

WEDNESDAY MORNING: Seeing with God's eyes

INTRODUCTION

- We are midway through our mission trip work week.
- Yesterday, we started looking at how we were fitting-in/getting along with our teammates and co-workers.
- Today is more of the same, but with a little bit wider scope: Why are we doing what we're doing this week and what do other people think about what we are doing this week?
- This is a natural thing to think about. In today's scripture story, we see Jesus doing it as well. He is asking his disciples questions about himself and his work.
- Let's see how that conversation goes.

READ Matthew 16:13-18

13 Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" **14** And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." **15** He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" **16** Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." **17** And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. **18** And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it."

ASK (answers in parenthesis)

- In verse 13, what does Jesus ask his disciples to tell him? (what OTHER people [i.e. word on the street] is about Jesus)
- In verse 14, what ARE other people saying about Jesus? (that he's someone else or a prophet)
- Then Jesus asks his disciples who they think he is. How does Peter respond? (that Jesus is the Messiah**)
- What does Jesus say causes Peter's insight/answer? (divine inspiration – God is helping Peter to see/think – verse 17)

TELL

- All sorts of people are going to have all sorts of opinions about you and what you do.
- But the opinions to trust the most are the ones that are divinely inspired.
- Challenge of the Day: What do you think God wants you to see/know/think about this Mission Trip and what do you think God wants you to see/know/think about yourself during this week?

CLOSING PRAYER *Recommended format:* Adult Leader asks for prayer requests and then leads the prayer (start to finish) in a pretty succinct matter that mentions the named prayer requests, maybe mentions something from the scripture story and then asks/invites God's help and guidance and blessing into the work day. Amen.

****NOTE:** *Christ is the Greek word for messiah. Messiah is a Hebrew word that means "the anointed." Back when Israel had kings, they anointed a king. So there's royalty associated with the word. Who or what the messiah would be was a bit of a fuzzy mess for the Israelites. The general consensus was that the messiah would be a political leader, a King David 2.0, who would create independence for Israel, increase the nation's borders, and thus bring stability to their land – but also a prophet-like individual who would restore/return the Israelites' focus to God.*

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DECOMPRESS

- We're going to go around the circle, now, and share with each other one thing that you did today that you keep thinking about, that surprised you or that made you uncomfortable.
- When it's your turn, start by saying your name.
- **RECOMMENDED FORMAT:** Adult leader starts. Then proceed around the circle. Everyone is expected to share. If someone can't think of something, pass them by and then come back.

REFLECT

- This morning, we read and briefly discussed the story of Jesus asking his disciples about himself and his work.
- When Peter answers, Jesus tells Peter that his answer is divinely inspired.
- Our challenge for the day was "What do you think God wants you to see/know/think about this UCCVF Mission Trip and what do you think God wants you to see/know/think about yourself during this week?"
 - **Suggestion for adult leaders:** Here's an opportunity to be very affirming of the youth by sharing what you've learned about the youth that you really appreciate. Then give thanks to God for being able to experience these gifts that the youth have shared this week.
 - **RECOMMENDED FORMAT:** This is meant to be more of an open discussion format. No need to go around the circle. And people might respond to what is shared. Other questions/topics might be raised. As the leader, there might be experiences that you'll want to raise and ask for responses about.

TELL

- It's important that we help with physical work, like we've been doing this week.
- However, sometimes what we do might not be understood by other people – by people who are farther away from us, just like the people who were farther away from Jesus misunderstood who he was.
- How others think about us can have an effect on us. Which is why it also important to keep asking and listening to God about what God sees and knows you/us to be: God's gift(s). And, the more we seek God, the more often we know how to live into the truth of being God's gifts to others.
- One important way that we see and hear how we are God's gifts, is from those who are seeking to do the same thing. Which is why we have these conversations. To help you see and know how those who are close to you, see how God is at work in you.
- Let's close with (song and) prayer.

MUSIC/SINGING (optional)

CLOSING PRAYER

Recommended format: Adult leader will start the prayer, and then say something along the lines of, "At this time, God, we lift to you our joys and concerns both outloud and silently." This then provides opportunity for everyone in the group to pray. When it feels like enough time has passed, Adult leader then closes the prayer. **NOTE:** The introductory part of the prayer by the Adult leader can be pretty succinct – some naming of joys and thanksgiving. The closing part of the prayer can be a place where the Adult leader can lift up the concerns of the group that were raised in the sharing time. The closing part of the prayer can also be a good place to give thanks to God for the individuals in the group.