

June 20, 2017

Dear Grace Church Family and Friends,

Who is Jesus?

That was the first question addressed in our summer preaching series: Questions of Faith, which began this past Sunday.

Many of us have a sense of how we would answer the question. We can tell you a few things about Jesus' life – where he was born, how he died. We might say he is an exemplary human being, one we should all try to emulate. We might describe him as the “Son of God,” or even as the “Savior.”

But, what does all that really mean?

Yesterday, I came across a few sentences written by Heinz Zahrnt, the German biblical scholar. In his book, What Kind of God? A Question of Faith, Zahrnt reminds us that we can tell a lot about a person by the company they keep:

"Tell me whose company you keep and I will tell you who you are."

Dictators like to be photographed with cheerful, happy and healthy people, with laughing children and old soldiers. They would like people to draw conclusions about themselves from the people who surround them.

Now, let us imagine such a photograph of Jesus of Nazareth – what kind of people surround him? Only people whom every devout person who thought anything of himself would go to some trouble to avoid, people against whom both church and society were prejudiced: the sick, who, because of their sickness, were regarded as guilty of a serious offense; lepers and the possessed, who were excluded from the fellowship of the living; heathens, who were looked down on and despised; women and children, who counted for nothing; harlots and tax collectors, that is the morally doubtful and politically unreliable.

That's how Jesus is, at least to Heinz Zahrnt.

Tell me... *Who is Jesus to you?*

See you in church,
Andrew