

## You Are the Messiah

### [Mark 8:27-38](#)

You know, say what you like about Peter, but every now and then he gets it exactly right. This was a shining moment for Peter. In spite of some of the errors of the past, Peter nails this one on the head. Jesus asked him, “but whom do you say that I am?” And Peter doesn’t hesitate one bit – he says with full conviction, “You are the Messiah.” Another reference has Peter saying, “You are the Christ, the son of the living God.” To sum it up in a word – perfect.

That is the case with us as well. At times we just get it right. Whether it is as an individual, as a congregation, or a country, at times we get it right. We say the perfect thing at the exact right time that just seems to sway something in our favor. We find ourselves doing the right thing even when we didn’t know it at the time. Think of your graduation, or the day you

received a promotion or a special recognition for something you did or said. Those of you who are married, remember your wedding day. Even if all the details weren't perfect, that moment hopefully was – when everything came together and it just felt right when you heard the announcement as a new couple. Think of some special time in your life – surely there is some time when everything just came together and everything was right.

What about some groups you have been a part of? Maybe a sports team that you or your children participated in and there was that one moment when you could stand proud and say, “That’s my son, that’s my daughter, that’s my grandson, that’s my granddaughter, that’s my dog!” Many of us collectively said that on Youth Sunday – “That’s our youth from Mt. Tabor!”

When we hear accolades about something we’ve accomplished

here, like the repairs to the hall, or an awesome chicken dinner, we can collectively say, “That’s my church!” It just feels right.

But there are also times when everything does not feel right. In fact, we wonder if anything at all is right at that moment. This week we honored a dark occasion in the history of our country. Eight years ago on 9/11, life for most Americans changed forever. I’m thinking before 9/11/2001, the famous date folks remembered was the day President Kennedy was shot. In fact, I heard it many times, “Where were you when Kennedy was shot?” We marked our lives by that occasion. Our generation had the unfortunate opportunity to mark history through another tragic experience eight years ago.

Where were you on 9/11? I was still working in health care at the time and was serving as a Marketing Manager for a hospital system in Northern Virginia. I had been sent to a

leadership conference in New Orleans. 9/11 was a Tuesday.

Within the hour everyone was glued to whatever televisions could be found permanently tuned to CNN. The cell phone and land line networks went down. Airplanes were grounded around the country. And we watched in horror as one tower fell, then another. Meanwhile, we watched the results of a plane striking the Pentagon and a plane crashing in PA.

I won't go into great details, but I was concerned for family members – concerned for their safety because I couldn't reach anyone. When we finally connected, my only thought was to get to my children, but I was stuck in New Orleans and all planes were grounded. It's amazing how much you can run on adrenaline as I managed to connect with the travel coordinator from my work, rent a car, link up with 3 others from the east coast and started driving home by Thursday morning. By Friday

afternoon I was home, so that when my children came home from school I could just hold them and know they were safe. We lit candles and put out flags and said prayers. Nothing was perfect at that time. Everyone was seeking answers. Churches were packed on Sunday morning as people turned to God for comfort, or just to vent their anger. That particular storm of life hit hard.

As painful as that was, was anyone able to see God's grace in all the chaos? Here are some things to ponder. Why were those four planes not packed with travelers? That was the heyday of traveling and business travel would have been at its peak. Why weren't they packed? Why didn't the first tower fall right away? For that matter, why didn't the second tower fall right away? Why did we find rescue workers and ordinary people running into the buildings to rescue people instead of

running for cover in mass panic? Where did all those heroes come from? Where did they find the courage to face the unthinkable? Many of us can and will question why God would allow such things to happen. I personally acknowledge the presence of evil in this world and the fact that we as humans are given free will. When those two link up and one crosses to the dark side, as Star Wars will tell us, perhaps we can see these things can happen. We cannot possibly fully understand God or the forces of evil at work in this world. All we can do is put our faith in almighty God – “my hope is built on nothing less than Jesus’ blood and righteousness.”

Does anyone remember the resurgence of American pride that happened after 9/11? Flags were seen everywhere to the point that manufacturers had to go into overtime to keep up with demand. There was an outpouring of good will toward

Americans from all over. I remember the 2002 Winter Olympics held in Utah. There was this tremendous feeling of overcoming difficulties and finding hope when there shouldn't have been any hope. As a country we found a renewed level of strength and courage.

There was another dark time in our history. Every year we remember it as we proceed into Holy Week. Physical darkness complimented the spiritual darkness on that day. The son of God, the Messiah, was put to death for crimes he did not commit. For those who were his followers, this was the darkest day in their history. It seemed all hope was lost, and yet a small glimmer remained. For after walking through the shadow of death, we experienced the true light of the world as Jesus rose from the dead, providing salvation for us all. Truly on that day, everything was perfect again.

You are the Messiah. Messiah means anointed one in Hebrew. The Greek term is Christos which is where we get the term Christ. You are the Messiah – the son of God. Jesus endured the darkest hour here on earth, yet he remained the blameless lamb, sacrificed for our sins. Our scripture lesson continues that after Peter's declaration, Jesus proceeded to tell his disciples that he would be killed and after three days rise from the dead. And pretty much within the same conversation, Peter pulls Jesus aside and basically tries to scold Jesus for saying these things. Once again, Jesus had to remind Peter that his focus should be on divine things, not on human things.

Often perhaps we too get caught up in human things. Let us never forget the divine. Hope, courage, strength, endurance, peace, love – all these come from God. Life will have its times of perfection and its times of utter darkness. But God is with us.

We may question God, or get angry with God because we just cannot understand why certain things are happening to us. But God is with us. We may celebrate and share great pride in our accomplishments, knowing our determination and strength come from God. God is with us. We may tackle a seemingly insurmountable task and see the victory on the other side. God is with us. Let us never forget to reach out one hand to God and one hand to our neighbor as we walk together through the trials and perfect times of our lives. You are the Messiah. God is with us. Amen.