

Whose Am I?

-Pastor Jeffrey Hubers

This psalm begins with a question that I believe plagues many parents and teachers in the world today. It's a question that I think causes the remaining young people in churches to stress over – especially in the high-anxiety climate produced by their parents and elders. It is an important question, but the better question might be: Who am I and whose am I?

Like the original question, the answer is in the “word.” The Living Word of Jesus has named us all sons and daughters of God’s Kingdom. We read the Word written to be told again and again who we are and whose we are – we belong to Jesus. With that identity above all others, we need to help secure it in the mindsets of young and old, so that we can face together the overwhelming identity crisis facing our world and nation.

“With my whole heart I seek you” (v. 10) – Jesus said, “search, and you will find” (Matthew 7:7). God is present to our wanderings, and available to us in the Word written, but most of all in the Word Made Flesh. This Lenten season may we all approach God, knowing who we are and whose we are.

Prayer: Lord, you know me because you made me. You love me and so you redeemed me. May I treasure this word in my heart, and carry it with me into the world.

Trust in the Lord

-Mike Asmus

First impressions - majesty, comfort, care, compassion, witness. All these words seem to come to mind as you read this passage. All of this is underscored that God had proclaimed it all many years before, and now it was coming to pass. What a great passage of uplifting renewal, contained in the message of the one true God.

The Lord then issues a challenge - "Who then is like me?" There is no one like Him to proclaim it; there were no others proclaimed except Christ.

He reminds Jacob and Israel several times, "Do not be afraid," and encircles it with these many phrases of comfort - formed in the womb, pour out water, spring grass, flowing streams - all words or signs of comfort and peace, not fear.

The whole undertone of this passage speaks of trusting in the Lord – such a reassuring passage to be shared with anyone that is going through a tough or lonely time. God will care for His people! Praise God!

Prayer: Lord, may You always be my comfort – the only One I turn to in times of stress and fear. You are God alone, and we are Your witnesses. Amen.

Where is the Light?

-Bob Polly

In a song by Styx called "Show Me the Way" (Google the lyrics!), the singers ask the same questions people do every day. Is there a heaven? Why do people we look up to fail us? Why is this world filled with hatred? Where's that sign we're looking for? If I see Your Light, should I believe? How will I know it?

And then they ask to have their illusions washed away, their confusion taken away. We've all asked that at one time or another. Everyone wants clear vision and a Light to show us the way.

Well, the Light is right here; we just need to take our blinders off, quit turning from it and making excuses for not following Him. Jesus came to earth to show us the way - to lead us to the Light. He gave us miracles, healing, and direction, and then He died for us and rose again. He told us to believe without seeing. He is real, and He was sent by the Father and did as He was directed.

In verse 36, He says, "Put your trust in the light while there is still time; then you will become children of the light." In verse 46 He says, "I have come as a light to shine in this dark world, so that all who put their trust in me will no longer remain in the dark." The Light is bright. He has shown us the way. There is one way. Follow Him!

Prayer: Father, thank you for sending Your Son (the Light) into this world to save it. Thank you for sending Your Light so that we can always find our way back to You. Amen.

Our Way vs. His Way

-Laurie Kent

In this passage Paul encourages the Philippians to imitate Christ's humility and to remain united in Christ as one family. "In humility, consider others better than yourselves" (vs. 3). We are each important to God, but our love and care for others is more important. How many times a day do we ignore these verses and think of ourselves first?

We've all seen a toddler demand to get what they want and get it now - but aren't we often the same way? We want to be waited on first, to control the temperature in the room, to have the remote in our hands, to have no other drivers in our way, to get the first and last piece of dessert, etc.

Verse 7 says, "He made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant." (Most days we struggle just to do the jobs we are paid to do!) Jesus set the example for us by being human. "He humbled himself and became obedient to death, even death on a cross." He died a slow, degrading, and horrible death to save us. It's that clear, and that incredible!

This passage ends, "At the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Imagine the shocked looks if we tried kneeling and shouting, "Jesus Christ is Lord!" every time we heard his name!

Prayer: Father, forgive me for all of the times I put myself first. Help me to humble myself and always put You first, serving others as Jesus did. Amen.

Give Thanks to the Lord!

-Mandy Stevens

“Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.....”

I feel like the season of Lent is often overlooked. We are so excited and focused on the prize at the end, Easter, that we completely miss all of the blessings that lead up to that wonderful day. I know I do anyway. Will we travel or stay home for Easter? What will we have for Easter dinner? What will we wear to church Easter Sunday? And the list goes on and on.....AND ON.

What would happen if we put all that planning and preparation on the back burner and just spent this time praising God for who He is and what He has done for us? What if we took the time and effort that we spend looking for the perfect outfit, or planning the perfect meal, and spent it on our knees in prayer? Or with our hands lifted high, singing at the top of our lungs, worshipping our magnificent Creator, and thanking Him for accepting us into His kingdom with open arms?

This Lenten season, I invite you to join me in doing just that. Spend some extra time in prayer, sing a little louder, raise your arms to the heavens, and just praise Him.

“This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.”

Prayer: Oh, Father, You are so worthy of our praise! Calm our busy hearts and minds, and help us to take time today just enjoying Your presence and worshipping You. Amen.

The Path of Restoration

-Debbie Asmus

In today's passage, the Lord reminds Jeremiah that He will fulfill His promise to heal and bless His rebellious people. However, before this can happen, He must first destroy their city and cleanse their land.

Some people accept Christ as a child, grow up in the church, and cannot remember a time when God wasn't part of their lives. I'm not one of them. Meeting Christ at age 13 was a game changer, but it unfortunately wasn't the end of my wandering.

Because I am proud and headstrong, the Lord has repeatedly had to tear down false foundations on which I've built my life, cleanse me from sins, and bring me back to Him. After I finally quit trying to run the show, His healing and blessings follow.

God was very patient with Israel for many years, but she pursued wickedness and idol worship. Before He could heal and bless her, her evil heart needed to be purged, a new foundation built, and a new heart planted. The good news is that God is patient and always keeps His promises. And, as verse 3 says, His Word and His Spirit will gladly tell us everything we need to know about how to live godly lives that please Him...if we only ask.

Prayer: Father, thank You for Your patience and Your faithfulness. Forgive us our sins, and help our wayward hearts to cling to You, so that we may be saved and enjoy your blessings. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Hope and Faith

-Katelyn Karhoff

In Mark 10:32-34, Jesus and His disciples are walking to Jerusalem. Jesus soon begins to talk to them about what is about to happen to Him. Jesus tells his disciples that He will be condemned to death, He will be mocked, spit on, flogged, and killed. He also tells the disciples the good news that He will rise again after three days.

The second passage, Mark 10:46-42, is the story of Jesus healing the blind man. The blind man calls out to Jesus, but the disciples try to stop the blind man from calling out to Him. Jesus soon hears the man and tells his disciples to bring the man to him. The blind man asks Jesus to restore his sight, and Jesus says, "Go your way; your FAITH has made you well."

These two passages can teach us many things. One thing the first passage can teach us is that Jesus wanted His disciples to know what was going to happen to Him, but He also didn't want them to be afraid, because He was going to rise from the dead on the third day. Jesus gave his disciples hope when He knew they were going to need it most. In the second passage, we learn that we will be healed when we have faith. Both of these passages teach us important lessons about hope and faith and how we can lean on God in the toughest of times.

Prayer: Lord, thank You for the hope You always provide. Help us to trust You and lean on You, no matter what life brings our way. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Covenant People of God

-Carly Hubers

“This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time,” declares the Lord. “I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.”

There is something powerful about the word “covenant”. When my spouse and I were preparing for marriage, we often reminded each other that the partnership we were committing to was more than just a promise to each other; it was a covenant between God and ourselves—a deep commitment that anchored us far more than any situational circumstance could waver us. God’s covenant with the people of Israel reaches to us today. Nothing can separate us from the covenant promises of God, not even death itself. God has promised to claim us as God’s own.

The Lenten season draws our attention to God’s new covenant with the people. An invitation to us from God, we are no longer slaves to Egypt or to our old selves, no longer trapped beneath the surface of hardened hearts, shame, or guilt. No longer bound by the old ways, we are set free to live as God calls us to live. The Lenten season reminds us that all things are being made new in this covenant promise. We are given a “new life”, made to be a covenant people of God.

Prayer: Heavenly God, From the least of these to the greatest, give us overflowing joy to share your love—not out of obligation, but because we cannot contain the good news of new life within us. You forgive the wicked and remember our sins no more! Teach us humility and give us the courage to live as your covenant people. Amen.