

Confessing The King – Mark 8: 22-30

Christian or otherwise, all of us live lives influenced by Jesus Christ. Christmas is a celebration of his birth, New Year a celebration of Anno Domini (year of our Lord), Easter of his death and resurrection. In the words of H.G. Wells '*Jesus Christ is easily the most dominant figure in all history*'.

Q. Do you agree with this comment? In what ways does Jesus still affect culture today?

In this passage of scripture Jesus asks 3 questions...

- 1) Do you see anything?
- 2) Who do people say that I am?
- 3) Who do you say that I am?

1) Do you see anything? Verse 23

This is one of the strangest of Jesus' miracles, not because he opted to spit on the blind man's eyes, but because the miracle was not instantaneous, unlike all the others. This was surely not for lack of power or faith, but because Jesus had a greater purpose besides simply healing a blind man. This miracle is positioned before Peter's famous confession of faith purposefully. Indeed, commentaries from across the theological spectrum agree that this miracle is, in many ways, a parable to do with faith. The events truly happened (you wouldn't document a partial miracle if you were making this up!) but they have a deeper message.

When Jesus asked the blind man if he could see anything, the reply was 'yes', he could see people, but they looked like trees walking. Essentially, the man's sight had returned to him, no longer was he in utter darkness, but also he didn't have 20:20 vision. When people first receive faith in Jesus, they can often be heard saying such things as... 'it's beginning to make sense', 'I'm seeing something new', 'I get it now', 'I just started to behave differently', 'stopped doing some things', 'began to feel peace', 'feeling much happier'.

Q. Do you remember when you first came to have faith in Jesus? Were there things that you immediately 'saw' and understood about God? What things have become clearer to you over time?

Q. What aspects of faith do you still find 'blurry' and difficult to make sense of?

2) Who do people say that I am? Verse 27

Q. What do you think the response would be if you were to go around asking your friends that question?

Q. Why is this question not egotistical but inherently loving when asked by Jesus?

Q. Why is this question much 'easier' to answer, generally, than question 3 (who do you say I am?)?

Q. Of your friends who wouldn't call themselves Christian, what opinion do you think they have of Jesus?

3) Who do you say I am? Verse 29

Peter's answer to this question, 'you are the Christ', was so much greater than any of the previous answers, for he was attributing to Jesus the greatest title, 'King of Kings' and 'the Messiah'! In Matthew Jesus says that Peter is blessed, because he could only have answered this way having received revelation from God. However, in the next passage Jesus rebukes Peter 'get behind me Satan' and later on Peter denies Jesus 3 times. It would seem that Peter has received 'sight' but that it is very blurred still.

Q. Do you agree that this is the most important question a person could ever be asked?

Q. Why is it that Peter can go from confessing the king one minute and denying him the next? In what ways might we be prone to do the same?

For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known (1 Corinthians 13:12)

One day our faith will be perfected, as we stand before Jesus and see him face to face. For now our sight is blurred, however, unlike our physical sight that deteriorates with age, which should expect our spiritual sight to get sharper and sharper. The more we become like Jesus, the more clearly we will see him, as we kill the sin in our lives and enjoy our God more.

Q. How can we sharpen our faith in Christ?

Q. How does knowing that we see in 'a mirror dimly' now an encouragement to us?

Q. What do you think it will be like, to see Jesus perfectly without any sin to obscure our view?