

Mark 8

“Who Do You Say I Am”

Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, “Who do people say I am?”

They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.”

“But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?”

There aren't many people who can pull that off. If I was stopped by the police and they said who are you? And I said “Who do you say I am” They would think I was mad or being intentionally difficult, to be honest there's truth in both.

But Jesus said to Peter, who do you say I am?

Who do you say Jesus is?

Some of you may know that I'm a big fan of the books of law in the bible, Leviticus and Deuteronomy and Numbers, all that stuff I'm well into it. Leviticus is written for the priests so they know the proper rites and rituals to carry out, and in Leviticus 4 it tells us what to do if the people sin.

It says if the whole Israelite community sins and does what is forbidden in any of the Lord's commands they're to take a young bull and bring it to the entrance of the tent of meeting, and all the elders lay their hands on its head and it's slaughtered. I guess once they've moved their hands, it doesn't actually say.

Then they dip their fingers into the blood. And they sprinkle it on the curtains seven times. Then they burn the bull to ashes. And it says that in this way the priest will make atonement for the community, and they will be forgiven. And the idea is that the sins of the people would be passed on to the bull and the bull would suffer the punishment the people deserved.

And they would have to do this year after year after year because for as many times as they were forgiven they would go away and sin again and it could never truly work.

But when Jesus took his place on the cross he took the place of the priest and the sacrifice and he suffered the punishment we deserve by dying, and in this way atonement was made for all people. One sacrifice so great that all people can be forgiven.

Who do you say I am? You are the messiah. This is who Jesus is. And it means more than anything else. Jesus says whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves, take up their cross and follow me.

The small things pale in comparison. Grudges that you hold on to, petty arguments, materialism, pride, they're not as important.

But more than that we should be filled with joy. We've been forgiven by the blood of Christ, we're clean and pure, we should be happy about it.

So let it go, don't live like you lived before, getting upset about small things, but live like you know Jesus is the messiah. Be cheerful, be kind, smile at people on the street, it's a tiny thing. Thank drivers at the crossing. Be proud, and be happy that Jesus is the messiah.