

Who Do You Say That I Am?
1. The One Who Stills the Storms

Luke 6:1-11

I am proud of our Scout Troop. It truly is an outstanding troop. And for Chapelwood to be named as the outstanding troop sponsor is a true honor.

I always wanted to be a scout when I was a boy. I tried to be a scout. I tried hard. I joined three different troops. Each time shortly after I joined the scout master quit. I kind of got a complex about it. Of course, each of those scout masters had good reasons to quit. The real tragedy was that there was no one to take their places. A good troop not only has a good scout master, it always has other adult leaders helping the scout master and ready to step up if he has to step down.

Our scout master, Dave, is a good one. And he is blessed with several men who work alongside of him, and many of them are members of Chapelwood. That's why we have an outstanding troop and are an outstanding troop sponsor.

During one of my brief stints in the Boy Scouts, I learned a lesson which has stuck with me all these years. The scout master told us that if we were in woods we were not familiar with, we would problem end up wandering around in circles, unless we kept our eyes on an object in the direction we wanted to go and walked directly to that object.

That struck me as being a pretty good rule for life. It's awfully easy to get lost in life and wander around in circles, not getting anywhere, unless you keep your eyes on something and keep moving directly toward it.

For us, as Christians, that something we are to keep our eyes on and keep moving toward is Christ. In fact, he is the only one who can keep us moving in the right direction. If we focus our lives on anyone or anything else, we will almost certain be going in the wrong direction and getting lost.

During the remaining Sundays of Epiphany, I'm preaching on the question, "Who do you say that I am?" This is the question Jesus asked his disciples after he had led them for three years. And this is the question that Jesus asks us today. Peter answered that question with the words, "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God." He was right. Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God. But what does that mean to us? Who is Christ to us?

Last week we learned that as the Son of God, Jesus is the one who has the power and authority to still the storms in our lives, and, even more importantly, in our souls. When we find that we have lost control of our thoughts and our feelings, when the storms of negative thoughts and destructive feelings are overwhelming us, we can turn to Christ, and he can bring calm to our souls.

This morning I want to say that as the Christ, the Son of God, Christ is the Great Teacher, the only way who can lead us in the right direction.

There are so many people who are more than happy to tell you what to think and what to do with your life. For many of them, their only qualification for teaching others is their absolute certainty that they are right. And a good rule of thumb is that if someone is absolutely certain they are right, they are almost certainly wrong.

If you pay attention to all the people who want to give you advice, you will probably end up walking around in circles, as lost as a goose. Because the advice people give you will be contradictory.

Early in my ministry I used to give a lot of advice to people. I don't do it so much anymore. I know that people think that when they go to a pastor for counseling, he is supposed to tell them what to do. But I like what Charles Allen had to say about pastoral counseling. Charles Allen was the pastor of First United Methodist Church in Houston for many years. He used to say that when people came to him for pastoral counseling, he would ask them what the problem was. Oftentimes, it takes a lot of talking before a person can say clearly what it is that's bothering him. But when the person was able to state clearly what the problem was, he would ask them what they thought they should do about it. And people can usually tell you what they need to do about it, when they are clear what the problem is. Then Dr. Allen would say, "Go, and do it." That works. Over and over again, when someone has come to me for counseling, I have asked them what the problem is and what they think they should do about it. And then I've told them to go do it.

You probably know more about your life than most of the people who want to give you advice.

Certainly, you should seek advice. And you should listen to what people have to say. Just don't assume they are right. If you hear several people saying the same thing, then you probably ought to pay attention to them.

But there is only one person who can teach you the absolute truth. That is Jesus Christ, the Son of God. I am absolutely sure of two things. First, that God is good. Second, that life is good if you trust God and love people. Those are the truths upon which my life is built. They are the truths which guide my thoughts and actions every

day of my life. I live them unquestioningly. Why am I so certain they are true? I am absolutely certain they are true for one reason—because Jesus said so.

And he is the Son of God. I know he is the Son of God because God said so. On the Mount of Transfiguration God spoke from heaven and said, "This is my beloved Son. Listen to him." Then, a few weeks later, God resurrected him to eternal life. I'm willing to trust someone absolutely who has those kinds of references.

To all those gurus who want to teach us the truth, we should say, "I tell you what, if you can get God to speak from heaven and tell us to listen to you, or if you are willing to die for what you say and then God resurrects you to eternal life, we'll believe anything you have to say absolutely. Either one would be sufficient. Otherwise, we will take anything you have to say with a grain of salt."

Is that fair enough? I think it is.

Jesus' authority was affirmed by God on at least those two occasions. And that says nothing about God's affirmation of his authority in his healing and his miracles.

Jesus is the Son of God. He stands high on the horizon. If we will keep our eyes set on him and move toward him, we will not be lost. He will teach us the truth. We will walk with confidence in the right direction, knowing what is true and what is not, what is right and what is not, what is good and what is not.

Jesus is the Great Teacher.

Dr. Wesley Welborn, Senior Pastor