

Gaines Congregational United Church of Christ

September 12, 2021

Old Testament Reading; Proverbs 1: 20-33

Responsive Reading; Psalm 19

Epistle Reading; James 3: 1-12

Gospel Reading; Mark 8: 27-38

Sermon Title: **Will You Say It Out Loud?**

By Rev. Jim Gardner

Summary: I know who you say that I am, but will you say it out loud?

And Jesus said to His disciples, “Who do men say that I am?” Now this question was posed after Jesus had been teaching and healing for some time. Jesus was doing things that just were not possible for a mortal man to do. People saw it, but because it was so impossible for a mortal man to do, they came up with explanations that they could accept as to who Jesus really was. Maybe Jesus was a reincarnation of John the Baptist, or Elijah, or maybe even some other prophet. They could not, or would not, put a greater credence in a person they could touch and talk to then they would in a person that had been revered and

proclaimed for generations by the most scholarly scribes and teachers of the land.

Then Jesus went one step farther and asked, “But who do you say that I am?”

This question was a defining moment in the Life of Jesus and His disciples. Jesus was going to find out if all of His teachings had fallen on deaf ears or did the disciples really know who He was.

Peter’s answer showed that he had more guts and understanding than all the lame or the blind or the deaf or even the 5000 who ate their fill from 5 loaves and 2 fishes. Peter said, “You are the Christ.” This statement would get a Jew thrown out of the synagogue and essentially excommunicated, but Peter just came right out and said it.

This statement opened the door for Jesus to inform His disciples of what was to come next. For the first time in His ministry Jesus revealed that He would be arrested, tortured and crucified, and would rise from the dead on the third day. Only God or a liar would say such a thing and the disciples knew that Jesus was no liar. They also knew that they loved Him and could not bear to hear Him reveal such an agonizing future.

When Jesus responded to Peter’s rebuking Him by saying, “Get thee behind me Satan.” He was not accusing Peter of being

Satin but accusing Peter of saying what Satan would say and what Satan would like to hear people say. Satan would not want people to speak the truth about Jesus even if it was as clear as the nose on their face.

Our reading from Proverbs extols people to have wisdom. Wisdom in part is just the acknowledgement of truth. Wisdom cries to the “simple”, the “scorners”, and the “fools”. The simple are the naïve that follow every whim that comes along. The scorners are those who treat wise counsel with contempt, and the fools are those who refuse wise teaching because they are too conceited to change their ways. Wisdom says that not accepting wisdom will eventually bite you in the butt.

Our Psalm says that the wisdom of believing in God is such an obvious truth that no one in their right mind could deny it when they observe the intricacies of creation and know that it could not be just a happy accident.

We often hear that actions speak louder than words but sometimes words can make our best actions seem hypercritical. James warns us that our tongue, although a small thing can have big consequences. He compares the tongue to the rudder of a ship or a small match that can start a forest fire. What people say can start a war or a revival. James warns us not to bite off more than we can chew. If you are going to be a teacher or a preacher you will come under closer scrutiny than

to average Christian so you should not get into it unless you're serious about it. The problem is that everyone is a teacher or a preacher to somebody in a lesser or greater extent. Somebody is always watching you and will be affected by what they see you do or hear you say. It may be a child or a peer or a total stranger but you will have an effect on someone.

As a Christian what effect will it be? I believe I would be preaching to the choir if I were to ask you what you think Jesus Christ is. You would not be here listening to this message if you were not convinced that Jesus is the Christ but the question is; Will you say it out loud.

Jesus spent His entire ministry getting His disciples ready to, "say it out loud"?

They said it out loud. They said it. We heard it. Now are we ready to say it out loud? It is our turn. Saint Francis said, "Proclaim the gospel 24/7 and in extreme emergencies use words." If you look at the world, I think you would agree that this is an extreme emergency.

If the Bills giving us a touchdown makes us want to Shout shouldn't the gift of everlasting life make us want to shout it from the mountain?

Say it out loud as you live it in silence. Hallelujah and Amen!

