

16B SML 2018  
MK 6:30-34

What all four gospels proclaim is Jesus is God, who taught and worked miracles, was crucified, is risen from the dead and sits at the right hand of the Father. Let me explain why Jesus was wise never to come right out and proclaimed this, and I'll begin in reverse order, starting with the Gospel, which came second, followed by Jesus, Who came first.

The Gospel of Mark is divided into two sections. The second section leads up to and includes the passion, death and resurrection of Our Blessed Lord, while the first section presents an account of Jesus' ministry in Galilee, and the effectiveness of His teaching and His miracles. Because of His teaching and miracles, the crowds kept coming and coming and coming. Mark uses phrases like:

- ✓ The whole town was gathered at the door (1:33)
- ✓ Everyone is looking for you (1:37)
- ✓ The whole of Galilee (1:39)
- ✓ The large number of people from Galilee and Judea (3:7)
- ✓ A large number of people came to Him also from Jerusalem, from Idumea, from beyond the Jordan, and from the neighborhood of Tyre and Sidon (3:8)

- ✓ And in today's Gospel, "people were going and coming in great numbers," and "He saw the vast crowd" (6:34)

These crowds followed and flocked because of the "Jesus problem." Jesus' behavior and actions were so exceptional that the evidence of His family background and His personal history could no longer define Him. The questions posed by those who liked Him were:

Where did this man get all this? What is the wisdom given to Him? What mighty works are wrought by his hands! Is this not the carpenter, the son of Mary? (6:2-3)

Yet those who hated Him asked the same question.

How long will you keep us in suspense? Tell us who you are! (JN 10:24)

Our Blessed Lord did not immediately and completely answer the questions born in the hearts of the people:

- ✓ who liked Him,
- ✓ who hated Him,
- ✓ who followed Him,
- ✓ who had become accustomed to His way of speaking,
- ✓ His behavior,
- ✓ His influence ,
- ✓ and His authority over men and things.

If He had, Our Blessed Lord would certainly have saved Himself a death on the cross. He would not have been killed as He would have been judged a madman, a conclusion His relatives came to early on anyway. “He is out of his mind. He is possessed by Beelzebul.” (3:22) Even at the end, when He admitted He was “Son of God,” He was charged with blasphemy. The man is a liar.

This is why Our Blessed Lord used a very deliberate teaching method that defined Himself slowly so as to provoke in others:

- ✓ a gradual understanding,
- ✓ a kind of “osmosis” of Who Jesus is,
- ✓ leading His audience to take steps toward understanding Who He is without the person who is taking the steps realizing it.

The less confrontation, the more easily the development.

So how did Jesus accomplish this gradual understanding, this osmosis if you will, in answer to the question posed by friend and foe alike, “Who are You?”

First, Our Blessed Lord identified Himself with the origin of the Law. The word “law” was the primary way the Pharisees indicated the divine. To say that something was according to

the Law was the same as saying that something was according to God.

- ✓ You have heard that it was said (in the Law), “You shall not kill,” but what I say to you is this . . .
- ✓ You have heard that it was said (in the Law), “You shall not commit adultery,” but what I say to you is this . . .
- ✓ You have heard that it was said (in the Law), “You shall not take a false oath,” but what I say to you is this . . .

Second, Our Blessed Lord told His hearers He has the power to forgive sins. Jesus took advantage of the opportunity to heal the paralytic to lead His audience to understand Who He is. When healing the paralytic, Our Blessed Lord said, “Your sins are forgiven.” He could have just as easily said, “Rise and walk.” But had He said only that, they would not have come to the understanding that Jesus forgives sins. Who can forgive sins but God alone! Exactly! So let’s put two and two together . . . perhaps Jesus is God! Jesus showed them He is God without actually coming right out and saying it.

Third, Our Blessed Lord puts Himself smack dab in the center of the origin of good. In the questions regarding the corporal works of mercy:

- ✓ Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you?
- ✓ When did we thirsty and give you drink?

✓ When did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?

In these questions, Jesus does not present Himself as the judge, but as “the good,” in that if an action is good because of Him and bad if it excludes Him, then Jesus presents himself as the discriminating factor between good and bad, as a criterion for identification. Jesus is (the) good, and not being with Him is bad.

For the disciples of Jesus’ time, this was all new. And like any good teacher, Jesus gradually introduced a new concept. But not for us. We have been at the answer to the question, “Who is He?” for 2000 years. And we have our answer. Jesus is God. He is Who He is. He’s God.

And once we realize that, there’s no sitting on the fence. There’s no “both and.” There’s no doubt. He has to be an “either or.” Either Jesus is God or He’s not.

You will know if you are a true follower based on your behavior of prioritizing Our Blessed Lord; He comes first:

- ✓ A household of five will be divided three against two and two against three: Honey, five nights a week at the gym are five nights a week you’re not helping to put the kids to bed
- ✓ Sports Saturday night, Sunday morning and Sunday night means Jesus is not even close to being first.

Either Jesus is God or He's not.

You will know you are a true follower based on whether you acknowledge Him in public. No relationship is complete and true if it is not strong enough to be revealed in public. A girl might have a relationship with a boy, until at a certain point, she says to him, "My parents would like to meet you." As long as the boy procrastinates, as long as he hesitates to acknowledge his relationship with her in front of his friends, the girl will feel insecure. And well she should. If you find yourself in situations where you cannot be open about your relationship with Jesus, you are not a true follower as you shouldn't be in those situations in the first place. Either Jesus is God, or He's not.

And lastly, you are a true follower of Our Blessed Lord when you find yourself doing things "for His sake." Once you are doing things "For His sake," the two previous behaviors are givens: Jesus is my priority, I want everybody to know it, because what I do, I do for His sake."

Every true believer needs to face it. Either Jesus is God, or He's not.