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Beverly E.C.C., Chicago, IL

**“WHO DOES HE SAY YOU ARE?”**

Luke 8:19-21

? *Who does Jesus say you are?*

{Mt 16:13-15; Mk 8:27-29; Lk 9:18-20} We usually come at this from the opposite direction: *“Who do you say Jesus is?”* And with good reason: Jesus asked his disciples, **“Who do the crowds say I am?”** and followed that up with, **“What about you? Who do you say I am?”**

Our answer reveals our heart and mind toward Jesus. Not only so, it can reinforce our convictions for or against him. What is more, in some cases speaking the words aloud actually activates faith or doubt, surrender or rejection, love or apathy for the Messiah.

*“Who do you say Jesus is?”* Let us answer with care!

Today we are considering another question: *Who does Jesus say you are?* Surely, what the Son of God sees in us is at least as important as what we see in him.

*Who does Jesus say you are?*

Part of the answer is the same for everyone.

✎ {Ge 1:27; Jn 1:3} The Lord says we are all bearers of his image. In the beginning **“God created human beings in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.”** The Son is co-Creator with the Father, for **“Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made,”** including us.

✎ {Jn 3:16; Ro 5:8} And the Lord says we are all objects of his love. **“For God so loved the world”** (that is, humankind) **“that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”** And **“God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”**

★ Still, we are not interchangeable. Each of us has unique DNA (identical twins included). Each has his or her own blend of personality traits, strengths, and frailties. Each experiences similar events, but the details vary. Each has a particular perspective. Each thinks diverse thoughts and makes diverse choices. Each relates in somewhat different ways to the Living God. Consequently, Jesus says different things about different people.

○ {Lk 6:47-49} In the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Builders in Luke chapter 6, Jesus says that people who come to him and hear his words and put them into practice **“are like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation of rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built.”**

**“But,”** he says, **“those who hear my words and do not put them into practice are like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete.”**

The Savior says different things about different people, as they respond differently to his word.

○ {Lk 7:44-48} In Luke chapter 7, Jesus says about a sinful woman who has approached him at a dinner party: **“she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair... [she] has not stopped kissing my feet... she has poured perfume on my feet... her many sins have been forgiven – as her great love has shown.”**

But to his inhospitable host, a Pharisee named Simon, Jesus says: **“You did not give me any water for my feet... You did not give me a kiss.... You did not put oil on my head.... whoever has been forgiven little loves little.”**

The Savior says different things about different people as they demonstrate love to different degrees.

○ {Lk 8:5-15} In the Parable of the Sower in chapter 8 Jesus describes a range of “heart conditions.” People with hard hearts are impervious to the word of God. It cannot penetrate to the soul, and they are not saved.

People with shallow hearts are too superficial for the word. It cannot put down deep roots, and they do not endure to receive salvation in the end.

People with thorny hearts are too divided for the word. It cannot find room enough to grow, and they do not bear the fruit of salvation.

People with noble hearts are a good fit for the word. It penetrates their soul, puts down deep roots, grows to its full size, and yields **“a crop, a hundred times more than was sown.”**

The Savior says different things about different people, as they bear fruit (or not).

■ That brings us to Luke 8:19-21:

**Now Jesus’ mother and brothers came to see him, but they were not able to get near him because of the crowd. Someone told him, “Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to see you.”**

**He replied, “My mother and brothers are those who hear God’s word and put it into practice.”**

What we see here is Christ’s ultimate, definitive, supreme differentiation between people.

○ {Ps 68:6} To be a member of a good natural family is a great blessing. Being called *son* or *daughter* by honorable parents, being called *sister* or *brother* by decent siblings, is a wonderful gift from **“God who sets the lonely in families.”**

○ {Eph 2:19; Jn 1:12-13; Ro 8:17; Gal 4:5} Yet to have a place in the supernatural **“household of God,” “to become [his] children ... born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God,”** to be **“heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ”** through **“adoption to sonship”** – this is a greater blessing. Being called *daughter* or *son* by God the Father, and *brother* or *sister* by God the Son is the superlative gift.

We have already noted that all humanity is created in the divine image. In that general sense, each and every human being is a child of our heavenly Father.

However, Jesus never says all females are spiritual daughters of God. He never says all males

are spiritual sons of God. Just the opposite: the Lord Jesus teaches that some people are, but some are not.

? Who does Jesus say you are? *Does he call you “brother” or “sister”?*

We don’t have to guess about this. Those who belong to the family of God share two things in common.

✪ First, they “**hear God’s word.**”

{Gal 5:22-23; Ro 8:29} Their hearts are soft, so the message of the kingdom penetrates to their soul. Their hearts are deep, so it becomes firmly anchored. Their hearts are undivided, so it does not lose ground to competing loyalties. And their hearts are productive, so it yields a crop of “**love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control**” and the like. The word “[conforms]” them “**to the image of [God’s] Son**” Jesus in their heart and mind.

Kade, you have literally heard the word. For the past two years you have sat under my teaching in Confirmation class. You have acquired a great deal of information and valuable skills for interpreting Scripture.

But as we learned from Luke 8:1-15 it is possible to hear the word with perfect physical clarity – and yet to be stone deaf to it in your spirit. My prayer for you (and each one here) is to “**hear God’s word**” and so be called a child of God by Jesus.

✪ Second, members of God’s family “**put [the word] into practice**”: they don’t merely hear it, understand it, and agree with it, they do what it says.

{2 Ti 3:16-17; Jas 1:22, 25} “**All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that all**

**God’s people may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.**” And so James warns us: “**Do not merely listen to the [message], and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says,**” for those who “**put it into practice**” “**will be blessed in what they do.**”

Kade, in a few minutes you will have the opportunity to confess personal faith by answering three questions:

1) “**Do you confess personal faith in Jesus Christ and desire, with God’s help, to be his disciple?**”

2) “**Do you believe with the Church of Jesus Christ that the Bible, the Old and New Testaments, is the word of God, telling the story of God and God’s people in the past and guiding them today?**”

And 3) “**As you continue in your life, do you intend to keep worshipping in Christ’s church, listening to his word, and responding to his call, according to your faith?**”

These questions are all about putting what you have heard into practice. My prayer for you (and each one here) is to be a doer of the word and so be called a child of God by Jesus.

“**Someone told [Jesus], ‘Your [biological] mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to see you.’ He replied, ‘My mother and brothers are those who hear God’s word and put it into practice.’**”

? *Does Jesus call you his brother, or his sister?*  
{Mt 1:16; Jn 10:30} Who does the Messiah, the Christ, he who is one with the Father, say you are?