Go to a different location for prayer (park, prayer garden at Incarnation, grocery store parking lot).
  - Try a walking prayer and pray for what you notice along the way as you also lift your own concerns in prayer.
  - Try praying over the phone with a friend.

This might feel awkward at first, so give it a try more than once. Imagine your own new way to pray and find a way that deepens your relationship with Jesus.

**Closing Prayer** - *Share the date, location and reading for the next gathering.*

Lord Jesus, we call you Savior, Messiah, Teacher and Healer. You are all these things and more! Continue to open our minds and spirits to a deeper understanding and experience of who you are and what you are doing in this world. Help us to accept your invitation to come and follow you each day. Amen.

One: God is with you no matter what. Go, now, in God's presence and love to be the hands, heart and hopes of Christ for our world. Amen.

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*This outline is to be used alongside Questions God Asks Us by Trevor Hudson. Some of the questions and reflection prompts questions listed here also come from Questions God Asks Us.*

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