

Who do you say that I am? This is the question Jesus posed in today's gospel, and it is a good one for all of us to consider. But I also want us to consider this question as though we are the one asking it. What would be the answer if we asked this question to family, friends, co-workers, acquaintances, or Christ? Who would each of them say we are?

We think we know how others see us, but do they? Are we the people that we want to be? Are we the people that God wants us to be? And it's important not to concentrate on our shortfalls.

There is a book titled "Losers Like Us," and the author asks: if you were the Son of God, would you have chosen those "12 losers" (apostles) to be the foundation for your church? They were normal everyday people, sinners, failures in many ways. Would you have chosen Peter to be the rock for the church?

It's amazing that Christ picked him, with his track record. Peter is almost too human, too like ourselves. In the Gospels, we see his ups and downs. He made mistakes and was often corrected by Jesus. If we looked at him only from his shortfalls, he probably wouldn't be our idea of a saint.

If Peter were to have asked others "who do you say I am?," people who didn't see him in the totality of his life may have judged him based upon one of his worst moments, when he denied knowing Jesus 3 times.

Each and every one of us is more important than one moment in our lifetime, and we can't be defined by that one moment. Remember Jesus forgave Peter and gave him the chance to begin again. Peter felt fear, loneliness and despair, like we do. And Jesus didn't cut him off. Jesus understands our weakness, too; he doesn't cut us off simply because we fail in our faith occasionally.

With everything going on right now – the pandemic, the economy, the election and the uncertainty of it all – we can make mistakes, be corrected, feel like a failure, and want to lash out. Christ never promised Peter or us that life would be easy. Our difficulties and struggles help us grow when we truly believe that Christ loves us through it all.

Jesus's love, His forgiveness, these second, third and fourth chances given, were the rocks in Peter's life, and in ours. Christ believes in us and loves us and that will never change. Each time Peter regained his faith and reasserted his love he was put in charge of more and more things, and ultimately the entire Church.

We are so much like Peter. We blow hot and cold in our loyalty to Christ, sometimes strong, sometimes weak. What's important is to look at ourselves to see if we are growing as Christians, if we are becoming more emotionally attached to Christ. Without a warm relationship with Christ, such as Peter had, we are only on the fringes of Christianity. We are like someone talking about love compared with someone who is in love.

So each time that we fail or go through difficulties, are we looking to be better and stronger in our faith? Are we trying to become the kind of person that Christ wants us to be? Are we spreading the love and faith that Christ has in us? When people see us, are we rocks of our faith, projecting that faith in our actions, or are we projecting anger, frustration or fear?

We have the opportunity to be rocks for others in these uncertain times, to be rocks of faith that people need and look for from us, to display the kind of strength, faith, courage and love that can only be found from those who have a true relationship with Christ. How we are to one another is how we will be known.

So, in the total picture of your life, and not one single moment, who do people say that you are?

Deacon Corey Compton

Christ the King Parish

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