

The Words of Jesus

Mark 8:27-38

The Second Sunday in Lent, March 1, 2015

Immanuel Lutheran Church, Broadlands

If Ash Wednesday had been later and Epiphany had been a little longer we would have witnessed in the Divine Service this Jesus from Nazareth do a lot more things.

Even this year in the Divine Service we have witnessed Jesus from Nazareth do a lot of amazing things. We have witnessed Him cast an unclean spirit out of a man in the synagogue in Bethsaida. We have seen Him heal Simon's mother-in-law from a fever. We have witnessed Him heal all kinds of diseases.

If Ash Wednesday had been later and Epiphany had been a little longer we would have seen Him purify a leper. We would have seen Him heal a paralyzed man in order to demonstrate that He has authority on earth to forgive sins. We would have seen Him restore sight to the blind and hearing to the deaf. We would have seen Him walk on water. We would have seen Him feed five thousand men plus women and children using only five loaves and two fish. We would have seen Him raise the dead.

All of this then points to a question, "Who do people say this Jesus from Nazareth is?"

Some say Jesus from Nazareth is a wise man. They say that He has natural abilities beyond the abilities of regular people. These natural abilities give Him insight into human nature and into God. But in the end these people say that He is nothing more than that. He is like the other wise men of the ancient world or like the other wise men of today.

Others say that Jesus from Nazareth is a prophet. They at least give some divine credit to Jesus. They say that He has a higher God consciousness than the rest of us. They say that the Spirit of God inhabits Jesus in such a way that He has a deeper insight and understanding of God and humans than other people do. But in the end, He is just like a prophet, like Isaiah or Jeremiah.

Others say that Jesus from Nazareth is a lunatic. After all what do we do with people nowadays who claim divinity? We put them in mental institutions in order to treat them regarding their delusion that they are God. Since Jesus from Nazareth made such a claim, these people say that Jesus must be no different than the mentally ill of today who make the same claims. They simply did not have any institutions back then for people who made such claims.

Others say that Jesus from Nazareth is a fraud. Some of these people say that Jesus from Nazareth never existed at all. They say that Christianity was invented by Jewish leaders living in the first century. They claim that they made up everything in the New Testament in order to perpetrate a fraud on people. They say the New Testament was written by ecclesiastical authorities who wanted to maintain their own prestige or pride. Or if these people say that there was a Jesus from Nazareth that the stories about Him have been so embellished that there is now no way to tell anything about the real Jesus from Nazareth.

That is who some people say that Jesus from Nazareth is. But Jesus is not going to let you get away with that. He will want to know more. He will want to know, "What about you? Whom do you say that I am?"

Now I happen to know who you say that Jesus from Nazareth is. I have heard you say it repeatedly over and over again. "I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord." I have heard you confess that He was born of the virgin Mary and

raised from the dead. I have heard you confess that He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.

In view of that confession that you say with great boldness in the Divine Service, there is now something else that we must discuss.

Jesus said, "Whoever is ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of that person whenever the Son of Man may come in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."

If that is the case, let us try out some of the words of Jesus. In Acts 9 Jesus Himself calls Paul to be His apostle. He sends Paul out as His personal emissary along with the other apostles to speak His word to the people. Jesus says to His apostles that anyone who listens to them is listening to Jesus. Therefore the apostles bring us the words of Jesus. Let us consider some of these words of Jesus.

From 1 Timothy 2:11 and following we read, "Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather she is to remain quiet. For Adam was formed first and then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. Yet she will be saved through childbearing – if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control."

Are you ashamed of those words? If you are, then the Son of Man will be ashamed of you when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels. You do still believe that the Bible is God's word don't you? Some of you have even told me that you confess that it is inspired by the Holy Spirit. That being the case you should not be ashamed of what it says.

What about this passage from Ephesians chapter 5: Wives, submit to your own husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church, His body, and is Himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. This is the word of the Lord. Are you ashamed of it? If you are, then the Son of Man will be ashamed of you when He comes in His Father's glory with the holy angels.

What about this passage from Romans, chapter one: For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their perversion. This is the word of the Lord. Anyone ashamed of this passage? If you are then the Son of Man will be ashamed of you when He comes again in His Father's glory with all of the holy angels.

What about this passage from 1 Corinthians, chapter 6: Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. This is the word of the Lord.

Or try out this passage for comfort from Mark, chapter 10, and this is a direct quote from our Lord Himself, "Whoever divorces His wife and marries another commits adultery against her, and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."

Now people, I am not asking you if you are guilty of these passages. I am asking you if you are ashamed of them? How many of you are currently thinking that this sermon is not the smartest thing that I have preached because I am bringing up all of the hot button issues in one sermon? How many of you think that I am on shaking ground for doing so? Am I on shaking ground? Am I the one who is ashamed of the Lord and of His Word?

And finally are you ashamed of this word from Jesus? And again this is a direct quote from John, chapter 14: I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

If you are ashamed of these words, then the Son of Man will be ashamed of you when He comes in His Father's glory with the holy angels.

The disciples have from time to time been ashamed of the things that the Lord has said.

Take an example from John, chapter six: Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever feeds on My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. Whoever feeds on My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on Me, he also will live because of Me. This is the bread that came down from heaven, not as the fathers ate and died. Whoever feeds on this bread will live forever.

After Jesus got done saying these things His disciples, notice this, His disciples said, "This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?" Then later after Jesus rebukes them for saying that His saying is hard, His disciples turn back and no longer follow Him. They are ashamed of Him. They are ashamed of His words. They no longer listen to His words. They cannot bear them. Jesus is left with only the Twelve and He asks them, "Are you going to leave also?" Peter answers, "Lord, You have the words of eternal life. To whom else should we go? We have come to believe and know that You are the holy One of God."

At least Peter got it that time. Peter did not always get it. Peter was ashamed of His Lord's words. It happened right after Peter figured out who Jesus was. He told Jesus, "You are the Christ." Jesus began to teach His disciples that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again.

Peter was ashamed that His Lord would die and rise again. He was ashamed that His Lord would be rejected and killed and rise again. He was so ashamed of what the Lord said that He had the nerve to take the incarnate God aside and rebuke Him! In the other gospels it is recorded that Peter said, "Never, Lord, this shall never happen to You." And Jesus is put in this wonderful and awkward position, but He tells Peter what He must tell all of us who are ashamed of His words, "Get behind Me, Satan! For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man." Then Jesus your Lord continues, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the Gospel's will save it."

And there you go. All of those passages that I read to you earlier just became Gospel because each and every one of them is your opportunity to lay down your life for Jesus. Each and every one of them is a golden opportunity to deny yourself and do what you do not want to do for the sake of Jesus. Each and every one of them is your possibility of taking up Your cross and following after Jesus.

Take up His Word. Take up all of His word. Do not be ashamed. Deny yourself and follow Jesus even if it means following Him to death for the place where Jesus is going is resurrection from the dead and eternal life.

In the name of Jesus. Amen.