

Sunday, March 26, 2023 Lent 5 ***This is Jesus! Part 5: Jesus is Lord and Directs My Path***

Psalm 130 Romans 10:5-13 and Matthew 7:13-14, 21-28

We continue in our Lenten journey with our focus “This is Jesus”. Jesus asked his closest followers “Who do the people say that I am?” As believers, Christians who follow Jesus’ teachings on love and life, we are still trying to figure this out. Just who is the one we call Jesus? He is the Lamb of God, Rabbi, Master, healer, teacher, miracle maker and the one who has created and continues to create and whose Spirit dwells within all who believe. Yet there are many people who wonder how Jesus spoke and taught and even today seek answers about his willingness to fulfill his mission as saviour to become Lord of lords. Throughout this Lenten time of remembering and connecting with Jesus in new ways, we need to consider again, “Who do the people say that Jesus is?” and most importantly answer the question, “Who do you believe Jesus is?” How does knowing Jesus help you live today?

We have focused on Jesus as Messiah, the Christ and the One who came to forgive us of our sins. He is the provider of all our needs. As God’s Son, born of a woman Jesus also was tempted and faced problems just like you and I, but he did not sin. Jesus watched and observed people while on Earth, and He continues to hear our prayers as we face challenges of living. These challenges might be when we are confused about who we are or when we need direction in our lives. Sometimes it can be hard to know if you are on the right path in life and the reason is because there are many voices crowding in to tell you what to do.

So where do you turn to know what to do? Fortune cookies? Horoscopes, Alexi or Siri, or the GPS lady who knows how to get to where you need to go? There is One who will help in all circumstances but unfortunately for many people when facing a tough decision, they do not turn to Jesus because they do not want to hear the answer. This is because when one receives his direction often the person resists because it is too difficult or it may cause us to be alone. This is because Jesus often takes people down the road less traveled.

Jesus’ teaching in Matthew 7, states that the only way to enter the kingdom of God is through the narrow gate. The way to destruction is wide and the gate is huge. But in order to experience life, the gateway is narrow, the road is difficult and only a few ever find it. So what path have you followed? It seems that there is a path that everyone takes but if you take that path with everyone else is it the best path for you? Are you not unique unto yourself?

Just think about the paths you have chosen for yourself. Decisions made at the time seemed right but if you could go back and try again the different path, you would choose a way

that is more focused on him. Maybe the decisions affected relationships, work, or purchases made. Although you cannot go backwards, your future decisions may be made easier if you let Jesus tell you what you should do. But you must trust him to be your Lord and enable him to guide your path. What does this mean let Jesus be your Lord?

The word Lord refers to the person who is master and has absolute control over others. In ancient times, Roman emperors acted as Lords over many others and out of respect they were answered with 'yes, my lord'. In the New Testament this word Lord is found 740 times and most of its use refers to Jesus. So when we say Jesus is Lord, we are defining the relationship between him and all who follow and believe him to be the Son of God. Jesus is to be served with all our hearts because he is Lord of all. Jesus is Lord, we are giving him control over our whole lives and he leads us. If we say that Jesus is Lord of our lives, then he controls our character, relationships, decisions, finances everything. He is Lord of all. Because Jesus loves we can trust that he will lead us on the best path of life. Not everyone will choose that path through the narrow gate to Jesus, but those that do, we are guided along the path in faith and with hope.

Jesus is Lord so how do we understand our relationship to grow as we live? Every day each of us have significant decisions to make. Some of them will be bad and prayerfully most will be good. Good decisions may be the goal, yet they are not always the result. So what are we called to do? Proverbs 3: 5-6 states, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take."

In this world things seem to be upside down and going against the stream is difficult to manoeuvre but Jesus calls us to walk his way, follow his path as He is the Lord of all. Maybe you are facing some difficult decisions right now. Our first instinct should be to pray: "Jesus, what do you want me to do? What is the best path for me to take?" Jesus directs your path when you study the Bible to know what is true. "Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path." (Ps 119:105) But we need to do this with a strong foundation and to have stability when those difficult times come. This is the hope for all people as we grow in faith together as a church family. But what is essential is that God loves us no matter what and will help us.

In speaking with different people this week I asked the question, so how are you doing? Often people will respond with their health situations- with having had colds, sinus infections or the like. Then depending on the circumstances and where we are talking I have also asked, is there any other things going on? Sometimes I hear these stories- I'm feeling anxious, I'm

worried about my family member yet often people are fine. Today's world is not totally fine- some of you heard President Biden address Canadian parliament on Friday with the problems of climate change, a changing economy and an increasingly dangerous world people are defying international norms. He also stated that the friendship between the two countries is essential in order to grow together and to restore hope.

IN Matthew 7:24 Jesus states, "Anyone who listens to my teaching and follows it is wise." His teaching involves the wise and foolish people who build houses. The person who builds their house on solid rock has a sure foundation that can withstand rain and flooding. But the person who builds on sand, the foundation washes away in the rain and it is destroyed. Jesus' teaching states that if we are wise people, we will and must put our lives in his stable strong hands. But how do we do this? We need to take the time to know and grow closer to Jesus, to understand God in the lives of people who went before us and to take to heart what we are to say and do. We are to take time to read the Bible. For years we have had Our Daily Bread devotionals at the back of the church. We also have Bibles available for people who would like their own copies. This is because it is important to spend a portion of our days in reading and reflecting on God's story in the lives of people- the Bible. This is how we will grow in wisdom and knowledge of Jesus our Saviour.

It is also important to grow in faith with others. As we gather to worship and praise together, we are also growing in wisdom. Proverbs 12:15 states "Fools think their own way is right, but the wise, they listen to others." And those others you listen to? They need to be people growing closer to Christ. This is why churches exist, why we livestream services, why we put so much time and effort in sharing in the life and work of the church. We learn from each other's experience and wisdom about the things that matter most in life. But most of all, we experience God's Spirit moving us to learn and grow in faith and knowledge of who Jesus is and may be in our lives.

If we believe that Jesus is Lord- this means that he is control of your life. John 14:6 says, "I am the way the truth and the life." You need not look for answers in horoscopes, fortune cookies or asking Siri for answers. Jesus says I am the way to God because I am God's Son. I came to give you life abundantly and for you to live eternally with God.

Next week we begin Holy Week when we tell, sing and share in the Jesus' passion story of love. From His triumphant entry into Jerusalem with his followers crowding around him to the time of his arrest, trial and crucifixion. IT is this Christ's story that causes us to rejoice each

Sunday morning and celebrate Jesus resurrection! But maybe you are unsure about Jesus' death and meaning for you. This is the best time to learn listen and respond to God's gift of Jesus. He is the Christ, the provider, the one who lived like us but unlike us is Lord of all.

Jesus asked the disciples, "Who do the people think that I am?" Who do you think Jesus is? Depending upon how we answer this question, our hearts will be filled with wonder, awe and rejoicing on Easter morning. Is Jesus your Lord? Is he the one upon whom you have placed your faith and enable him to truly lead you? Is Jesus your Lord?

Let us pray:

Jesus we praise you for you are the one who is God's Son and came to show us the way to live and love. Help us to know you and trust you as we place our lives in your hands. Jesus you are the Lord of all. Hear these words from our hearts as we pray to you <SILENCE>. AMEN