

Sunday, August 23, 2026 - 13th Sunday after Pentecost

Isaiah 51: 1- 6

2 - Look to Abraham your father and to Sarah who bore you;

for he was but one when I called him, but I blessed him and made him many.

Cf. Jacob in Genesis 32: 9-11 – "O God of my father Abraham and my father Isaac, I am not worthy of the least of all the steadfast love and all the faithfulness that you have shown to your servant, for with only my staff I crossed this Jordan; and now I have become two companies. Deliver me, please, from the hand of my brother Esau, for I am afraid of him."

3 - For the LORD will comfort Zion; he will comfort all her waste places,
and will make her wilderness like Eden, her desert like the garden of the LORD.

Psalms 138

1 - I give you thanks, O LORD, with my whole heart.

2 - I give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and your faithfulness.

Cf. CeCe Winans – "Goodness of God"

6 - For though the LORD is high, he regards the lowly; but the haughty he perceives from far away.

Cf. Mary's Magnificat – Luke 1: 47-55

7 - You stretch out your hand, and your right hand delivers me.

Cf. Peter – Matthew 14: 28-31

Romans 12: 1-8

1 - I appeal to you therefore, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice.

A living sacrifice can always get off the altar.

2 - Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your minds.

3 - I say to everyone not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think.

True humility – not to think less of yourself, but to think of yourself less.

4-5 - For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another.

Cf. 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4, 1 Peter 4

Most fully expanded upon in 1 Corinthians, which was probably written earlier

6-8 - We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, ministry, teaching, exhortation, generosity, leadership, compassion, cheerfulness.

Matthew 16: 13-20

13 - Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi.
Center of pagan worship – one of the headwaters of the Jordan River

He asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?"
Jesus began with the easier question – Who do other people say that I am?

14 - They said, "Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets."
What are some of the ways in which people today would answer the question, "Who is Jesus?"

15 - He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"
Jesus went on to ask the most important question, "Who do you say that Jesus is?"
Who is Jesus to you? What do you believe about Jesus?
It does matter what you believe about Jesus.
C. S. Lewis re Jesus – Liar, Lunatic, or Lord – Crook, Kook, or Christ

16 - Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

17 - 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."

Who or what is the rock on which Jesus will build His church?

Peter as the first pope?

Peter's faith?

God's revelation of Himself in and through Jesus?

"The gates of Hades will not prevail"

An amazing statement for Jesus to make in a stronghold of pagan worship

Who is on the defensive? Who is on the offensive?

The gates were where a city was most vulnerable

Where are the forces of spiritual darkness most vulnerable?

Do you think of the forces of spiritual darkness as vulnerable?

How would your life be different if you truly believed that the forces of spiritual darkness are vulnerable?

The amazing effect that light has on darkness

What Peter believed empowered him.

Peter was not perfect. He would continue to have struggles, but he would have new confidence and new courage because of his deep and abiding convictions about who Jesus is and what Jesus did.

If we know who Jesus is and what Jesus did, then we, too, can have a new confidence and a new courage, and we will be able to speak with a new conviction.

Who Do You Say Jesus Is?