

## I. The Casual Opinion (18-19)

“Who do the crowds say that I am?”

- A. A mysterious man who is a sign (18-19a) - “And they answered, John the Baptist...”
- B. A godly man with miracles (19b) - “...but others say, Elijah...”
- C. A courageous man with a message (19c)- “...and others, that one of the prophets of old has risen.”

## II. The Personal Decision (20-21)

- A. The singular question (20a) - “Then He said to them, But who do you say that I am?”
- B. The stout declaration (20b) - “And Peter answered, The Christ of God.”
- C. The surprising prohibition (21) - “And He strictly charged and commanded them to tell this to no one.” **No cross yet!**

## III. The Gospel Proclamation (22)

- A. A purposed proclamation (22a) - “The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes...”
- B. A painful proclamation (22b) - “...and be killed...”
- C. A prevailing proclamation (22c) - “...and on the third day be raised.”

## IV. The Powerful Conclusion (23-26)

- A. Hear the mandate (23) - “If anyone would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me.”
- B. Receive the mystery (24) - “For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it.”
- C. Do the math (25) - “For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?”
- D. Confess the Master (26) - “For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.”

**Typical Gospel invitation:**

**Ask Jesus into your heart so you can go to Heaven when you die.**

**Biblical Gospel invitation:**

**I invite you to commit your life to Jesus Christ today. Renounce your loyalty to yourself and this world with all of its goals and philosophies. Commit now to identify with Jesus Christ and His selfless sacrifice. Come hollow and hungry and ask God to keep you this way. The path is not primarily one of brilliance and laughter and gain in this life but, rather of death and sacrifice and letting go in this life. You will forfeit your own glory and your desire to make a name for yourself. You will renounce sole ownership of your time and your talents and your treasure. You will embrace being misunderstood and maligned, scorned and slandered and being viewed as a fool who lived for Another whom you have never seen. Your joy will then rest in the fame of Jesus. Your sorrow will be in discerning how others little regard Him. You will speak of Him, pray to Him, wait upon Him, trust Him, obey Him, praise Him, sing of Him, and serve Him. Ultimately you will so delight in Him that you will be convinced that there is no greater reason for living. He will become everything to you, and you will most certainly be aware that you are daily carrying a cross of temporary loss but eternal gain. Your selfish ways will die, and you will endeavor to serve others. Your pride will be affixed to the cross you carry as you will know that to live for yourself is to die a slow and meaningless death. There will be much reward as you carry your cross but most of that reward will not be tasted in this life. Repentance and release will become deeply ingrained parts of you. Suspicion of yourself will replace your judgment of others. Mark it down, life will no longer be about you: your rights, your preferences, your aims, your independence, your self-assertion. Come to Christ and lose all claim to self-governing. Come to Christ and give up control of every area of your life. Forfeit this world and find Him. In doing so you will also find you. Come to Jesus and receive a cross today. You will need to do this before you can ever come to Him to receive a crown. Salvation is a surrender. If you will not surrender, you cannot be saved. If you will surrender, you will find everything He is and all that He has reserved for**

**Who do you say that Jesus Christ is? Eternity hangs upon your answer.**