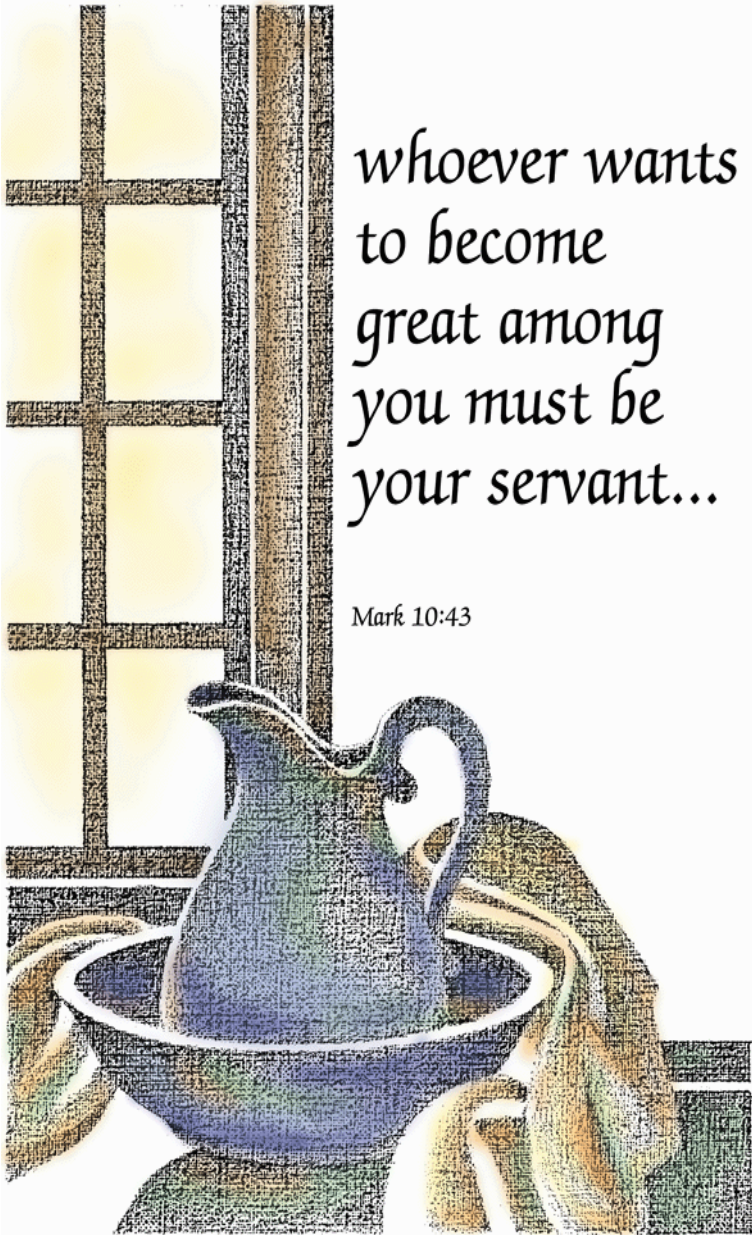


WHO IS THIS SON OF MAN?

Dr. Fred Fourie ~ Sunday, July 29, 2007



whoever wants
to become
great among
you must be
your servant...

Mark 10:43

[Mark 1:21-28](#) They went to Capernaum; and when the Sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught. They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. Just then, there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, and he cried out, "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God." But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be silent, and come out of him!" And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, "What is this? A new teaching -- with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him." At once, his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee. [Luke 9:9](#)

Herod said, "John I beheaded; but who is this about whom I hear such things?" And he tried to see him.

[John 12:34](#) The crowd answered him, "We have heard from the law that the Messiah remains forever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up?"

Who is this Son of Man?"

There was the little boy who did not want to go into the pantry alone, and he said, "Mommy, it's dark in there, and I'm scared." "It's all right, Johnny," she said, "You go in there and fetch a can of tomato soup. I need it for a recipe." He said, "But Mommy, it's dark, and I'm too scared to go in there by myself." "It's okay, Johnny," she said again. "Jesus will be in there with you. Now you go and get a can of tomato soup." Johnny went to the door and opened it slowly. When he peeked inside, it was dark, and he was scared. His hands began to tremble, but he got an idea. He said, "Jesus, if you are in there ~ would you please hand me that can of tomato soup?"

Well, little Johnny is no exception. Faith **in God and Jesus** is not a simple matter. Understanding who Jesus really is does not come easily either. Have you ever had questions about your personal faith? **Have you ever reached a period in your life that the answers that you learned in Sunday school no longer made any sense?** Most of us can remember our first questions and doubts for as long as we have known ourselves. Today, let us wrestle some more with the same question!

I am amazed to notice how my personal belief about who Jesus is underwent radical and dramatic changes. New insights replaced older ones - and I fully expect that this process will continue until the last day of my life. **The people who lived two thousand years ago saw Jesus differently than those of just, one two or three centuries later.** Each generation has its own sincere struggle to formulate its beliefs and convictions. Even in our time, Christians with a profound belief in God offer a variety of convictions and beliefs about Jesus Christ.

We just read such a **difficult to understand** story, said to have taken place in a Synagogue about 2000 years ago. In fact, **it sounds like something straight out of a spooky television's show.** **Mark tells us that Jesus and his disciples were in Capernaum.** On the Sabbath, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law. Then it happened. A man in their synagogue, possessed by an unclean spirit, suddenly cried out, **"Have you come to destroy us?"** I know who you are, the Holy One of God."

I have seen some strange things happen in church, but nothing like that. One might wonder, **"What is an unclean spirit?** What really happened? The description does not bother with detail. It does not give us a clue except telling us that, on that day, there was a lot of confusion in that synagogue. The question remains, **"Who are you really? What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth?"**

What we do know for sure is that Jesus brought out the best and the worst in people. If you were on his side, you would give your life for him. If you were not on Jesus' side, you would do much to stay to get rid of him or to stay out of his way. **On a smaller scale, we have seen it happen with other controversial people.** There have been people who have hated each of our presidents with passionate zeal whether it was John F. Kennedy or Richard Nixon or Ronald Reagan or Bill Clinton. Do you remember the passions that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. aroused in people? **There was no middle ground. People either loved him or hated him.**

Nothing has changed much in 2000 years. The people did not know what to do with Jesus. Learned people of our time have new questions and amazing conclusions. Through the centuries, the challenge remained. **What to think, believe, say and do about Jesus.**

The lukewarm response that many make to the stories about Jesus **is an indication that many still do not know what to make of this man.** If they knew Jesus as he really is, their response

would be as mixed as that of the people of Jesus' times. They would hate him and long to see him destroyed or they would be willing to follow, serve and die for him. Would Jesus be a welcome guest in your home or would you be a little unsettled? "Who does he think he is anyway? God?"

Kenneth L. Woodward writes, "Whether we like it or not, Christ's life radically changed human culture throughout the world. Before Jesus appeared on the scene, the world was ruled by the 'might makes right' theory. However, Jesus' teaching about humility and turning the other cheek redefined our views of human character, of war, of masculinity. Jesus' commitment to the poor, to women and children opened the way for civil rights and equality for women. Jesus always chose the side of the underdogs of his society. He has changed the rules for the better of many through the ages ... up to this very day. However, the revolution is not complete. There is still so much hatred, so much violence, and so much debasement of human dignity. Maybe, if you and I are comfortable about Jesus we simply do not see him as he really is. Unfortunately, many preachers in our time have a tendency to sell Jesus rather cheaply. Cheap and quick grace if you would only nod your head and reach for your pocketbook! Jesus Christ! – On sale for 95% discount! – "Get him while you can!"

That is the constant danger -- that we will remake Christ into a meek, harmless figure, sold cheap to attract the masses. Jesus taught in the synagogue in Capernaum and a man, possessed by an evil spirit, suddenly cried out, "What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are--the Holy One of God!"

For Jesus ... being Jesus ... meant choosing the hard and difficult way. It included accepting the scorn of the Scribes and Pharisees, clashing with those who changed God into a temple yard commodity, EVEN to stand before the rulers of his time, beaten, broken and crucified.

It also meant that untold millions would hear, understand, and follow him. People are still following! You and I have discovered that in the life, death, resurrection & message of this broken one of long ago we have found the way!

Who is the Jesus ~ for you?

What difference is your faith making in your life and for those around you? ...

Sun of my soul, o Savior dear, it is not night if you are near;
O may no earthborn cloud arise to hide you from your servant's eyes!

AMEN

Note: "The phrase son of man is a primarily Semitic idiom that originated in Ancient Mesopotamia, used to denote humanity or self. The phrase also appears in Judaism and Christianity".