

'But who do you say that I am?'

Who likes a quiz?

Are you someone who is happy to watch on TV and admire, or deride, the efforts of others? Are you a University Challenge-type, or would you like to be a Millionaire? Are you a Mastermind or do you usually end up Pointless?

Or do you prefer taking part? With your pals at the pub or the village hall, testing your expertise on soap operas or pop songs?

Are you one of those people who is always ready to press the buzzer? To show what you know? Or at least to have a guess?

Or are you one of the reticent ones? Not so confident, happy to keep quiet and hope someone else on your team knows the answer, afraid of embarrassment if you don't get it right?

talking.

What is everyone else saying about the gossip? What's the speculation?

Jesus gets a range of answers. Jeremiah. You're Elijah. One of the prophets, who, in Jewish tradition, will return to proclaim and prepare for the appointed Redeemer. Or you're the resurrected John the Baptist, who was doing the proclaiming until King Herod beheaded him off a few weeks ago.

The forerunner. The warm-up act. The Headliner comes on stage.

And then comes the more challenging question: 'Who do you say I am?'

I wonder how many of the disciples dared to risk an answer. We'll never know because good old Simon already pressed the buzzer.

Simon, who from now on we shall know as Peter, still has a lot to learn about what that word 'Messiah' is going to mean. For Peter, there will be many challenging questions to come, and he will get a lot wrong before he finishes the quiz. But at least he's through to the next round.

So, now we can turn to the next contestant. Who do you say he is? Yes, you!

If we weren't constrained by facemasks or by mute buttons, I might have asked if anyone wanted to put their hands up and answer.

That doesn't usually work very well, anyway. People tend to keep to textbook answers, or else to say nothing, because they're worried they might give the wrong answer, or that they can't give the clear-cut, confident answer we hear from Peter.

There's a temptation, as well, to go back to that previous question because it feels easier. 'Who do other people say He is?' or 'What does the people

He simply gave himself to us in service of healing to the sick, peace of mind to the troubled, promised relief and freedom to the burdened, and challenged the people offering them a way out from the prejudices and hypocrisies. He asked people that their Father, their God, was as He himself was. He left them to the rest.

Who do you say He is? There is no answer; Jesus is just looking for an answer. But will there be a prize?

The prize for Simon wasn't just a job for him, and Jesus could have waited until Simon was ready to give the answer, in spite of all his frailty and doubt. Peter was ready to become the Rock – the stone of the new community that Jesus would summon to serve Him. Peter was ready to put His faith in Peter.

will have given your answer long ago, and perhaps many times.

Whatever our answers may have been, or may yet be, and in spite of all our frailty, of all our uncertainty, of all the limitations of our understanding, Jesus has a place and a role for each of us in his community

He wants each of us to stand as a sure foundation for some part of His work – however great or small. He's asking us, as he asked Simon, if we are ready to accept His faith in us.

Who do you say He is? Whatever your answer, you can expect a prize. Not a new name, but the revelation of a God who has faith in you.

