

Jesus asks, "Who do people say I am?"

Peter responds

The religious leaders and others respond

Jesus declares his true identity

Discussion questions:

1. In an encounter with Peter, Jesus gave the Son of Man's job description (Mark 8:31-33). What things did Jesus say he would do and how did Peter respond? Why do you think Peter responded as he did? Jesus' response to Peter was very strong. What had Peter done wrong and how was Jesus' response an act of love?
2. Jesus told his followers they would do four things as they walked with him day by day: 1) deny self; 2) take up his cross; 3) follow him; and 4) be willing to lay down their lives for him and the gospel. What does it look like, in an ordinary day of your life, for you to seek to do these things?
3. God declared who Jesus is and what we are called to do in response (Matthew 17:5). In what ways can we live out this calling on a daily basis?
4. Human kings in the Bible (and in our world today) were exalted and received special honor. When Jesus walked on this earth he acted very differently. What contrasts do you see between how Jesus lived and how other kings live and behave?
5. When Jesus called himself the "light of the world", he assured his disciples that they would no longer walk in the dark if they followed him. How have you discovered the light of Jesus since you became a Christian and how does his presence keep you from living in the darkness?
6. As Jesus interacted with some of the religious elite he declared, "Before Abraham was born, I am!" (John 8:58) What was Jesus claiming and why did this upset the religious leaders so much that they wanted to kill him?
7. Lazarus was sick, so his sisters sent word to Jesus (John 11). In this encounter, Jesus declared that he was "the resurrection and life." What was Jesus claiming about himself and why did it matter at that time and today?
8. Jesus is the Savior, Messiah, and Lamb of God. He came to live a sinless life, die on the cross in our place, and rise again in glory to break the power of sin and death. How does the truth of his identity clarify your life purpose and direction?

Homework: As we walk through life we meet people who have all sorts of theories on who Jesus is. Make a commitment to read the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) and keep a journal of all the things Jesus said about himself. Then ask the Holy Spirit to help you gently and graciously paint an accurate portrayal of Jesus to those people you encounter who have misconceptions about him.

For next week, please read Chapter 26 of The Story (Matthew 26-27; Mark 8-12, 14; Luke 9, 22; John 7-8, 11-12)