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Kevin Sneed

Mark 8:27-33

The way you personally answer Jesus' question "who do you say I am?" will define your life.

Read Mark 8:27-33.

1. AW Tozer in his book *Knowledge of the Holy* writes: "What comes into our mind when we think about God is the most important thing about us...We tend by a secret law of the soul to move toward our mental image of God." In other words, we become like who we think God is. What, for you personally, has shaped your imagination of who Jesus is?
2. Mark, in his gospel account, unsettles the settled and grabs the attention of those who assume they are "insiders." How do we see him doing this in this passage? What do you find surprising, confusing, or challenging about this passage?
3. Read verses 29-32. Peter, even with Jesus' clear explanation, rejects the manner in which Jesus brings about the kingdom of God, and, in doing so, rejects the kingdom of God. What does this scene reveal about Peter's imagination and expectation of who the Messiah is? What is Peter struggling to understand?
4. How does Jesus as Messiah and His cruciform kingdom challenge your own imagination and expectation of who Jesus is? How might you have constructed a Jesus of your own making (or made him a projection of your own self) to fit your own understanding of the world?

5. Read verse 33. We, like Peter, can refuse the manner in which God is working when we, with minds set on human concerns, try to take up other means. In doing so, we may be taking up a form of the kingdom other than the cruciform kingdom. For Peter, those means were power, military conquest, and violence. How might you be taking up other means? Where might God be inviting you to get behind Him, follow Him, and submit to *His* agenda rather than your own?
6. Kevin said that the manner in which the kingdom comes in power is always subverting the means and manner in which the world sees power. What are some of these worldly measures of power and success we idealize today? How does Jesus' kingdom and His way of faithfulness upset these measures of success?
7. Mark challenges us as the readers with this very question that is central to what it means to follow Jesus: "Who do you say I am?" Who do *you* say Jesus is? How is this reflected in the way you live and order your life?
8. Kevin reminded us that part of our spiritual formation is the healing of the images we hold in our mind about who God is. How might you regularly remember, and remind one another, of Jesus the Christ - the cruciform Messiah who is initiating a cruciform kingdom? What might it look like for you to hold out the image of the eucharist out in front of you?