Sermon: **Who do you say I am?** (Matthew 16.15)

Jesus and Donald Trump share one thing in common – you cannot be neutral about them.

Jesus is remarkable and compelling. Admittedly the reports could be said to be biased, but even so.

Throughout Matthew TEXT is raised. At the outset some know who Jesus is - at baptism God speaks (3.17), the tempter knows (4.3, 6), as do evil spirits (8.29). Humans ask questions (8.27, 11.3, 12.23, 13.54, 13.57), and end with a statement (14.33).

At Caesarea Philippi Jesus asks the question and with the answers – John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah, a Prophet. (NB Herod thought Jesus was John come back to life, Elijah was expected (Malachi 4.5), Prophet expected in Dt 18.18).

TEXT: Peter answers, The Christ, the Son of the living God, declaring that Jesus is the expected Messiah, and as such stands in a special relation to God. The Church debated what Son of God meant, ranging from Jesus being an ordinary man adopted by God at his birth, baptism or resurrection, maybe as some kind of reward, to Jesus being fully God in human form.

TEXT. I know where I stand in this, and to a large extent it does not matter where you stand.

What *does* matter is that we must respond to this Jesus, we cannot stay neutral.

Imagine if getting the question ‘right’ would beat the Chaser, or claim $1M. It would be crucial. For us the TEXT is not merely academic; it is not about *getting* it right, but *responding* to it right.

Jesus’ mission was to proclaim the Kingdom of God is near. He did things that proved it; he was both the messenger, *and* the message. By agreeing to carry on Jesus ministry we agree to be Christ’s messengers, but can only do so if somehow we also become the message, as Christ is seen in what we do. And this can only happen if we let Christ change our attitudes & actions, transforming our common life as God’s family.

TEXT – our answers not only determine who we think Jesus is, but also what we want him to make of us.