

But Who Do You Say That I Am?

Actually more than a few of you would answer that with you have little or no idea who I am. By the way, I am fine with that answer, no offense would be taken on my part.

So, I'll rephrase the question. How would you answer Jesus's question: "but who do you say that I Am?"

C.S. Lewis used the apologetic concept of 'Liar, Lunatic, or Lord' for how to answer Jesus & I'm going to play that out for the next few minutes.

Sadly, I would also add 'Left-out'.

Is Jesus a 'Liar'? Is Jesus a 'Lunatic'? Is Jesus 'Left-out', as in completely 'Left-out' of our conversations? Or is Jesus Lord?

Apologies, kind of, to any group that I leave out. Jesus Christ to the Mormons is not the Jesus Christ of our Bible. They believe in a different Jesus.

To a Jehovah's Witness, Jesus is a created being, different Jesus. Our Jesus, the Jesus of The Bible, a Liar & Lunatic!

The same with Muslims, Jesus is a created being, a different Jesus, in fact making Him God would be their highest form of heresy called shirk. Shirk is the only unpardonable sin in Islam. The punishment is you stop breathing... not by your own choice.

This does not mean in a civil sense that any of these groups are not, or cannot be nice people, to be blunt they do not correctly answer Jesus's question. Full stop: end of discussion!

Buddhists, Hindu's, Jainists, Bahai's, & all other non-Christian belief systems can be added to this list as well. Liar & Lunatic!

I'm not here to pick on other people today or any day. Once again, in the civil sense, they can & will often be very sweet & nice people. In many instances, nicer people than Christians. Still; they are wrong on Jesus.

So, who is Jesus? Was He adopted by God or maybe He is a later creation? Was He an angel? Or an elevated angel? Was He God in a meatsuit? Was He a ghost or a maybe a phantom? Was He a form or mode of God once God came to earth? Was He just a nice man? Even some people who profess to be Christians would tell you that He was only a nice smart man. Wrong, wrong, & wrong. By the way, I did not make these up, these are what non-Christian's believe.

Going back to C.S. Lewis's question, the previously mentioned groups would say Jesus is either a Liar, a Lunatic, or both. My sincere apologies if you think I am wrong; but you are still not right & neither are they.

By the way, if you were going to ask what about the Hebrews? The Christian Doctrine of Christology is crucial that it be correctly defined. Jesus is 100% fully Man & 100% fully God. True Man-True God.

Without this understanding we are left with either an unpreached, unknowable, eternal Word, i.e., a hidden unknown God - albeit hidden in His majesty... or a poor god-forsaken man who was executed in 1st century Judea by the Romans to maintain order after Jewish religious leaders accused him of blasphemy. A Liar! A Lunatic!

This now crosses Hebrews, Polytheists, Agnostics, & Atheists off of your scorecard.

By the way, that hidden God... you really do not want to meet the hidden God. That is the part of God that told Moses no one can see me & live. That is the part of God in whose presence Isaiah felt the full weight of his sin to the extent he felt he should implode. God who told Isaiah I am a God who hides Himself. Because the part of God that wants to be known, He revealed to us, through His Son; Jesus.

Jesus tells us that if you have seen me, you have seen the Father. Please take Him at His word. He is neither a Liar nor a Lunatic. Never has been, never will be!

What about my addition to Lewis's thought? Left-out. While Jesus initially told His disciples not to tell anyone, He later commanded them, & us, to tell everyone. How are we all doing with that command? I know I fail with this regularly, so I'll be very honest & say it, it is not going well for me with following His command.

You see the world prefers Jesus Left-out. Left-out of the marketplace of ideas. Left-out of the public forum. Left-out of the schools. Left-out of how we live and govern this nation. Left-out out of daily interactions. Left-out of every square inch of our existence. Seen, but not heard, tolerated only if we remain silent. Scolded into irrelevance.

Amen & Amen...

You see this is what you get when you cannot answer that question. “but who do you say that I Am?”

When I first handed this to my editor, my wife, she said this is really harsh. Where is the hope? Where is all of the flowery stuff you put into your sermons?

She understood right away that something was missing. Well, I truly hope you did not really think that I was done! I bring you Grace & Peace from our Lord & Savior Jesus the Christ.

Amen.

From the first half of my sermon, that is what the world understands, very little. No hope, no answers, & nothing of substance. Look at our world

& tell me people are not looking for a real answer. Something concrete that you can cling to.

Jesus & the Gospel are foolishness to the world. It is a frustrating concept; I didn't ask Jesus to die for me & you didn't ask Jesus to die for you. So, who does He think that He is?

Well that is the real question. He is who He is. He is the second person of a singular God represented in 3 personhoods. We do not understand the Trinity because we do not live in harmony, my proof, look at the news!

How can three personhoods agree on everything with perfect intentions at all times. Let alone be in all places. Yet that is Truth – please just let God be God.

How do we answer Jesus's question?

Biblically speaking, the only person who can confess Jesus is Lord is someone who has been gifted The Holy Spirit.

We confess the Apostle's Creed due to confusion over who Jesus is. This confusion started when Jesus was here on earth & continued over 1600+ years ago when the Apostle's Creed was written. As you will notice from my initial segment, that confusion still exists.

Jesus is:

The Way, The Truth, & The Life. The Word made flesh. The only way to Salvation. The Bread of Life. The Giver of Living Water. The One who

draws all, meaning all, people to Him. The world does not like absolutes; Jesus is as absolute as you can get! There is no other way.

The world wants Jesus and... Jesus and a new redefinition of who He is. Jesus and me, really, did He not finish the work at the Cross? I could go on, but I'm trying to leave the harsh behind.

Jesus is:

The Word of God in all His forms. The One who attach's Himself to a Promise & then delivers in person on that Promise. He makes it easy by attaching that Promise to regular everyday things, things I will add that He created. In Baptism He (the Word of God) attach's Himself to water.

Regular H₂O.

In The Lord's Supper (the Word of God) attached to bread & wine. Regular bread & wine... it is the mystery of God as to how that happens. And the Word of God attached to the words I am speaking... or that Pastor Terry or anyone else preaching here speaks. Only through Jesus, the Word of God, do these words – His Words... become living & active.

I'm going to return to harsh for one more moment... when the government & news said stay home, we stayed home. When they said wear a mask, we wore a mask. When they said go outside and exercise, we went outside and exercised. When they said go out and eat or shop, we went out and ate and shopped. What is the one thing they have not told us to do?

They have not told us to go back to church... which is why I added Left-out.

Jesus is Lord. He is not a Liar, He is not a Lunatic, and try as some might... He is not to be Left-out.

Jesus is Lord & you are Free in Christ. So, now what? Well you are to Go Tell. Tell everyone who Jesus really is. Do it with gentleness & respect; but He is an absolute. Do not be ashamed of the Gospel. It, He (the Word of God), is the Good News!

I've been told I am an Orthodox Lutheran who takes the Orthodox Lutheran position. Well my seminary professors were extremely happy to hear this... that is kind of the point when one is going to an Orthodox Lutheran seminary.

This last part is not just Lutheran... it is Christianity. The Law (the harsh part of the sermon) without The Gospel is false religion. The Lie. The Gospel is foolishness to the world. Lunacy. The Gospel is not present in the Law' it is Left-out. Our freedom in Christ scares people; including ourselves. For Jesus is Lord. The Law says do; but the Gospel says done, solely in & by Christ.

We come here, or watch at home, each week because He (Jesus, the Word of God) Promised to be here each week to meet us with His hand of mercy. Using plain & ordinary things; water, bread, wine, me, you, our words, attaching His Word, as Promised, to strengthen & give us His

Perfect Peace that passes all understanding. He is The Word made Flesh who dwelt among us & conquered sin, death, & the devil; for all that believe. Another promise that He fulfilled.

Jesus is Lord. When He returns all knees shall bow & every tongue will confess this Truth.

May the God of Grace & Peace bless each of us & be our abiding portion today & every day.

Amen & Amen!

Please stand. Now we are going to confess our Faith using the words of the Apostle's Creed. I am going to stop us after the second section (about Christ) for a few brief comments.