

## Meditation on Matthew 8:29

By Bev Kilts



John Mark was not one of the original disciples. He accompanied Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey and on a later journey with Barnabas. You can read the details of these journeys in the book of Acts 12:25-13:13 and 15:36-51 and was recognized as a leader in the church (Col.4:10). Later we find John Mark as a companion of the apostle Peter, who speaks affectionately of this young man, calling him “my son Mark” in his first letter (1 Peter 5:13). It is thought that Mark wrote “the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God” (Mark 1:1) from Peter’s recounting of his memories and experiences.

Mark moves quickly into a series of events all written to reveal Jesus, Messiah. We follow along with the disciples in what must have been an exhausting, but exhilarating pace as Jesus touched the lives of many and left an indelible mark on those who truly listened. And then we come to chapter 8 and we pause...Jesus asks a question in what seems to the reader to be in a very off handed, “by-the-way” manner: “Who do men say I am?” The disciples answer: John, the Baptist, Elijah, one of the prophets...all reasonable, true answers...all wrong.

Then come THE question: “But, who do YOU say I am?”

Peter, every the bold one, spoke up, “You are the Christ.” Can you hear the sharp intakes of breath – the pause to hear Jesus’ response? Did Peter really say “the Christ...Messiah.....King???” The reader might feel relief at Peter’s declaration – at last he gets it! But, does he? Do any of them? Notice, very quickly Jesus warns them not to tell anyone. Of course, Jesus knew that Peter still did not realize what that statement meant. Peter was not considering God’s purpose, but only his own natural desires – he wanted Jesus to be the King – not the Messiah on the cross – not the suffering sacrifice. Peter was ready for the glory of the Kingdom – not the cross. Peter saw only part of the picture and, to be perfectly honest, understanding at that moment why Christ had to die was not humanly possible. And not only Peter, for in the days leading to Jesus’ final trip to Jerusalem, we find the disciples bewildered, fearful and doubting and at Jesus’ arrest, He stood alone. But who could have possibly understood what was to come? Do we?



It seems entirely possible to get the facts right, but misunderstand the meaning – to hear what we want to hear, what fits into what we desire to happen. And we have to advantage of having access to Scripture completed – of seeing the whole picture.

We have to answer many important questions in a lifetime – “What college will I choose?” “Will I follow my job to Japan?” “Will I help out in New Orleans?” “Will you marry me?”

But, that one questions hovers and shoves the others far into the background: “Who do YOU say I am?” Think very carefully. Be fully aware of the consequences of your reply. A statement of faith must lead to a deepening of that faith – a life commitment to follow Him and to serve.

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