

The Feast of Saints Peter and Paul, Apostles  
St. Matthew 16:13-20  
June 29<sup>th</sup>, 2022  
Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC  
Simpsonville, SC  
Pastor Jerald Dulas

## Who Do Men Say That I Am?

*In Nomine Iesu!*

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

### **Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:**

O Lord, send out Thy Light and Thy Truth, let them lead us. O Lord, open Thou my lips, that my mouth may show forth Thy praise. O Lord, graciously preserve me, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Today we celebrate the saints for whom our parish is named. St. Peter and St. Paul, apostles of the Lord + Jesus, are who we celebrate. They boldly proclaimed the Word of God. They boldly confessed the Christ. They preached the Savior of the whole world even though it meant they would endure mockery, prison and death. They preached the Lord + Jesus Christ without fear because they believed wholeheartedly that He was the Messiah, the Anointed of the heavenly Father, Who had come down from Heaven to atone for the sins of the whole world, so that all those who believe on Him might have everlasting life. They preached without fear because they believed He was the Christ, the Son of the living God.

This was the confession that St. Peter gave to our Lord when He entered Caesarea Philippi and asked His Apostles what everyone was saying about Him. Who did men say that He was? The Apostles knew who He was. St. Peter gives the confession, but all the Apostles believed it. They all believed that He was the Son of the Living God; that He was the Messiah, the Anointed One of the Lord. Because they believed it, they would willingly endure suffering and death; they would gladly be martyred because of Who they believed the Lord + Jesus to be. He was the One Who came from Heaven to save them. They may have begun by believing that He would save them in an earthly way, but through His preaching, and His suffering, death and resurrection, the Apostles came to believe that He was sent to win for them forgiveness of all their sins.

This same confession is the same confession upon which our parish is formed. We also believe firmly and completely that our Lord + Jesus is the Savior of the whole world. We believe that He came to this earth—that He humbled Himself to be born of the Blessed Virgin Mary—in order to perfectly fulfill the Law of God for us, and suffer and die in our place—suffer our punishment—on the tree of the holy cross. This He did to win for us forgiveness of sins, eternal life and salvation. Like the Apostles, like St. Peter and St. Paul, we confess that our Lord + Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God. He is our Lord and Savior. He is our Lord God and Redeemer. Our parish was founded upon this confession, which is why we boldly preach to all those who enter into this holy house that our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ has atoned for their sins and won salvation for them. He was atoned for our sins, and won salvation for us.

When our Lord + Jesus first entered in Caesarea Philippi and asked His Apostles the question

of Who men said that He was the Apostles made it clear that those who were uncatechized always got it wrong. The Jews thought He was either St. John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah, or one of the other prophets. The Jews recognized Him as a great teacher. For only a great teacher could preach the way that He preached. They did not see Him as the Savior. He was a great man, but He was not their Savior. This is of course no different that the way people of today view the Lord + Jesus. Those who do not openly and outright reject Him as a figment of people's imagination, will try to make Him only a great teacher. To them He is just another person who had good things to say; He gave great advice on how to behave in this world, and find peace, joy and happiness in this life.

But that is the extent of their understanding of Who the Lord + Jesus is. They only view Him as a man; another great teacher with good things to say. The problem is that when a person sees the Lord + Jesus as only a man with good teachings, they can either listen to, or ignore whatever He has to say. They can pick and choose what teachings they want to follow and observe. Like the Jews, they want a + Jesus of Nazareth Who fits into their specific worldview. They do not want a Savior Who reveals their sinfulness through His perfect obedience of the Law. His perfection shows their imperfection in keeping the Law of God. In fact, they only want to obey the Law of God in so far as it suits their purposes. Our Lord's suffering and death also reveals our corruption, for we see in it the punishment that we deserve. We see the wrath of the Lord God poured out upon His One and Only Beloved Son, and come to see that this is the wrath of the Lord God which we deserve for our manifold transgressions; the sins which we commit daily and often.

St. Peter's confession, which was also eventually confessed by St. Paul, which we see confessed in the words of the Introit from his Second Epistle to St. Timothy, is the same confession that we make here in this place. Who do men say that the Lord + Jesus is? Without proper catechesis men say all sorts of wrong things about our Lord and Savior. But we who have been instructed in His Word confess with all the saints that He is the Christ, the Son of the Living God. We confess that He gives to us His most precious gifts of life and salvation through the working of the Holy Ghost through the means of grace. This is why He has seen fit in His grace and mercy to establish in our midst His Office of the Holy Ministry. He has established here in Simpsonville, SC, and in all her missions, a ministry of Word and Sacrament meant to teach all those who enter into this place about what our Lord + Jesus has done for us.

Therefore, my dear friends, it is very fitting that we are named for the two men who established the Church both among the Jews and among the Gentiles by preaching to all men that the man who was called + Jesus of Nazareth, was indeed the Messiah, the Son of the Living God, Who had come down from Heaven to become man in order to save us from our sins. The Lord God has been born of the Blessed Virgin Mary by the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost, in order that He might fulfill the Law and redeem us from sin, death and the power of Satan. This is the preaching of St. Peter and St. Paul, the Apostles. It is also the preaching that we continue to preach here in this place to all who enter through those doors.

May the Lord God Almighty—and may our Lord + Jesus Christ—grant us grace to continue to confess with St. Peter and St. Paul, the men for whom our parish is named, that the Lord + Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God, Who came to us to redeem us from all our enemies; from sin, from death, from the power of the devil; from the world, and from our very own sinful flesh. For upon this confession of St. Peter and St. Paul, indeed this confession of all the Apostles, the Lord + Jesus established His Church. He founded His Church, and this parish, upon the confession that He is Christ the Lord, the Savior of all mankind. Wherever two or three are gathered together in the Lord + Jesus Christ's Name to make this confession, the Lord + Jesus is there with them. And wherever the Lord + Jesus is He is establishing His Church in His midst.

He is here with us as we confess today with all the saints that the Lord + Jesus is the Christ, the

Son of the Living God. And He is handing out to us His blessed means of grace which grant to us forgiveness of sins, eternal life and salvation. He will continue to be with us for as long as we continue to meet, even if that meeting only consists of two or three persons. For He has promised to be with us and grant us faith to believe on Him and His works and merits, and receive from Him His precious gifts of forgiveness, life and salvation. He has promised to give this gift to all those who confess with us and with St. Peter and St. Paul that He is the Christ, the Son of the Living God. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

**Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:**

Almighty God, be pleased to accompany Thy Word with Thy Holy Spirit and grant that Thy Word would increase faith in us; bring into the Way of Truth all such as have erred; turn the hearts of the unrepentant; and for sake of Thy Name grant succor to all heavy hearts and those who are heavy-laden, that they may through the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ be relieved and preserved so that they succumb not to the temptation of despair but rather that they gain the victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil; through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with the Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

**The Votum:**

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

*Soli Deo Gloria!*