

Mitchells Presbyterian Church Monthly

Newsletter

December 2022

Pastor's Corner

During the last bible study in November, an interesting topic came up during our discussion of Christ's distinction of being the Messiah in the early first century. We started down the rabbit hole of the difference in the name "Son of God" versus the term "Son of Man". Yet we had barely started down the rabbit hole before we ran into a road block that often we run into during theological discussion, a lack of knowledge. I, for one, could not remember exactly why the two terms were at such odds, and at times counter-intuitive to logic. Therefore, I told the group that I would go home, crack open the books and figure out the answers that I didn't have that night; and as I thought about it, in the midst of my research, I decided that it was an interesting enough topic for it to be the *Pastor's Corner* in this month's newsletter. So without further ado, I present the reasons for the difference in terms of "the Son of God" and "the Son of Man".

During Christ's ministry, he often spoke in a way that was only right for God to do. Stating that he could forgive sins, amending words of scripture "You have heard it said... but I say to you", and worked miracles. For us, it is then logic to answer 'how do we know this man Jesus is the son of God?' with the recognition that it's because he speaks with the authority of God and does mighty works on behalf of God. Thus, we can make the statement Jesus is "the Son of God" and it makes sense. Yet, Christ never explicitly calls himself the Son of God. He calls Yahweh "father", and it is alluded to by Christ, but others always place that name upon him (read Matthew 16:15-17). To understand this, we must look at what it meant to be "the Son of God" in Christ's time. It was a common title in the ancient world. Many rulers were called "son of God" because their majesty and power supposedly proved that they were the offspring of gods (demi-gods). In the period of Jesus' ministry, you could meet people everywhere that referred to themselves as "son of God" because they claimed to have divine powers, some even called themselves 'savior'. According to Shirley Guthrie's *Christian Doctrine*, the fact that Jesus was a miracle worker and spoke with authority was not unique. If he had only been a son of God or savior on the basis of the miraculous powers, we would have not be unusual and certainly not *the* Son of God. Yet, what set Christ apart for us (the original followers and all those through history including you and me) was not his strength but his weakness, not his majestic power but his suffering, not his authority and rule but his obedience and service. He was a *lowly* Son of God, and in this Advent and Christmas season, this is made known clearly by his birth in a manger in Bethlehem.

So Jesus never called himself the Son of God explicitly, as that title was given to him by others, but between the four gospels he speaks of himself as the "Son of Man" 78 times. Why does this title cause a debate you ask? Mainly, it is because it rarely occurs outside of the gospels [only four times to be exact], and the lines to the title in the Hebrew texts are few and fair between [as it mainly only meant 'being human']. The water gets even muddier when we recognize that Jesus spoke in Aramaic, so how does one say "son of man" in Aramaic? Well, again, it's not exactly clear but likely Jesus referred to himself in Aramaic as *bar enash*, or some variation thereof. Scholars point out that in Aramaic *bar enash* is an idiom, not a title, and it can mean something like "I," "human beings in general," "a man as one among the people," or "a man in my position." Hence, what is debated is whether *bar enash* is a generic description of people or whether it can have particular sense of "this man." One more hunk of

mud, is looking at Daniel, chapter 7, as it references a mysterious figure, “one like a son of man,” who receives power and authority from the Ancient of Days (Yahweh). Through Daniel 7, later Jewish literature, “Son of Man” becomes a messianic title. So what does all this mean for us in the midst of this debate? Theologian Dr. Michael Bird says it better than I, “In the phrase “Son of Man” (*bar enash*) Jesus appropriated scriptural language for a human being but used it with some particularity to refer to himself. In addition, on some occasions, Jesus linked *bar enash* with the heavenly son of man from Daniel 7 and its messianic connotations. But he also added a pattern of suffering and exaltation (possibly from Isaiah 53). Therefore, Jesus used “son of man” to refer to himself and his messianic role to usher in God’s reign after he went through the crucible of suffering and the triumph of exaltation”.

So, I hope this long worded, pastor’s corner showed you exactly how and my this two phrases are different, and if the water is still muddy (it is for me, and with theology likely always will be), know that both terms are acceptable to call our Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ. He is indeed THE Son of God, which has been revealed to us by God and the scriptures, and he is THE Son of Man in its messianic meaning of redeeming the world (as well as, the way in which he spoke in the third person about himself). They are both load terms, for multiple reasons, and they are both equally suitable.

Blessings to you and I look forward to more theological discussions!

-Pastor Patrick

Sources used (and recommended further reading):

Shirley C. Guthrie, Jr. *Christian Doctrine, Revised Ed.*

Michael Bird, *Seven Things I Wish Christians Knew About the Bible*

Session News

Summary of Session Actions

November 2020

Session Action items from the November 17, 2022 meeting:

- Moved the December Session Meeting to Thursday, December 15 at 7:00 p.m.
- Approved Elder Ordination & Installation for Sunday, January 15, 2023 during Worship.
- Announcements: Rev. Dr. Denise Hall will preach on Sunday, December 4
 - Lessons and Carols will be held on Sunday, December 11 at 6:30 p.m.
 - New pew bibles are in place. They are the New Revised Standard Version updated edition
- Elder training is being held for the newly elected elders.

Presbyterian Women

The Mitchells Presbyterian Women met November 1, 2022 in the Fellowship Hall.

Hazel Eakin had very special All Saints message for us, and Vickie Wallace led our Bible Study Lesson 4 - ***Job's Fainting Fit*** - using scripture from JOB 3.

We want to remind everyone of the donations to the ***Loads of Love Project***, Please bring slightly used clothing coats and shoes for infant to teen sizes. There is also a need for new socks and under ware, personal hygiene products and school supplies. Your items can be placed on the donations table in the Fellowship Hall.

Our next meeting on December 13th will be the notorious Women's Christmas meeting. There is a Flyer attached for details. We really want all women to please join in this joyful time! Even though you cannot always come to regular meetings...This a time set aside for the women to have fellowship after a full year of doing so many good deeds for the benefit of the Church and Community.

Kaye Inskeep, Moderator

Men of the Church

The December meeting of the Men of the Church will be a dinner held at Headmaster's Pub & Grill in Sperryville on Thursday, December 1, 2023 at 6:30 p.m. Wives, girlfriends, and guests of the MOC members are invited to attend. Actually, everyone is invited to come out.

Safety and Security Committee (SSC)

Nothing new to report.

Church Events/Information

Pavilion – Buildings & Grounds

The eight standard and two ADA compliant commercial outdoor park tables offer a warm inviting atmosphere under the shelter of the pavilion. The tables arrived just in time for the 155th celebration of MPC. Gutter downspout underground drain lines with popup valves have been installed. The electrical installation is moving right along. Plans are in the works for finalizing the locations and installation of security cameras.

MPC Spotlight

No MPC Spotlight this month.

Tree Lighting Service

The MPC tree lighting service will be on Sunday December 11 at 6:30pm.

Candlelight Christmas Eve

The candlelight service will be held on Christmas Eve December 24 at 8:00pm.

Mitchells Presbyterian Email Prayer Chain

Patti Weaver has agreed to monitor and maintain the prayer chain email account. Thank you Patti for your service to MPC.

If you would like to receive notifications of prayer requests via email, please send an email to:

prayersofmitchells@gmail.com

Your email address will be added. This is open to members, regular attendees, friends, etc. Just have all requesters send an email and they will be added.

Prayer requests mentioned at church will try to be added, but it is best if you could just send them to the prayersofmitchells@gmail.com email address.



Merry Christmas Ladies

It's time for our Holiday Celebration!

Covered Dish Dinner

Special Christmas Message and

*Bring a Christmas Ornament gift for our Big
Ornament Fight. . . I mean swap!*

TUESDAY DEC. 13TH AT 6PM

In the Fellowship Hall

*We would love for all the women of Mitchells
Presbyterian Church to join us!!*

Worship Committee

Nothing new to report.

Donations to MPC

Any donations to the church can be mailed to:
Mitchells Presbyterian Church
P. O. Box 98
Mitchells, VA 22729

All mail is being picked up twice a week and deposits are being made by Ron Evans, the church treasurer.

December 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 Doug Settle	2 Vickie Wallace Abbie Weaver	3
4 Robert Nixon	5	6 Josh Tidman	7 Amber Gallahan	8 Dolores Aylor	9	10 Boulton Chase Greg & Teresa Griffith
11 Lesson & Carols and Tree of Lights 6:30pm	12	13 Kerr Chase	14 Jimmy Howell	15	16	17 Bill & Janet Miller
18 Heather Massey Frederick Neal	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26 Steven Todd	27 Jack Howell	28	29	30	31 Kim Nixon

Usher: Scott Mitchell and Luke Gyory Acolyte: Tommy Cuccherini