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SERMON – SAINT JOSEPH PARISH
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“What do you think of me?”...Jesus asked the Pharisees this question...he asks us the same question...“What do you think of me?”

The action in today’s Gospel takes place during the final weeks of the life of Jesus on Earth. We’re very familiar with the antics of the Pharisees...they always try to trap Jesus. But just who are the Sadducees mentioned at the beginning the Gospel?

The Pharisees and the Sadducees were the two main political parties within Judaism. The major difference between them...the Pharisees believed in angels, the resurrection of the dead, a final judgment, and heaven and hell. The Sadducees did not believe in any of the above.

Jesus has just turned the tables on the Sadducees, who tried to trick him with a question about marriage in heaven. He tells them their theology is flawed...they don’t know their own Scriptures...there will be no need for marriage in heaven...the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, is the God of the living...not the dead.

It’s now the Pharisees turn. They ask Jesus which is the greatest commandment. Jesus answers the Great Commandment is to Love God with our whole heart, soul and mind; and to love others the way we want to be loved. The right answer! Since the Pharisees knew all of the Law of Moses and the teachings of the prophets depended on the Great Commandment...they were smart enough not to ask any more trick questions.

Jesus now turns the tables on the Pharisees and asks them a question about whose descendant the Messiah is. They answered he was descended from King David. The Pharisees probably thought they were off the hook with that answer. Wrong!

Jesus then asks them if that is true, why did the Holy Spirit inspire David to call him “Lord”. Jesus quotes Psalm 110: “The Lord said to my Lord, the King; sit here at my right side until I put your enemies under your feet.” Jesus asks them again to explain how the Messiah is a descendant of King David if he calls him “Lord”.

The Pharisees’ self-righteousness and high opinion of themselves and hatred of Jesus kept them from understanding Jesus was really asking them, “What do you think of me?”

“Lord” is a title of respect that would have been used by a young person when addressing his father, uncle, elder, or when talking about an ancestor. A father or an uncle would never have called his son or nephew ‘Lord’.

When I was a little boy I usually called my father “Daddy”; sometimes I called him “Sir”...he never called me by that name. Although, when I misbehaved he would look at me and firmly say...“MISTER”. When I was much older there were times he did call me “sir”. I’m not sure why...perhaps he was saying, “you’re all grown up now, ready to make grown-up decisions”.

There is no question King David was great; the Messiah is greater; Jesus is the Messiah. Jesus sits down at God’s right side, which we say in the Nicene Creed, because his work on Earth is complete and he now reigns in heaven. He is claiming the place that is rightfully his from the beginning. Jesus said, “Before Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, I AM.”

Jesus quotes Psalm 110 to make the point the religious experts who kept trying to trap him really didn’t understand the truth about their own religion. Otherwise they would have understood King David’s prophetic words when he called the Messiah, who is his own descendant, “my Lord”.

We call Jesus our Lord and Master...and indeed he is. Jesus is King David’s Lord and he is our Lord. He is Lord over all of us. His Lordship is not like anything any ruler, government official, or even religious leader can offer, because it is a Lordship of pure and selfless Love.

Listen again to the question Jesus is asking us: “What do you think of me?” What do we think of Jesus? Let’s not hesitate to embrace Jesus as “Lord” over every facet of our lives!

