

Confirmation

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Preacher: Bishop Trevor Walters

[0 : 00] One of the questions at our theological college was, what would the faculty say if Jesus appeared to them and said to them, and who do you say that I am?

This was a question raised by the students about the professors. For we feared they would say something like, well, you are the eschatological manifestation of the ground of our being, the kerygma manifest in decision and conflict.

And Jesus would have said, what? For if we listen to his record, it's so much clearer. I'm the light of the world.

Anyone who comes to me will no longer walk in darkness, but will have the light of life. The Pharisees, in hearing the declaration, and the Pharisees and theological professors, sorry for that close juxtaposition.

It's a different country. There's no, no... The Pharisees listening to the clarity of the simplicity of Jesus saying, I'm the light of the world, say to him, oh, no, no, no.

[1 : 35] Your record doesn't count. You don't have the right pedigree. We don't buy it. Too simple. Jesus' response to them intrigues me.

He says to these folk, I know where I came from and where I'm going. And I expect Jesus to say, and do you?

Like any good preacher, and do you know? But he doesn't. He says to them, I know where I'm going and where I came from.

Do you know where I came from and where I'm going? What Jesus does is make sure that the primary question is the primary question.

Where you're going and your purpose is not the primary question. It may be interesting for you. It may have some significance to you.

[2 : 46] But if you don't answer the first question correctly, which is, do you know where Jesus came from? And do you know where he's going? You'll make a mess of answering the second question.

I can tell you that because I made lots of messes in algebra. And algebra requires that you get the questions answered in the right orders. Now I'm a Brit and so I have a mnemonic for remembering algebraic.

It's, bless my dear Aunt Sally. Never had an Aunt Sally, but it's brackets, multiplication, addition, subtraction. And if you answer the questions in that order, you don't add on to life more than you should.

You don't take away from life's fundamental question what you're in danger of doing. You don't divide up your life in a mess.

Instead, you multiply your life based upon the kingdom of God. The primary question then is, do you know where Jesus came from and where he's going?

[3 : 59] And these confirmation candidates so articulately tonight have told us, yes they do. They may not have all the answers, as Sam so wisely said, but they know that this is the starting place.

And if they get this question answered correctly, who you are and where you're going will get sorted out just fine. Just fine.

About eight days before the transfiguration, Jesus asked the disciples the same question. Who do men say that I am?

Who do people have me pegged? How do they have me pegged? And the answer was, some think you're Elijah, some think you're one of the prophets.

But who do you say that I am? Jesus asked them. And Peter's great confession, you're the son of the living God.

[5 : 09] And Jesus says to him, blessed are you, Peter, for flesh and blood did not reveal that to you. That's a gift.

That's one of God's revelations. And what we pray for tonight is that there will be many revelations from the Holy Spirit revealing who Jesus is.

Now I personally can't wait to get to the cake and to the the conflagration candidates, the ones I haven't seen yet, and ask them, tell me what happened.

Let me tell you what I heard or saw when I was praying for you. And I'm hoping other people are going to be globbing over them saying, well, let me tell you what I saw.

What I saw. What I saw. What I saw. What I saw. What I saw. What I saw. Because tonight is about being clear of who Jesus is.

[6 : 13] Where he came from. Where he's going. And building our lives on that wonderful truth. And if we get that truth right for our lives, then all of life's questions will get themselves sorted out one way or the other.

I think I've shared this with the morning congregation at St. John's, but there are a lot more young people here tonight and you'll relate a bit more perhaps than some of those more stately folk in the morning.

The question of who am I was the question that haunted my 15th and 16th year. Who am I? I'd lie awake at night wondering who I am.

Who am I? As if somehow if that got answered the world would now be fine. And one night at about 11 o'clock I heard my parents still up and so I came back downstairs and cornered my father on the stairs and said, Dad, tell me what's your purpose of life?

Now my father didn't have the advantage of a Christian faith and so this was a very nasty question to be given at 11 o'clock at night with no preparation.

[7 : 41] And he paused and thought and then said to me, well, son, I think my life's purpose is to make your life a better one.

Okay, thank you dad. Good night. I sat bolt upright in bed and thought, I've been had. He's passed the question on to me.

He's not going to answer it. He hasn't answered it. All he's trying to do is make my life better so perhaps I could find the meaning of life. And shortly after that I met Jesus Christ and I no longer needed to worry about the question of who I am because my identity was found as a child of God, as a son of the creator of the universe, as a human being loved by its maker, as one who has a destiny and a purpose and I invite you to pursue your destiny and purpose as you seek to answer the question of who you are in the bigger question of who Jesus is.

Amen. Cake. Thank you.