

Who are you trusting in for your life?

You?

A doctor?

Science?

Money?

Some other god?

Yourself?

Everyone is trusting in something. What is it for you?

This week I had a fascinating visit with a very interesting man.

I met him out west on the Pine Ridge reservation. We talked for about an hour.

He has had a very rough life; grew up on the reservation, Military service, dashed expectations.

We talked about God. He said that he believed in God, Jesus, and the Bible.

But he also believed in his Lakota traditions, His history, ancestors, gods.

When trouble comes, he reaches out to all who might listen.

He has all his bases covered, just in case.

I asked if he believed in hell or heaven. He thought for a while and then said "no."

But there is an afterlife he insisted. Everyone knows this in their heart. (Ecclesiastes 3:11)

In all of this he is not hugely different from many others that I have talked to.

I met a man in India who said he was a Christian and a Hindu.

He had in his house a collection of Indian gods and goddesses, and the gods Mary and Jesus.

He has them all, and finds comfort in all sorts of different needs and situations.

This is commonplace in India, and one reason the Roman Catholicism is so widespread. It fits in.

Of course, if you are trusting in Jesus as one of an assortment of options, are you really trusting in Him at all?

If you see a doctor, then another for a second opinion, and then another, in whom are you trusting?

Probably you are trusting in just one, or in yourself who chooses which opinion you like.

This is all fine with doctors. It is maybe not so good with Jesus.

My daughter Emily currently works as a nurse in a hospital in Illinois.

She overheard her colleagues talking about all the different people that they recently slept with.

Following that conversation she was talking with one of those ladies about praying for patients.

"Oh, are you a spiritual person?" she asked, "I am a spiritual person too!"

They had a short conversation about God in which this woman described praying to whoever might listen.

Just in case He might help her out a little she asks the big guy upstairs for help.

Is this trusting in Jesus?

Of course it is not.

If Jesus is just one of your options, on the list of agencies to which you apply for help...

Well, suffice it to say there is no relationship, no intimacy, no family bond, no loyalty, no covenant, no promise.

If you are trusting in Jesus, but retaining yourself as the arbiter of truth and options...

There is no real trust in Jesus.

And if there is no real trust in Jesus, there is no real payment for your sins.

And if there is no real payment for your sins, you will die in your sins and go to hell.

You must trust in Jesus, or you will die in your sins.

In John 8:12, Jesus is continuing His teaching that He began in the temple on the last day of the Feast of Booths.

(John 7:37) His teaching during the feast began in John 7:14.

The focus during this entire time has been on this question: Who is Jesus?

The Pharisees and the people are asking about Him. Jesus is answering them.

Everyone is trying to figure Him out. They wonder about how He knows all the stuff He knows. (7:15)

They wonder why the authorities are not trying to kill Him. (7:25)

They wonder about where He is from and where He is going. (7:27-36)

They wonder if He is the prophet that Moses predicted. (7:40)

They wonder if He is the Messiah predicted by the prophets. (7:26, 41)

Of course, they are thinking about all these questions because of who Jesus is saying He is...

And because of the amazing things that Jesus is doing.

Is He the Messiah, Savior of the world, the Son of God, God Himself come into His world?

He is. And if He is, then you must trust Him. You must begin by listening to Him.

So, what does Jesus say?

I. Jesus said, "I Am the Light of the World."

John 8:12

This is the second of Jesus' seven "I Am" statements recorded in the Gospel of John:

These all find their roots in the words of God from **Exodus 3:13-15**.

Only God's covenant name, "Yahweh," means "I Am." He is the only self-existent one. He simply exists.

Jesus in these statements is declaring Himself to be the one God who has that name.

But He is getting specific about what it means that He is God Himself.

"I am the bread of life." (John 6:35, 41, 48, 51)

Here He says, "I am the light of the world." (again in 9:5)

"I am the door." (John 10:7 and 9)

"I am the good shepherd." (John 10:11, 14)

"I am the resurrection and the life." (John 11:25)

"I am the way and the truth and the life." (John 14:6)

"I am the true vine." (John 15:1, 5)

In each of these "I Am" statements of Jesus, He is saying something specific about His being God.

Jesus is God Himself in these specific ways in which He relates to us and we to Him.

It is a relationship, not an option for whatever is the need of the moment.

Jesus is God, not an insurance company or a government service.

In these statements we learn how we need Him, God come in the flesh to save us.

In these "I Am" statements, Jesus is telling us why we need to trust Him and no one else.

He says here, "I am the Light of the World, He who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the light of life."

What does He mean by this?

If you follow Jesus, this means looking at Him, listening to Him, and doing what He says.

It means following His example in obeying His Heavenly Father.

If you do this, you will walk in light and not darkness.

Light is John's metaphor for truth. Darkness is his metaphor for lies and lostness.

If you follow Jesus you will live in the truth, you will love the truth, you will increasingly know the truth.

If you do not trust Jesus you will live in a lie, you will love lies, you will increasingly know only lies.

If you are living in the truth, you will live this life the way that God intended, true living.

And if you are living His way you will have life forever, even after you die.

II. They said, "You are testifying about Yourself?"

John 8:13-18

The Pharisees take all that Jesus is saying as an attack on their authority, their religious power.

Now they are questioning His credibility.

It appears to them that Jesus has no credentials. He has no degree, no papers, no references.

They have associates who vouch for their education and years of wise teaching.

Jesus has... sinners and fishermen. He has no one verifying His authority.

But He actually does, and Jesus blasts these blind Pharisees for their ignorance.

They ought to see the truth, but they are in darkness.

Jesus makes two points:

1. Even if Jesus is the only one testifying to His authority, He would be in the right. (vs. 14)
Why? Because Jesus is from heaven and is going back to heaven. He is from God.
The Jewish leaders do not know this because they cannot see it because they are in the darkness.
They are judging Him according to their own human wisdom. It is not enough.
2. But His Father in heaven testifies about Him, giving Him absolute authority. (vs. 16)
How is it that the Father does this? Well, we have only to turn back to **John 5:31-47**.
Matthew 3:16-17 (also Mark 1:11 and Luke 3:22)
Matthew 17:5 (also Mark 9:7)

There has never been and will never be anyone with the credentials that Jesus has.

We might look for people with degrees from the best institutions and teachers...

SDSU, the University of Illinois, Harvard? But really, who are we kidding?

We have all met people from these places who are ignorant idiots.

We might look for people with experience all over the world, with connections everywhere.

These professionals and pundits might have some wisdom in their particular area of expertise.

But what about absolute truth, life, all of life, and life eternal?

Only Jesus has credentials there. Only Jesus speaks for God.

Only Jesus has come from heaven and has gone back to heaven.

Only Jesus has died and come back from the dead.

Who are you going to trust with your life?

III. They said, "Where is Your Father?"

John 8:19-21

This is an interesting and underhanded attack on Jesus and His identity.

They knew that Jesus has claimed that His Father is the Father in heaven. They didn't believe Him.

What they did believe was that Jesus was an illegitimate child, maybe fathered by Joseph, maybe not.

And Joseph was dead by now. Jesus had no father around.

"Where is your father?" they had asked. They were being intentionally nasty.

Jesus responds by pointing out their lack of relationship with His Father in heaven.

They do not know Jesus, no relationship, and so they do not know the Father, no relationship.

Because trusting in Jesus and walking with Jesus and knowing God is all about relationship.

In fact, anyone who knows anything about how life really is knows that it is all about relationships...

relationships with people and relationships with God.

Do you know Jesus? Do you know God?

Relationships begin with trust and are maintained by communication, listening to God, talking with God.

Jesus continues by explaining that as a result of their lack of relationship with Him they will die in their sins.

Why? Because Jesus came to save sinners by dying on the Cross for our sins.

But if they do not trust Him, they will pay for their own sins in hell forever.

Who are you trusting to pay for your sins?

IV. They said, "Will He kill Himself?"

John 8:22-24

They are now making fun of Jesus declaring that He is going to die. They know what He is saying.

There is a twisted dark irony to their question.

Jesus is going to die, and they are the ones who will get Him killed.

They actually know in their hearts, as they say this to one another, that they want Him dead.

If they were honest with themselves, they could see their arrogance and hypocrisy.

But they are not honest, not even with themselves, because they are in the darkness. They cannot see.

Why? Why are they blind? Why can they not follow Jesus to eternal life?

It is because they are from this world, “from below.” (vs. 23)

Listen friends, if you are trusting in your own best efforts to figure out eternity and heaven...

You have no chance to get there. Because you do not know the way. You are an earthling.

What do you know of life after death? What do you know of eternal life? Of heaven?

If you trust yourself, you will die in your sins.

Who are you trusting?

V. They said, “Who are You?”

John 8:25-30

This really is the central question of the entire discussion, and of what Jesus is teaching.

This is key to the central message of the Gospel of John.

Who is Jesus? Everything depends upon the answer to this question.

The message of the Gospel of John depends upon the answer to this question.

The credibility and authority of Jesus depends upon the answer to this question.

Your salvation and eternal destiny depend upon the answer to this question.

“Jesus, who are You?”

Jesus begins His answer by rebuking them for not hearing what He has been teaching all along. (vs. 25)

All that He says is what the Father has given Him to say. (vs. 26)

All that He does is what the Father has given Him to do. (vs. 28)

And the Father is with Him and all that He does pleases the Father. (vs. 29)

And the principal work that He has been given to do is to die.

You can see this in verse 28, though cryptically.

Jesus here is speaking about His death, and those who are there know by now what He is saying.

We know this by the way that they have been responding to Him already.

Jesus says, “When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I Am.”

Most translations read “I am He.” The predicate nominative reads better in English.

However, in the NASB and in most KJVs, the “He” is in italics.

This is to let the reader know that the word has been added.

But it doesn’t need to be added, and, in fact, dilutes what Jesus is actually saying.

Sure, Jesus is saying that when He is “lifted up” they will know that He is the Son of Man.

But, Jesus is also saying that when He is lifted up, they will know that He is the one and only “I Am.”

He is God Himself who identified Himself to Moses in Exodus 3.

He is the self-existent one, the agent of creation, the Word of God, with God, who is God.

And, incredibly, He is the Messiah God who is going to die.

And in His death people are going to see that He is the Messiah God and believe in Him.

No doubt, His words seemed ridiculous to the Pharisees.

They are not planning to “lift up” anyone.

Everyone knew that these words were a way of referring to crucifixion.

And the Jews never crucified anyone.

They never had, and the Romans would not allow them to in any case.

The Jews carried out capital punishment by stoning, never by crucifixion. That was the Roman way.

So, how stupid it was that Jesus said to them, “When you lift up the Son of Man...”

Who could have known that what Jesus was saying would be exactly what happened?

The Jewish leaders would conspire with the Romans so that Jesus would be crucified.

This was always God’s plan, you can see it in the prophets. Only Jesus knew it.

That He predicted the nature of His death is just one more indication of His credibility.

And, so, even as He spoke these words, many were trusting Him.

When Jesus spoke, they heard God speaking. And there is nothing better in life than hearing God.

Who are you trusting?