NOTES

Chapter II

Who Do You Say that I Am?

UNDERSTANDING

(for your preparation as a leader)
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VARSITY CATHOLIC

UNDERSTANDING

WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THIS PASSAGE?

Who do you say that I am? (Matthew 16:13-17)

That's the question Jesus posed to his disciples some 2,000 years ago (Matthew 16:15). And it's a question he asks each of us today. Who do you say that Jesus is? Is he a prophet? One of the world's great religious leaders? A good moral teacher? A wise sage? An inspiring revolutionary? How we answer this question impacts everything about our lives.

Jesus is Unique: He Makes Himself the Central Issue (John 14:6)

In most other religions, the founding leader claims to be a messenger of God, a teacher with an important lesson on how to live life or a prophet sent with a revelation from a deity. But Jesus was different. He made *himself* the central message. He said, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life; no one comes to the Father but by me" (John 14:6). Notice how Jesus didn't merely offer a way to God; he claimed to be *the* Way. He didn't just come to offer the world truth about God. He claimed to be that Truth. And he didn't just come to offer a way of life. He claimed to be the life. In sum, Jesus didn't merely summon people to believe in God; he called them to believe *in him* (John 6:36; 11:26).

The only reason Jesus said these things is that he viewed himself not just as some religious messenger from God, but God himself. And this brings us the very heart of what makes Christianity different from every other religion in the world.

Jesus' Actions: Jesus Does What God Does (Psalm 107:28-30, Matthew 8:23-27, 9:2-7)

In his words and in his actions, Jesus asserted an equality with God that would have been shocking to his first-century Jewish audience. He, for example, calmed the storms and made the seas quiet, which was something only the God of the Old Testament could do (Psalm 107:28-30; Matthew 8:23-27). As Biblical scholar Dr. Brant Pitre explains, "Should there be any doubt about the implications of Jesus's actions [in calming the storm], we need only turn to the reaction of Jesus's Jewish disciples: *'Who then is this, that even wind and sea obey him?'"* (Mark 4:41). In this context, this question implies that Jesus has not merely performed a remarkable miracle. Even more, he has displayed a power that the Old Testament repeatedly attributes to God alone."[1]

Jesus also claimed to be able to forgive people of all their sins — another divine quality (Matthew 9:2-7). It's one thing to forgive someone who has personally wronged you: "I forgive you for what you did to me." It's another thing to claim to be able to forgive every sin someone has ever committed against God and others. Especially in the first-century Jewish world, that's something only God could do. Yet, Jesus told people, "Your sins are forgiven," and the Jewish leaders were abhorred by this and accuse him of blasphemy (Matthew 9:2-3).

[1] Brandt Pitre, *The Case for Jesus (New York: Image Publishing, 2016), 125.*

Jesus's Words: Jesus Speaks about Himself as Equal to God (John 10:30, John 8:58)

Jesus also made remarkable statements about his unique relationship with the Father. On one occasion, he said, "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30). With these words, he put himself on par with God. His claim to be divine was so clear that the Jewish leaders picked up stones to stone him to death. They accused him of blasphemy, saying, "It is not for a good work that we stone you but for blasphemy; because you, being a man, make yourself God" (John 10:33).

On another occasion, Jesus said to the leaders in Jerusalem, "Before Abraham was, I AM" (John 8:58). This also astonished his listeners, because in this statement he not only claims to have existed long before Abraham, who died about 2,000 years before Christ, he also applies to himself the holy name of God, "I AM" (or in Hebrew, *Yahweh*), which was the name God revealed to Moses (Exodus 3:13). So holy was God's name that no Jew would ever dare to speak it. That's why it was so shocking for Jesus' audience to hear him say, "Before Abraham was, I AM." They would be hearing Jesus speak the unutterable name of God and apply it to himself! That's why many Jews, who were strict monotheists, were ready to stone him to death for blasphemy (John 8:58-59).

What Does This Mean for Me?

How do we respond to a man who speaks and acts in the Person of God? For some people in the modern world, the idea of Jesus claiming to be divine might be uncomfortable because of what that will mean for their life. If Jesus is not just a religious teacher but really is God, then he has authority over my life. What he teaches matters. I have to follow him and all that he says. And that might involve me having to make changes in how I live. That's why many people prefer to think of Jesus merely as a good moral teacher, someone who perhaps points us to God, who offers a good example and who inspires us to be better people. We can contain that kind of Jesus. We can keep him at a distance. We can pick and choose what we want to accept about his teachings and set aside other points that challenge us to change and grow.

"But the real Jesus won't let us do that," Edward Sri explains. "The real Jesus challenges us to make a choice like no other religious leader does. Unlike Buddha, Muhammad, Confucius, or other religious founders, Jesus repeatedly acted and spoke as God. So, he either is who he claimed to be, or he's a very bad man, a liar who deceived millions of people throughout the world into thinking he was God. Or at best, he was a very confused man — someone who sincerely thought he was God but was not. We can accept Jesus as Lord, we can accuse him of being a liar, or we can feel sorry for him as a deluded extremist or crazy man. But, as C.S. Lewis pointed out, it does not make any sense to say Jesus was merely a good man, a wise moral teacher, and a spiritual guide. Jesus doesn't give us that option."[2]

What C.S. Lewis points to is called the "trilemma" — three options for answering Jesus' personal question to each of us: "Who do you say that I am?" Jesus either is Lord, a Liar or a Lunatic. As Curtis Martin explains, "Jesus claimed to be God, so either he is God or he is not. If he's not God, then we are left with two options: he either knows that he is not God and is a liar, or he mistakenly thinks he is God and is a lunatic. The one thing he most certainly is not is merely a good man."[3]

[2] Edward Sri, *Love Unveiled: The Catholic Faith Explained (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2015), 66-67.*

[3] Curtis Martin, Made for More (Kentucky: Beacon Publishing, 2008), 22.

In other words, Jesus either was who he claimed to be — the Lord God — and we need to welcome him as Lord over our entire lives. Or he was a wicked liar, deceiving millions of people and someone we should fight against. Or he was a pathetic lunatic, someone who sincerely thought he was God but wasn't — someone for whom we might feel sorry, but not someone we'd admire and take life lessons from. The one answer, however, that doesn't make sense at all is to claim he was merely a good man, a good moral teacher. Jesus challenges us to make a choice about him: *Who do you say that I am?*

Finally, there is one more claim about Jesus that has come to the fore in recent years: some argue that Jesus didn't actually claim to be God, but his followers made up this claim after his death, adding it to their writings about Jesus and turning him into a legend. Over time, the story of Jesus was exaggerated, and the early Christians turned Jesus into something that he never was in real life.

When we look at this claim that Jesus was simply a legend, we have to try to understand why an early Christian leader, like one of the apostles, would exaggerate the story of Jesus. What would they have to gain? Peter Kreeft, a distinguished professor of philosophy at Boston College, explains what Christians had to gain if they did exaggerate claims about Jesus: "Here is what they got out of their hoax. Their friends and families scorned them. Their social standing, possessions, and political privileges were stolen from them by both Jews and Romans. They were persecuted, imprisoned, whipped, tortured, exiled, crucified, eaten by lions, and cut to pieces by gladiators."[4]

Indeed, all the original disciples of Jesus were persecuted for the faith.

[4] Peter Kreeft, *Fundamentals of the Faith: Essays in Christian Apologetics (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988), 62.*

And all but one of the apostles died as martyrs. Is it likely that they made up the stories of Jesus, exaggerated what he said and did and turned him into someone who claimed to be divine? If they wanted to save their lives, all they needed to do was deny Jesus and admit they made it all up. But not a single one did that. They all independently went to their deaths in different parts of the world to die for their belief in Jesus as the Son of God, who died for our sins and rose again on the third day. Would every single one, on their own, in their own place and in their own time, die for a lie? Not likely. If these early Christian leaders made up the stories of Jesus and turned him into a pious legend, we have to ask ourselves, "Why would so many people, independently, in their own place and at their own time, die for a lie?" *(See sidebar for more information on this topic.)*

SIDEBAR

Are the Gospel Accounts of Jesus Reliable?

Some might argue that Jesus was just a legend — that the stories in the Gospels don't give an accurate account of what Jesus really said and did in history, that the Gospel writers exaggerated Jesus' claims about himself. The problem with this theory is that there is significant evidence that the Gospels are historical, reliable biographies of Jesus.

First, the Gospels were written by disciples of the Lord and their disciples — not random people with just a vague, incidental recollection of Jesus' life, but trained disciples who possessed what scholars call "skilled memories" or "trained memories." Rabbis would train their disciples to remember, rehearse and pass on their teachings to others. It was a rigorous training of memorizing, practicing and getting feedback from peers and the rabbi himself

on how well the teaching was being expressed. As New Testament scholar David Allison explains, the disciples likely would have started "rehearsing" the teachings of Christ even during his lifetime, especially when they were sent on mission (Matthew 10:1-23).[5] Frequently bringing the core teaching to mind helps reinforce and retain one's memory of the message accurately. As Biblical scholar Brandt Pitre, explains, "anyone who is a teacher knows this to be true. I might not be able to tell you what I did last week, but I could give you a three-hour lecture about Jesus and the Jewish roots of the Last Supper with zero preparation because I have been talking about it all the time for the last ten years." [6]

Moreover, the Gospels exhibit many of the key features of other ancient biographies in the Greco-Roman world, such as a focus on a single individual's childhood, public life and death; an average length between 10,000 and 20,000 words; beginning the work with the ancestry of the person; and a literary style that does not report everything about a person or follow a strict chronological order. Ancient biographies claimed to be recording the truth about the person, and so do the Gospels. There is much more to say about this topic. For the fuller background, read Brandt Pitre's excellent work, *The Case for Jesus.* In the meantime, consider his summary conclusion:

"If you are going to hold to the theory that Jesus never claimed to be God, *you had better be committed to eliminating a lot of historical evidence*...you have to eliminate all of the manuscript evidence for the titles of the Gospels; eliminate the external evidence from ancient Christians and their pagan opponents; eliminate the literary parallels between the Gospels and ancient biographies; eliminate the passages in which the Gospels themselves insist that they are telling you what Jesus actually did and said; and eliminate the internal and external evidence that the Gospels were written within the lifetime of the apostles.

Likewise, in order to hang on to the theory that Jesus never claimed to be divine, you have to eliminate the entire Gospel of John and what it tells us about who Jesus claimed to be; eliminate the passages in the Synoptic Gospels in which Jesus take the divine name 'I am' and speaks as if he is the divine Son of Man; eliminate all the miracles in which Jesus does what only the God of the Old Testament can do; and eliminate all the evidence that Jesus was both repeatedly accused of blasphemy and condemned to death for blasphemy because of who he claimed to be...In other words, in order for the theory that Jesus never claimed to be God to be correct, you have to keep eliminating all of the evidence that doesn't fit the theory.

Now, of course, there's nothing to stop a person from trying to make all of this evidence disappear. Lots of people do it. Some of them are scholars. But I for one can't. It just isn't good history. It makes far more historical sense to me to conclude that the reason the idea that Jesus never claimed to be divine has to eliminate so much evidence for the theory to work is that the theory is wrong."[7]

[5] Dale Allison, *Constructing Jesus: Memory, Imagination, and History (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 25-26.*

[6] Brandt Pitre, *The Case for Jesus (New York: Image Publishing, 2016), 88.*

[7] *Ibid., 193-194.*

FOR MORE BACKGROUND: KEY CONCEPTS

The Name of Jesus (CCC 430):
Jesus means in Hebrew: "God saves." At the annunciation, the angel Gabriel gave him the name Jesus as his proper name, which expresses both his identity and his mission. Since God alone can forgive sins, it is God who, in Jesus his eternal Son made man, "will save his people from their sins". In Jesus, God recapitulates all of his history of salvation on behalf of men.

I AM (CCC 213):
The revelation of the ineffable name "I AM WHO AM" contains then the truth that God alone IS. The Greek Septuagint translation of the Hebrew Scriptures, and following it the Church's Tradition, understood the divine name in this sense: God is the fullness of Being and of every perfection, without origin and without end. All creatures receive all that they are and have from him; but he alone is his very being, and he is of himself everything that he is.

Christ (CCC 436):
The word "Christ" comes from the Greek translation of the Hebrew Messiah, which means "anointed". It became the name proper to Jesus only because he accomplished perfectly the divine mission that "Christ" signifies. In effect, in Israel those consecrated to God for a mission that he gave were anointed in his name. This was the case for kings, for priests and, in rare instances, for prophets. This had to be the case all the more so for the Messiah whom God would send to inaugurate his kingdom definitively. It was necessary that the Messiah be anointed by the Spirit of the Lord at once as king and priest, and also as prophet. Jesus fulfilled the messianic hope of Israel in his threefold office of priest, prophet and king.

"True God from True God" (CCC 242):
Following this apostolic tradition, the Church confessed at the first ecumenical council at Nicaea (325) that the Son is "consubstantial" with the Father, that is, one only God with him. The second ecumenical council, held at Constantinople in, kept this expression in its formulation of the Nicene Creed and confessed "the only-begotten Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, light from light, true God from true God, begotten not made, consubstantial with the Father".

DISCUSSION

DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR YOUR BIBLE STUDY

Passages: Matthew 16:13-17, 8:23-27, 9:2-7; Psalm 107:28-30; John 8:58, 10:30, 14:6

Introduction

1. Launching Question: When was the last time you found yourself in a period of waiting? What were you waiting for? What did you experience as you waited?

   Allow the group to discuss.

Who do you say that I am? (Matthew 16:13-17)

Note to the leader: Please read aloud.

In Jesus' time, the people of Israel were waiting. They had been in a season of waiting for over 2,000 years. What were they waiting for? For the promised Messiah, who would liberate them from their oppressors and restore the Kingdom of God. Into this time steps a man who begins exhibiting many signs of the Kingdom of God: healing the sick, blind, lame and mute, preaching with authority on the Kingdom of Heaven, performing countless miracles, and drawing thousands of people to follow him. From those that followed, he chose twelve to be his closest followers, and they spent every moment of many years together with him, getting an even closer look at the signs and teachings of this incredible man. Did they know whether or not he was the one they were waiting for? Let's begin our study by reading Matthew 16:13-15.

(Read Matthew 16:13-15)

2. Before we hear how the disciples respond, put yourself in the scene: Imagine Jesus coming to you at your home, at your workplace, at your school, and he asks you about what people in the world *today* think about him*: "Who do people say that I am?"* What would you say? What do people today say about Jesus? Who do they think he is?

   Answer: Allow the group to discuss. Possible answers might include: One of the world's great religious leaders, a good moral teacher, a wise sage, or an inspiring revolutionary. Yet others make the claim that he was and is God.

3. In this passage, Jesus then asks his disciples a second question, "But, who do you say that I am?" Why do you think Jesus asked them this question? Why might it be important for the disciples to answer Jesus' question *personally*?

   Allow the group to discuss.

Jesus is Unique: He Makes Himself the Central Issue (John 14:6)

Note to the leader: Please read aloud.

As we investigate Jesus' identity, let's look at a few ways that Jesus is unique among religious leaders. In John 14:6, he claims: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me." In this verse, he is not just claiming to be a messenger of God or a teacher with lessons on how to live life – he is making himself the central message, the way to God.

4. How might Jesus' view about himself in this statement be different from how other religious leaders in history viewed themselves?

   Answer: In most other religions, the founding leader claims to be a messenger of God, a teacher with an important lesson on how to live life or a prophet sent with a revelation from a deity. Muhmmed claimed to be the prophet Allah. Buddha taught principles on how to find a tranquil state of life. Confucius offered proverbial sayings on how to live wisely. But Jesus was different. He didn't just come to offer the world truth about God. He claimed to be that Truth. And he didn't just come to offer a way of life. He claimed to be the way and the life. In sum, Jesus didn't merely summon people to believe in God; he called them believe in him *(John 6:36; 11:26).*

Jesus' Actions: Jesus Does What God Does (Psalm 107:28-30, Matthew 8:23-27, 9:2-7)

Note to the leader: Please read aloud.

Next, let's see what it would have been like for the Jews of Jesus' time to witness the things Jesus was doing and saying. Many of his words and works corresponded to Jewish prophecies, and to truly understand who Jesus is, we have to consider his words and actions against the Jewish backdrop of his time. Jesus is revealing something very important about his identity through his miracles. Let's look at some examples of this in Scripture.

(Read Matthew 9:2-7)

5. The Jews understood that only God can forgive sins (see Mark 2:7). So, with that background in mind, why would Jesus's statement in verse 2 be so shocking? What is Jesus saying about himself by claiming to be able to forgive sins?

   Answer: Forgiving sins was a divine quality, something only God could do. Here, Jesus is asserting his equality with God by saying he can forgive sins. It's one thing to forgive someone who has personally wronged you. "I forgive you for what you did to me". It's another thing to claim to be able to forgive every sin someone has ever committed against God and others. Especially in the first-century Jewish world, that's something only God could do (see Mark 2:7). Yet, Jesus told people, "Your sins are forgiven," and the Jewish leaders were abhorred by this and accuse him of blasphemy (Matthew 9:2-3).

Note to the leader: Please read aloud.

To see another example of Jesus' actions revealing his identity, let's compare Psalm 107 and Matthew 8. (Note to leader: have two members of your group look up each of these verses and read them aloud.)

(Read Psalm 107:28-30)

(Read Matthew 8:23-27)

6. What correlation do you see between these two passages? What does this tell us about Jesus?

   *Answer: In the Old Testament, God is the creator, the only one with power over the wind and the sea. Indeed, though many miracles occur in the Old Testament, power over the wind and the sea was reserved for God alone. By calming the storm on the Sea of Galilee, Jesus is revealing that he is more than just a miracle worker; he is God. As Brant Pitre explains, "Should there be any doubt about the implications of Jesus's actions, we need only turn to the reaction of Jesus's Jewish disciples: '*Who then is this, that even wind and sea obey him?*' (Mark 4:41). In this context, this question implies that Jesus has not merely performed a remarkable miracle. Even more, he has displayed a power that the Old Testament repeatedly attributes to God alone."*[8]

Jesus's Words: Jesus Speaks about Himself as Equal to God (John 10:30, John 8:58)

Note to the leader: Please read aloud.

We've looked at Jesus's actions – performing incredible signs that fulfill Jewish prophecy and claiming to forgive sins. Now, let's turn to his words as well. What does Jesus say about himself? He makes some remarkable statements about his unique relationship with God. Let's look at a couple passages. (Note to leader: have two members of your group look up each of these verses and read them aloud.)

(Read John 10:30)

[8] Brandt Pitre, *The Case for Jesus (New York: Image Publishing, 2016), 125.*

(Read John 8:58)

7. What is Jesus claiming in these verses? And how do you think the Jews of the day would have responded to such bold statements?

   Answer: In these verses, we see clearly that Jesus is claiming to be God. When he said, "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30), Jesus put himself on par with God. His claim to be divine was so clear that the Jewish leaders picked up stones to stone him to death. They accused him of blasphemy, saying, "It is not for a good work that we stone you but for blasphemy; because you, being a man, make yourself God" (John 10:33).

   In John 8:58, Jesus astonished his listeners, not only because he claims to have existed long before Abraham who died about 2,000 years before Christ; he also applies to himself the holy name of God "I AM" (or in Hebrew, Yahweh), which was the name God revealed to Moses (Exodus 3:13). So holy was God's name that no Jew would ever dare to speak it. That's why it was so shocking for Jesus' audience to hear him say, "Before Abraham was, I AM." They would be hearing Jesus speak the unutterable name of God and apply it to himself! The Jews respond just a few verses later: "'We are not stoning you for a good work but for blasphemy. You, a man, are making yourself God." (v. 33). He is claiming to be God.

The Trilemma

Note to the leader: Please read aloud.

So who is Jesus, really? Jesus comes proclaiming a kingdom, performing signs, claiming to forgive sins, and even claiming a unique

relationship with God, and this is just a small sampling of what Jesus said and did. Jesus was not just starting a movement, leading people or helping those who were suffering. He certainly did all that, too. But through his many powerful words and supernatural works, Jesus was making a most unique claim about himself: he was claiming to be God. Many people today, however, are not comfortable with Jesus' claim to be divine. They prefer to think of Jesus merely as a good moral teacher, someone who perhaps points us to God, who offers a good example and who inspires us to be a better people: Jesus was good man — someone we can learn from and be inspired by — but not God.

8. Why might people today prefer to think of Jesus as "just a good man" — a good example, a good prophet, a good teacher? Why might they be hesitant to say he is God? If Jesus is really who he claimed to be, what impact would that have on our lives — on how we live?

   Answer: For some people in the modern world, the idea of Jesus claiming to be divine might be uncomfortable because of what that would mean for their life. If Jesus is not just a religious teacher but really is God, then he has authority over my life. What he teaches matters. I have to follow him and all that he says. And that might involve me having to make changes in how I live. That's why many people prefer to think of Jesus merely as a good moral teacher, someone who perhaps points us to God, who offers a good example and who inspires us to be better people. We can contain that kind of Jesus. We can keep him at a distance. We can pick and choose what we want to accept about his teachings and set aside other points that challenge us to change and grow.

Note to the leader: Please read aloud:

But C.S. Lewis, the great 20th century Christian writer, and many others have noted that the popular belief in Jesus as merely a good man does not make any sense. As Curtis Martin explains, "Jesus claimed to be God, so either he is God or he is not. If he's not God, then we are left with two options: he either knows that he is not God and is a liar, or he mistakenly thinks he is God and is a lunatic. The one thing he most certainly is not is merely a good man."[9] This idea has often been referred to as the "Trilemma." Jesus is either who he said he was (Lord), or he is a very bad man who wickedly deceived millions of people into believing he was divine (Liar), or he was a pathetic crazy man who sincerely thought he was God but was not (Lunatic).

9. What do you think of these three possibilities? Is Jesus Lord, Liar, or Lunatic?

   Answer: Allow the group to discuss. Use the following points to help drive the discussion:

   a. *If Jesus was a liar, then we have to ask ourselves, why would He lie? What did he gain? If he was merely looking for popularity and mustering many followers, why did he reject the opportunity to be made a king (John 6:15)? And if his claim to be divine is in large part what leads him to be condemned to death, why would he die for a lie?*

   b. *If Jesus was a lunatic, then we have to ask ourselves how he was able to preach some of the greatest ethical teachings of all time, like the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7). And why did others perceive such unique real authority in his teaching (Matthew 7:29)? Do the teachings about loving*

[9] Made for More, 22.

your enemy, praying for those who persecute you, and being merciful sound like the words of lunatic? (Matthew 5:7, 5:44).

c. *If Jesus is Lord, what does that mean for us?*

Note to the leader: The following section is optional information if this point comes up in your discussion.

Option to Address the Question: "Was Jesus Just a Legend?"

So, of these three options (Lord, Liar or Lunatic,) it is most reasonable to believe that Jesus is who he said he was: Lord. But there may be one more objection people might make about all this. Some people might say, but Jesus is just a legend. He didn't really claim that he was God. According to this view, the Biblical accounts of Jesus' life are not history; they're just legends, exaggerated stories that made the simple human Jesus out to be more than he ever really was in history. Jesus never claimed to be God; his followers just made up the stories about his various claims to divinity.

But does this theory hold up to scrutiny? Peter Kreeft, a distinguished professor of philosophy at Boston College who has been studying Jesus and the Christian faith on an academic level for more than 50 years, asks what would have been the motive---what did Christians have to gain if they did exaggerated claims about Jesus? "Here is what they got out of their hoax. Their friends and families scorned them. Their social standing, possessions, and political privileges were stolen from them by both Jews and Romans. They were persecuted, imprisoned, whipped, tortured, exiled, crucified, eaten by lions, and cut to pieces by gladiators."[10]

[10] Peter Kreeft, Fundamentals of the Faith: Essays in Christian Apologetics, (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988), 62.

Also, all the original disciples of Jesus were persecuted for the faith. And all but one of the apostles died as martyrs. Is it likely that they made up the stories of Jesus, exaggerated what he said and did and turned him into someone who claimed to be divine? If they wanted to save their lives, all they each needed to do was deny Jesus and admit they made it all up. But not a single one did that.

End of Optional section.

The Disciples' Response

Note to the leader: Please read aloud.

Now, let's consider the option that Jesus is Lord a bit more closely. And to do so, let's go back to the passage from the beginning of this study. Jesus asked his disciples, "But who do you say that I am?"

(Read Matthew 16:16-17)

10. How does Peter respond? Who does he say Jesus is?

    Answer: Peter states, "You are the Christ, the son of the living God."

11. Peter accepts that Jesus is God. What about you? Who do you think Jesus is? Is Jesus Lord?

    Allow the group to discuss.

12. In considering who Jesus is, ponder his words in Luke 6:46: "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you?" What does

it mean for us if we call Jesus Lord? How should that fact that Jesus is Lord affect our lives? According to this verse, what is Jesus concerned about?

Answer: Allow the group to discuss. There's a saying: "Jesus either is Lord of all, or he is not Lord at all." In other words, Jesus is really who he says he is — Lord of all, Lord over all the Universe — or he's not Lord at all. But if he is the Lord of all, then I should welcome him as Lord over my life. And that means I can't just call him "Lord" or agree on a quiz that "Jesus is Lord." I need to do what he says. I need to follow his commandments. I need to surrender my life to him and his plan for my life. In sum, if Jesus is not just a religious teacher but really is God, then he has authority over my life. What he teaches matters. I have to follow him and all that he says. And that involves making changes in how I live.

13. How would your life be different, if you really followed Jesus as Lord? If you gave your life even more to Jesus' Lordship now, what in your life would change?

Oftentimes, we can think that Christianity and sport ought to be separate. Jesus invites us to let him be Lord of our whole life, including our sport. What prevents you from bringing Jesus into your sport? How can you bring Jesus into your sport this week?

Allow the group to discuss. Note to Leader: Perhaps share from your own experience how following Jesus as Lord of your life has changed your life.

NOTES