**Mark 8:27-35 27Jesus went away with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that I am?” 28They told him, “John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others say one of the prophets.” 29“But who do you say I am?” he asked them. Peter answered him, “You are the Christ.” 30Then he warned them not to tell anyone about him. 31Jesus began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things; be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the experts in the law; be killed; and after three days rise again. 32He was speaking plainly to them. Then Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. 33But after turning around and looking at his disciples, Jesus rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind me, Satan! You do not have your mind set on the things of God, but the things of men.” 34He called the crowd and his disciples together and said to them, “If anyone wants to follow me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. 35For whoever wants to save his life will lose it. But whoever loses his life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it.**

A Mouth of Good Confession

How many times have you prayed the Lord’s Prayer and said, “Hallowed by thy name?” Do you know what those words mean? It means that God’s name is certainly holy by itself. But we pray that we too would be people who keep it holy by what we say and do. God’s name is kept holy when his Word is taught in its truth and purity and when we as children of God lead holy lives, Godly live, account to it. This is what we want to do because God has made us his children. Whoever teaches and lives contrary to God’s Word dishonors God’s name among us. This is what we want to avoid out of respect for God and who he is.

To go deeper into what this means, pretend God is the CEO and owner of the world’s most successful business. He’s really nice and you want to do business with him because every person and company that does business with him improves. You make an appointment to see him at his office. People are coming and going, and yet he has agreed to meet with you and do business with you. He has given you time in his packed schedule. You can’t wait to meet him. You enter the office build and go up to his office floor. There you are greeted by his secretary. “What do you want?” (make it gruff) she says. You wonder if you are in the right place. The secretary looks at her screen and says, “I suppose you are Mr. So-and-So. Sit down and take a seat. You people come parading in here as if the boss has all the time in the world. Don’t you know he has more important things to do?” You say, “Excuse me. I must have the wrong place.” Then, you leave.

Do you get the idea? The boss might be the nicest man in the world. But if the receptionist misrepresents her boss, most people will get the wrong impression and leave. We are God’s receptionists. People don’t discover God by themselves. God uses us to present him to the world. They find out about God and our Savior through people. They find out about God and the Savior through you and me. What is the impression you give people of God and Jesus? We pray that it is one that hallowed God’s name. Help us do this dear Father in heaven. Keep us from bring dishonor to your name even though it looks and might come from a innocent appearing intentions.

With all the miracles Jesus did, with all the prophecies Jesus fulfilled in his life and ministry, with all Jesus taught, a lot of people just didn’t get it. Jesus and his disciples were walking to the next place. **On the way he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that I am?”They told him, “John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others say one of the prophets.”** Honestly, it’s not a bad list of people. It would be an honor for most to be considered as part of that kind of list. But the popular opinions about Jesus fell short of the truth. They didn’t say he was the Son of God. They didn’t say he was the one God had promised. They didn’t say he was the Savior of the world. It showed people misunderstood who Jesus was.

Who do you say that Jesus is? I’m sure all of you would echo Peter’s words, **“You are the Christ.”** Peter had it right and so do you. Jesus is the Christ, the promised Savior. Jesus is the Son of the Living God, meaning he is God himself. How did Peter get this right when others got it wrong? Because God had revealed it to him. Peter heard Jesus speak God’s Word. He listened to him and took to heart what Jesus said. He saw the miracles. He saw the prophecies fulfilled. And through the Holy Spirit, Peter believed. And so have you.

Even though you may never answer this question before Jesus, you will have to answer his question. Someone, somewhere at sometime will ask you, “Who do you say Jesus is?” What’s the answer you will give? When a friend says, “I think all religions are the same. It doesn’t make any difference what you believe?” what will you say? If someone thinks it’s just about living a good life, what will you say? When someone even though they are really good for you gets you to question or give up what you have been taught in the Bible about how God wants you to live, how will you answer? Will you still make the confession, “Jesus is the Christ” or will you jump to the other side.

Peter shows us that other side today when he tried to interfere with Jesus’ work. This second conversation took place soon after. **Jesus began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things; be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the experts in the law; be killed; and after three days rise again. 32He was speaking plainly to them. Then Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. 33But after turning around and looking at his disciples, Jesus rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind me, Satan! You do not have your mind set on the things of God, but the things of men.” 34He called the crowd and his disciples together and said to them, “If anyone wants to follow me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. 35For whoever wants to save his life will lose it. But whoever loses his life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it.**Jesus said the Son of Man must suffer. There was no other way that people could be saved. It had to be this way or no way at all.

Peter didn’t want Jesus to be the Christ. He scolded Jesus for talking about death. Why would Peter do so? One moment he said Jesus was the Christ and the next the Devil had him working against the Savior. How can this be? Sometimes this happens, in the most innocent way from the ones that would be considered the most innocent. Sometimes it happens when Christian’s are ignorant about all of God’s truth. Sometimes Christians decide to put God aside and follow Satan rather than God. How is Satan talking to you? How is he getting you to give up your Christians cross? Sometimes it happens because Christians let Satan convince them they can do something different from what God says and it will be better.

As Jesus said to Peter, **Get behind me, Satan! You do not have your mind set on the things of God, but the things of God, but the things of men.** No matter how innocent it appears to be, no matter how good you thing it is, no matter how innocent it appears, or how much you think it’s not hurting anything, Satan needs to be told to get behind.

Have any of us ever made a perfect confession of our faith all the time and never gotten in the way of Jesus’ work? I don’t think that we have done much better than Peter. Sometimes we can make a wonderful confession of faith in our Savior! When we do, it is because God has used us and opened our mouths to declare his praises. Help us to do this, dear Father in heaven! And sometimes we can have in mind the things of men and get in the way of Jesus’ work. Keep us from doing this, dear Father in heaven! But in the end, by God’s grace, Peter was saved. And so are we. In the end, God did use Peter’s mouth for the good of his kingdom, and God will use ours also. Amen.