

Small Group Guide: "Who Do You Say I Am?"

Mark 8:27-30 | Caesarea Philippi

Opening Prayer

Begin your time together by asking God to open hearts and minds to understand who Jesus truly is and what it means to follow Him.

Icebreaker

Share a time when you were asked a question you weren't prepared to answer. How did it make you feel? What did you do?

Key Scripture

Mark 8:27-30

²⁷ Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, "Who do people say I am?"

²⁸ They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets."

²⁹ "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"

Peter answered, "You are the Messiah."

³⁰ Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him.

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Context

1. **Why do you think Jesus chose Caesarea Philippi—a dark, pagan place—to ask this critical question?** What significance does the location add to His message?
2. **What was the meaning of "the gates of Hades/hell" in that culture?** How does Jesus' statement that "the gates of hell will not overcome" His church change your understanding of the church's mission?
3. **What does the name change from Simon to Peter (the rock) signify?** What does it mean that Jesus builds His church on this confession of faith?

Personal Reflection

4. **Jesus asked two questions: "Who do people say I am?" and "Who do YOU say I am?"** Why is the second question so much more important than the first?
5. **If someone in your community asked you "Who is Jesus?", how would you answer?** What would be most important to communicate?
6. **The sermon mentioned the difference between an "eyesight issue" and an "insight issue."** In what ways are you still growing in your understanding of who Jesus really is?
7. **C.S. Lewis said Jesus was either a liar, lunatic, or Lord.** How does this framework challenge the common cultural view that Jesus was just a "good teacher"?

Application

8. **The disciples expected a political Messiah who would overthrow Rome, but Jesus came as a spiritual Savior.** In what ways do we sometimes want Jesus to be different than who He actually is?
9. **Jesus said, "On this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell will not overcome it."** What does this tell us about the church's posture—defensive or offensive? How should this change how we engage with darkness in our world?
10. **The sermon emphasized that our lives should "reflect the reality that Jesus really is the Messiah."** What would it look like for your life to more fully reflect this reality this week?

Key Takeaways

1. **The most important spiritual question you'll ever answer is: "Who do you say Jesus is?"** This question is the turning point of your spiritual life.
2. **Jesus is not just AN anointed one—He is THE Anointed One, the Messiah, the Son of the living God.** This isn't just about historical knowledge but personal faith.

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge

Choose one or more of the following to practice this week:

- **Write out your answer** to the question "Who is Jesus?" as if explaining it to someone who knows nothing about Him. Share it with one person this week.
- **Identify one "dark place" in your life or community** where you've felt defeated or discouraged. Pray specifically and ask God how He wants to advance His kingdom there.
- **Reflect on your spiritual journey.** Are there ways you've wanted Jesus to be different than who He is? Confess those to God and ask Him to give you insight, not just eyesight.
- **If you've never made a personal declaration of faith in Jesus as Messiah,** consider doing so this week. Talk to your group leader or pastor about what that means.

Closing Reflection

Read together: "I have come that you may have life and life in all its fullness." - Jesus (John 10:10)

Reflect: What would "life in all its fullness" look like for you? How does knowing Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of the living God, lead to that fullness?

Closing Prayer

Pray for one another, specifically:

- For those still exploring who Jesus is
- For deeper insight into Jesus' identity and mission
- For courage to live out the reality that Jesus is Lord