

## “WHO DO YOU SAY I AM?”

A few weeks ago, while writing about how we see God, I sensed the Lord asking me a question. It was the same question that He asked His disciples during the latter part of His ministry on earth. That question was, “Who do you say I am?” When Jesus first asked His disciples this, they responded with what others were saying (Mt. 16:13-14). Pressing them further, He then asked, “But what about you? Who do you say I am?” (Mt. 16:15). It was then that Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Mt. 16:16). It was then that Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven” (Mt. 16:17).

### RESPONDING FROM MY HEART—WHO ARE YOU, LORD?

As I meditated on this question and the Scripture reference, I sensed that Jesus was asking me this so that I would stop and examine what I truly believed about Him and His character. I did not struggle, as possibly some of the disciples did, with His identity as the Christ. That was settled for me a long time ago. What Jesus was asking me was more about how I “saw him,” and what was in my heart about Him and His nature (i.e., Is He loving, faithful, kind, and merciful, etc.). The past few years have been quite challenging in my Christian journey—with varying degrees of struggle and “wrestling” along the way. As a result, I knew that the Lord wanted me to answer Him from what was in my heart and not simply from what I knew in my mind. The communication that followed between us concerning this question was important. It was during this time that I found myself becoming even more honest with the Lord and I was able to declare truths about who He is. It was also during this time that I found myself relating to Him again as my “friend.”

### LORD, WHO DO YOU SAY I AM?

As important as this was, a few days later I sensed that the Lord was bringing this question up again, but in a different context. Instead of Jesus asking the question, I sensed He was inviting me to ask HIM this question—“Who do you say I am?” This caused me to really step back and ponder. Why would the Lord want me to ask Him this question? Because I need to know! He could look into my heart and see that I am still in need of more of His love, affection and worth (the “true L.A.W.”). To be honest, I am still working on this question of the Lord. I have started to ask Him and am receiving His response into my heart, but I recognize that this is going to be something I work on over time. Just as Peter responded to the original question from Jesus as a result of revelation from the Father, I too want this question and the Lord’s response to be just as revelatory and transforming!

### FINDING INTIMACY WITH GOD--TWO IMPORTANT ISSUES TO ADDRESS

As we have worked with many people over these past years, we have seen that there are really two primary issues that we all have to address. These are 1) how do we see God (“Who do you say I am?”), and 2) how do we see ourselves. This second issue is significantly resolved when we “know” at the deepest level how God sees us (“Lord, who do you say I am?”). In fact, the greatest commandment, and the one that follows, addresses these points: “Love the Lord your God with all your

heart and with all your soul and with all your mind . . . and the second is like it: Love your neighbor AS YOURSELF (emphasis mine)" (Mt. 22:37, 39). Much of the work of sanctification that occurs over the course of our walk with the Lord is our going deeper in these two areas of revelation. These are also two of the most demonically attacked areas in the lives of many believers.

#### PETER NEEDED TO KNOW—AND SO DO WE

It was probably only a relatively short time from when Peter spoke the inspired answer to Jesus' question, "Who do you say I am?" to his betrayal of Jesus the night before the crucifixion. When Jesus came to Peter on the shore of the Sea of Galilee for the purpose of restoring him, I believe it is possible and likely that Peter had that same question stirring in his own heart—"Jesus, who do YOU say I am?" Peter knew that he had betrayed "the Son of the living God." He most likely saw himself as not simply one who had betrayed, but up to that moment as having an identity as "a betrayer." In his heart he desperately needed to know how Jesus saw him and how he defined him. Through the words of Jesus during that "breakfast by the sea," He spoke into Peter's heart and Peter no longer had to question how Jesus saw or defined him. It was settled! He longs to restore us as well and settle all unresolved issues concerning His love for us and how He defines us!

#### ASK HIM THE QUESTION . . .

Over the next few writings I will share more about some of the hindrances that many of us have to knowing and walking in the love of God, and some things that might help us to move further into His heart of love for us. I will also share some stories of others who have "broken through" in these areas. In the meantime, I encourage you to begin to ask the Lord the question addressed in this writing—"Who do you say I am?" Take some time to rest before Him and allow His heart to be revealed to you. What do you REALLY believe the Lord says about you (not simply what you might know in Scripture to be true). What do YOU say about you? Do you and the Lord agree . . . disagree? We'll explore more on this in the future, and we will also take a look into the Scriptures to examine the foundational truths about this Love.

#### PLEASE PRAY WITH ME . . .

Father, I long to love You more and to know Your love for me at a much deeper level. Open my heart to see what I cannot see at this time. Remove any veil that separates me from You and the truth of Your love for me. I give You permission to show what is in me that hinders or opposes love. Lord, give me the grace to ask You the question, "How do You see me?" and also the grace to receive Your response. I welcome Your Holy Spirit to "lead me into all truth"—the truth about You and Your truth about me. In Jesus' Name, Amen

From the Father's Heart,

Jerry Basel