



Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ according to Saint Mark 8:27-35.

Jesus and his disciples set out for the villages of Caesarea Philippi. Along the way he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" They said in reply, "John the Baptist, others Elijah, still others one of the prophets." And he asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter said to him in reply, "You are the Christ." Then he warned them not to tell anyone about him. He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer greatly and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and rise after three days. He spoke this openly. Then Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. At this he turned around and, looking at his disciples, rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan. You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do." He summoned the crowd with his disciples and said to them, "Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and that of the gospel will save it."

Introductory Prayer:

Lord Jesus, I believe that you came into this world to redeem sinners. I hope in you, and in your power to transform my soul, by your grace, from sinfulness to holiness. Lord, I love you and offer you the longings of my heart to put you truly first in my life. I want to love you with all my mind, heart, soul and strength.

Petition:

Lord Jesus, help me to know you and to follow closely after you.

1. A Pop Quiz:

Jesus asks his disciples a question completely out of the blue: "Who do people say that I am?" Christ really wants to know who his disciples thought he was. Yet he leads them by degree to the tougher and more committing questions. The first question – who do people say I am – provokes thought and is easy to answer; all the disciples participate in the answer. The second question requires something more. It involves that introspection and self-examination that closeness to Christ always provokes. Only Peter had the courage to respond. Like the disciples in the Gospel, throughout our own spiritual journey Christ will give us surprise examinations and pop quizzes – moments when we, too, will

be asked to evaluate who Jesus really is for each of us.

2. Judging by God's Standards:

Like the disciples in the Gospel, the closer we draw to Christ, the more he reveals himself. Once the disciples know and accept Jesus as the Messiah, it is important they know the type of Messiah he is. Many misconceptions abound, and all conceive of the Messiah in terms that are all too human. He is not the political liberator who will cast off the Roman dominion and make life "easy." Rather, he is the Redeemer of the human person. In no uncertain terms, Jesus makes it clear to Peter and the disciples that the Messiah is the Suffering Servant of Yahweh, who must suffer greatly and be rejected.

3. Bound to Christ by the Cross:

Peter thought he was doing Christ a favor by trying to dissuade him from the suffering he predicted would be coming. Yet Peter received the surprise of his life. His well-intentioned but completely misinformed attempt got him the worst possible rebuke from Christ, "Get behind me, Satan." Christ makes it clear that his disciples must be ready to follow in his footsteps. The path to salvation necessarily leads through the sorrow and joy of the cross.

Conversation with Christ:

Lord Jesus, conform my heart to yours. Help me to value events and things the way you do. Help me love you above all things and be especially ready to follow you when it means a personal sacrifice or discomfort for me. Sustain me, Lord in my efforts to follow in your footsteps.

Resolution:

Today I will accept difficulties with joy.