

¹⁸ Once when Jesus was praying in private and his disciples were with him, he asked them, "Who do the crowds say I am?"

¹⁹ They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, that one of the prophets of long ago has come back to life."

²⁰ **"But what about you?"** he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "The Christ of God."

²¹ Jesus strictly warned them not to tell this to anyone.

²² **And he said, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life."**

²³ **Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."**

²⁴ **For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it.** (NIV)

INTRO - When our Son Tim was in Kindergarten he was excited about an activity coming. As the class studied about Native Americans he wanted to choose his name. He was hoping to be 'Little Bear.' He told us that for a number of days before the big event. On the day he was coming home from Kathy asked him, 'Did you get to choose your name?' 'Yes', he replied. 'And what name did you choose, she asked, thinking she already knew. His answer, 'Buffalo Rammer.' She asked why and he said, 'Because it's Spiritual.' We still don't know where he came up with the name.

I. Names have often carried a meaning with them.

A. Do you know the meaning of names?

1. Coopers used to be those who made barrels.
2. Smith's used to work with iron.
3. Sawyer was the person who cut trees and lumber.
4. Jacobson was the son of Jacob.

B. Names carried a meaning, but many today do not realize that, and so we miss the history and the heritage in people's lives.

1. The disciples were asked who people SAID Jesus was.
2. Said is the key word - they had the right answer, but did not totally understand.
3. Peter gave a partially correct answer, **"The Christ of God."**
4. But, Peter missed all that it meant that Jesus was the Christ of God.

C. So, in all the accounts of this story, in Matthew, Mark, and here in Luke, Jesus follows up Peter's answer with an explanation of what it meant that Jesus was the Christ.

1. ²² **And he said, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life."**
2. Jesus was not only the promised Messiah, but as the Son of God come to earth, he came for sacrifice. He came to suffer, to be killed. . . and to rise. He came to do this for the sins of the people of the world.

3. Who Jesus was also pointed to what He would be doing, but the disciples missed that.

II. This week at St. John we held Vacation Bible School. The boys and girls, and I think the adults and youth, all had a good time at 'Avalanche Ranch.'

A. I played Rowdy, who helped the boys and girls learn who God is. As the children studied Bible stories they learned that 'God is real,' that 'God is With Us,' that 'God is Awesome,' that 'God is strong,' and that 'God is in charge.'

B. But, I wonder if they missed something.

1. In learning who God is, did they miss what He did?

2. Jesus told the disciples this truth about who He is AND what He does, 3 or 4 times.

3. It was important for the disciples to know that Jesus would be dying and rising.

4. It is the most important thing for us to know. Because that is what the promised Messiah, the Christ, would do, and because by believing this Jesus gives eternal life, to the disciples, to the boys and girls of Bible school, and to us.

III. But, perhaps you and I are missing something too. You see, when Jesus asked the question, 'Who do the crowds say I am?', the answer would not only be something to know, but would also affect the lives of His disciples, and our lives.

A. If the Son of God, the Christ of God came to earth to be betrayed, and to suffer, and to die, and to rise, can His people expect life to be any different for them?

1. Jesus not only says, "**The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.**"

2. In every telling of this account, Jesus follows Peter's confession with the following verse, ²³ **Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. ²⁴ For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it.**

B. Who Jesus is not only told the disciple what HE would do, it tells them how they are to live.

1. Because we are God's children, because we are disciples of Jesus, the Son of God become flesh, we too will have different lives.

2. It is not natural to be self-denying, to be sacrificial, to put God and others before ourselves, but Jesus lived that way, and His followers will too.

3. Yes, we follow the example of Jesus.

4. But, One of the reasons we can do that is that Jesus has won eternal life IN HEAVEN for us when we believe. So we can sacrifice in this world, God has a wonderful eternity waiting for all who trust in Jesus as their Savior.

CONCLUSION - One of the people I know who really knew Jesus was Eleanor Brooks.

Her picture is on the bulletin board, the publicity center, in the East Narthex. When you asked how she was doing, whether she was recovering from a broken hip, walking to church through the snow, or telling someone about Jesus, her answer seemed to always be, 'Thankful.' She not only knew who God was, but she knew what that meant to her.

Boys and girls, we may have learned that 'God is real,' that 'God is With Us,' that 'God is Awesome,' that 'God is strong,' and that 'God is in charge,' but I want you to know, this is not just something to know. Who Jesus is means we are God's children. Who Jesus is affects how we live. We don't live to please our desires, but to serve God and love others. I pray that your knowledge of Jesus may show in your life, as well as in your words.