

Time for God – Take 2

Purpose: To assist the congregation with further reflection on the theme of the Sunday service/passage.

Week beginning Sunday 16 September 2018 Who do you say I am?

Pray that we would be willing not only to say the right thing but to follow it through with action remembering that Jesus has promised to be with us always.

Read Read the passage (preferably in an easy to understand version). Mark 8:27-38.

Background The crowds were building up. More and more people had seen and heard Jesus and he was creating quite a stir. Different ideas were circulating as to who exactly he was and what he was about. Jesus was aware of this but was also aware that he would have to grasp the nettle and head for Jerusalem. It was a turning point in his life and ministry – ahead he knew lay suffering and death but that was far from the minds of his followers. He takes soundings on what people thought of him but he was much more interested in who his disciples saw him to be and how they were going to rise to the challenges of discipleship. The detail for us will be markedly different but the principles are the same.

Possible questions/points to consider

1. Public opinion is hugely important these days. Just think for a moment how many competitions are decided – not on the basis of correct answers but on how many (or sometimes how few) people have given that answer or how many people have voted to keep or get rid of a contestant. Why do people feel that the more people hold an opinion the more likely it is that they are right? Ask people in the street What is the capital city of the USA and the highest “vote” will probably be New York. That doesn’t make it right. How do cope with the difficulty that Jesus is NOT popular in modern day society?
2. What answers would people in the street give to the question “Who do you think Jesus is/was?” What might these answers say about faith/doubt/religion/secularisation ?
3. Jesus was probably well aware of what people thought of him – and as now there would have been a range of opinion. It can be quite hard to share our beliefs and talk about them. Some have said, perhaps he was creating a climate that made it easier for a discussion to take place in a neutral kind of way. How might we find ways of creating space to have non threatening discussions about Jesus/faith?
4. For the disciples, who had had the benefit of more of his teaching and thinking and who presumably had been able to ask him questions, he was more specific – Who do you say I am? What answers would we come away with in response to that question being asked of us today?
5. Confession of faith – proclamation of Jesus in all his glory is great but Jesus goes on to signal how confession is supposed to lead to discipleship, to following him, to putting his plans into action – and that can be costly. What might the cost of discipleship really mean for us in 21st century Scotland? How willing are we to REALLY follow Jesus?
6. Please discuss/consider anything else that arises from the passage or service.

Prayer Lord thank you were willing to be obedient even suffering and dying for us. Help us to work out in practice what it means for us to truly follow you. Give us the grace we need to stand firm for you as we work out our faith in our day and age. Amen.