



Questions Jesus asked (Part 1)

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We're starting this new series – *Questions Jesus Asked*. Jesus asked a lot of questions in his earthly ministry and we're going to be going through the next eight weeks, through March and most of April, including Easter, talking about questions Jesus asked. A lot of different question like "What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world yet forfeit their soul? Or Jesus Asked, "Will you really lay down your life for me?" He asked, "Do you now believe?" He asked why are you troubled? and he asked "Do you love me?" among other questions that he asked.

Questions are good. When we get asked a question, it makes us think. You have to go to a part of your brain and connected some synopsis to be able to answer a question. Some questions are harder to answer than others, but questions make us think. And I think we all can agree that thinking is important. It's important for us to use the brains that God gave us.

One of the things I like about our church is the hospitality. Our hospitality team does a great job of making us comfortable and welcome every week. By round of applause, does anyone else appreciate the coffee that we get here on Sunday morning? The specialty drinks and the cups of coffee are just wonderful.

Years ago, we were walking into church through the foyer. It was when we were a smaller church, so the coffee was done differently. There was a table in the foyer. The cups were already filled, and you walked along and you picked up your prefilled cup of coffee and went into the castle here. So, I did that and on my way in, I took a sip and I thought *this isn't the best coffee*, but I wasn't going to be critical of the hospitality team because far be it from me to complain about free coffee.

I got to my seat. I took a couple more sips and I thought *Wow, I'm really trying to enjoy this coffee, but it's bad.* The service continued. Halfway through the sermon, I'm still drinking this stuff and just trying to ignore it. Finally, I opened the lid to see that I'm drinking a cup of hot water. Thinking is important. I wasn't thinking as I walked up to the table where the separate set of cups were sitting that had a sign that said, "Hot Water, with the tea bags behind them. I thought I was getting coffee, and I didn't think I kept sipping it saying this is really bad coffee, maybe it's not coffee at all.

So, thinking is important. What does God say about thinking? Well Jesus answered the question, What's the greatest commandment? In Mark 12: 30. He said, ***And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind... our thinking. Love the Lord your God with all you mind and with all your strength.*** Love him with all of you, including your brain. We put our brain to work when we start thinking.

Throughout this series in examining the questions Jesus asked, we are going to notice that we each of us might fit into one of a few categories as far as thinking goes. Let's look at those:

We may be apathetic, apathetic, meaning kind of indifferent and inactive. We're not really activating that part of our brain when it comes to thinking and the questions that Jesus asked.

We might be thinkers, but it's important that we remember that thinkers should be rooted in scripture. We know that scripture drives the bus that and that it is our primary source of truth. And as we think and as we process things and as we reason through things, we keep scripture in the driver's seat, making sure that bus is seated well between the lines on the road of truth. So, when we are thinking, we stay rooted in scripture.

Some of us may be overthinkers. We try to process things we think may be a little too deep or try to pull in too much information. Our over thinkers... we need to simplify. After all, the gospel of Jesus Christ is very simple. The essential truths of our faith are very simple. So, sometimes we can over think things and if we are overthinking things, we need to simplify. Some of us need to activate that part of our brain and some of us need to chill out that part of our brain. And all of us need to be rooted in scripture as we think.

What else does God's word say about loving him with all of our mind? Well, Proverbs 18: 15 says, ***The heart of the discerning requires knowledge.*** That's an important word – Knowledge, ***for the ears of the wise seek it out.*** And in Proverbs 4: 5, we read ***get wisdom and understanding. Do not forget my words or turn away from them. So, we get these three words – Knowledge, understanding, and wisdom.***

Let's look at the interplay of these three words as we're talking about thinking about questions Jesus asked and how they get us thinking.

Number one: Knowledge is simply information. If you think of knowledge, it's just data in a database. Just bits of information. Understanding is the reason for that knowledge. It's the reason behind that information. Wisdom properly applies knowledge and understanding.

Let me explain that to you with an illustration. Imagine a shipping warehouse. The shipping warehouse has a supervisor and workers. The supervisor comes to the workers and says, "There is going to be a truck that comes in delivering some things, some of item A and some of item B. I need you to unload that truck into the warehouse. But it's important that you stack item A on top of item B when you store them. So, the workers hear the instructions the supervisor leaves, the truck arrives and the workers say, "That really doesn't make sense because it's going to be easier for us to stack item B on top of A, so they do it their way.

The supervisor comes back in a little while and says, "Okay the truck for Item A, the outbound truck has arrived, I need you to load all of Item A on this truck to leave. Suddenly, they realize their error. So, you see, now knowledge is item A needs to be stacked on top of Item B. Understanding is having the reason because Item A 's outbound truck is coming and it's going to be easier to load and leave.

Wisdom does a couple of things. First, it says next time, I'm going to stack Item A on top of Item B and it learns from the knowledge that it has. It also realizes that sometimes, that supervisor is going to give me instructions that I don't fully understand but it's important that I follow those instructions. You see, the questions Jesus asks should prompt us to gain knowledge and understanding and act wisely. God's word is the supervisor of the warehouse of our lives. We let our thinking be rooted in scripture. We gain knowledge and understanding and we act wisely.

But, before we do any of that, we look at Proverbs 1: 7 which says, ***The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.*** So, before we can even start to gain knowledge to try to understand to act wisely, it begins with the fear of the Lord. ***Fools despise wisdom and instruction.*** So what does that mean? True wisdom starts with a reverence for almighty God, realizing he is the ultimate source of knowledge, he is the ultimate source of understanding. He is the ultimate source of wisdom

So, with all of that being said, we're going to jump into Part 1 today. The question we are going to examine is "Who do you say I am?" This is a question Jesus asked. I think it's fair to say this is the most important question that Jesus asked. "Who do you say I am" Every single one of us is going to be faced with that question. We are faced with that question now and in the future. "Who do you say I am?"

Our passage today is going to be in Matthew 6: 16 and we are going to start in verse 13. We are going to go through verse 20 and we are going to start in Verse 13 – it says, Now when Jesus came into the district of Scoria Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the son of Man is?" Now, notice something there. Jesus asked the question and gives the answer in the question. Like who he really is. But his question is who do the people say he that he is. That's his question he's asking here. They say, some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the profits.

Now Jesus knew that there would be speculation at this point about who he is. They are going into this region that's about 25 miles north of the Sea of Galilee. The people there had built a temple worshipping Cezar Augustus. So, he also knew they were accustomed to worshipping mortal men. So, it was reasonable for him to ask, "Who do people say that I am?" and they answered him with the information that they had.

They had heard people talking, they had heard what the world around them was saying about this man. They were saying maybe it's John the Baptist or Elijah or Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. So that was really the answer of the day. That's who the people believed that he was. If Jesus was to come today and ask this question, we could come up with a pretty good list of who people say that he is. In other words, he might say, "Who does the world say I am?" We should answer that question as well. Who does the world, right now, say that Jesus is.? And it doesn't take much more than an internet search to see what the opinions are about who Jesus is. So, when you do that, you come up with a few answers –

He's a good teacher. He can provide information, he can instruct, and I think of teachers I've had in the past. I've had some good teachers that helped me to learn. They were interested in my learning, so that's who some say that Jesus is.

Some say he is a moral leader. So, we would put Jesus in that category with people like Mother Teresa or Mahatma Gandhi, people who teach how to live a good life, to be a moral leader. Some say that's who Jesus is. Some say he is a social reformer, someone like Martin Luther King, Jr, who changed cultural norms for the better. Some say he was a radical Jew, that he was a religious rebel that he challenged religious and political establishment, standing up against the establishment. That's who Jesus is.

So, if Jesus asked us today, like he asked his disciples then, these would be answers that we would come up with. This is who people say that he is.

We do some of our grocery shopping at Aldi's. And I think Aldi's has probably the best espresso beans you can get. Now, two things about that statement. I just made, number one, I actually never had coffee beans from that place. And two, there were a few mistakes in the words that I used. Number one, the name of the store is Aldi, not Aldsi. Much like Walmart does not have an "S" on the end of it. And if you think Walmart has an "S" on the end of it, you gotta know that uins is also not a word. It's pronounced Y'All I also said probly the best espresso beans. Probably There are two "B's" in probably. Some people say it without any "B's and it prolley. And there is no "X" in espresso. Espresso is a coffee shop that uses the play on words to say you are going to get your cup of coffee quickly. But there is no X in espresso. I've met a lot of people that lately that have moved here from California recently. Are you fluent in hillbilly yet?

So, what really is wrong with that statement because you understood what I was saying when I was making a declaration about the quality of coffee beans at that place. I Got the information across. Did it really matter? There were some mistakes in the grammar, but did that really matter because you understood what I was saying. In grammar it may be okay, but the problem is when we allow our theology and our thinking about God to just speak the way that the world speaks and to hear the things that the world says about what they believe about who God is, we're simply taking a sip of hot water, and we're missing out on the rich truth of God's word, what's really true about him. We're sipping hot water when what we really need is a cup of coffee, a good hot strong cup of coffee.

Let's look at the truth of God's Word then

We know what the people then, who they said Jesus was. We know what the world says about who he is. So, I think it's important that we examine who Jesus says that he is.

Are you ever in a conversation and the person is talking to you about their opinion about what someone else thinks or what they feel and that other person that they are talking about is standing right there. It's like I could just listen to this person give me this information. Sometimes we hear people saying, "Well, Jesus never claimed to be God. . Well, that's okay for you to say, but you know what? I'm going to listen to his words. I'm going to let him tell me who he says that he is.

So, we answer the question. Who does Jesus say that he is? Again, our thinking should be rooted in scripture. So, we turn to the scripture to answer the question of Who Jesus says that he is.

John 14: 9 says, ***whoever has seen me has seen the father.***

John 10: 30 Jesus says, ***"I and the Father are one, the Lord Our God, the Lord is one.***

John 8: 58 says, ***Truly, truly I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.***

I am is the distinction that God used for himself when he was speaking with Moses through the burning bush. Jesus is declaring through the scripture that he is the living God. He is the One. Why is it that we can believe what he says? Well, because I've known a lot of good teachers, I've known some moral leaders, I've known some social activists and there have been a lot of those throughout history and why is Jesus believable? Because of all of those others in the past that have died are still in their grave and Jesus is not. He has risen. The man that predicted his own death and resurrection and pulled it off, we can believe him. We can believe who he says he is.

So, moving on to Verse 15 in Matthew 16 in this scenario, this discussion that they are having, Jesus with the disciples. He said to them, but who do you say that I am? And here's our question for the week. Who do you say I am? I notice something that Jesus does here as a teacher, as a great teacher. He uses something called juxtaposition, which means to put two things next to one another to compare and contrast. So, the first question he asked is who does the world say that I am? And he is asking us. Who does the world say that I am? So, we can see that answer, because the upcoming answer about who he really is that we are going to see is very contrasting to that.

When I look at TV screens, computer monitors and things like that, I can't tell a difference in the resolution or how good the quality of a picture is. But when I go somewhere that sells these things and you see a big wall of all of them, you can compare them and that helps them sell better TVs. I can see the difference there. So, in this juxtaposition that Jesus is about to expose, this comparing and contrasting, it's like the old black and white tube television. How many of you have watched Television on a black and white tube television. You remember those days. And now we have this. This thing is like this thick and it's extremely sharp and colorful. The comparing and contrasting is very, very stark between the two. That's what Jesus is doing. He's bringing these two beliefs in comparison to one another. In doing so, he's asking you, when you are juxtaposed to the world, do you stand out? Are you the sharp, High-definition television or are you the watered down, black and white tube television. You should stand out. You should contrast to the world around you in your thinking, in your words, and in your actions. He said, "But who do you say I am?"

Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the son of the living God." Peter declared who Jesus is. He is the Christ, which mean Messiah, which means Savior. He is the lamb of God who takes away our sin, who saves us from our sin. And look at Jesus's response in Verse 17. Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you Simon BarJona. He used his full name. that's Simon, son of Jona. He said his full name.

When you were a kid, did your parents ever use you full name? Yeah, it was usually not something good. But Jesus is using it. He is exclaiming here saying his full name. for flesh and blood does not reveal this to you, but my father who is in heaven. He used his full name and said "Blessed are you.

Did you know that the moment you place faith in "Christ, you declare, Jesus, you are the "Christ. You are the messiah; you are my messiah. do you know that Jesus says, blessed are you, James Travis Brawner. Blessed are you. welcome to the family.

He and the angels rejoice when a sinner repents. When you answer that question, you are the Christ, you are the Messiah. You are my messiah. Jesus rejoices.

Verse 18 – moving on, and I tell you... This is him to peter. ***I tell you, you are Peter.*** The word for Peter is Petra which means rock. ***He said and, on this rock, I will build my church. And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. against my church Jesus says. I will give you... this is a plural you, you, us, the church. I will give you the keys of the***

kingdom of messiah heaven and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven. And whatever you lose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

Sp. What do we know from this? To proclaim that Jesus is your messiah, that he is your Christ, is to receive the keys of the kingdom of heaven. He is yours and you are his. And you receive the keys to the kingdom of heaven

Now, this passage uses the word church in the original language, the word *ecclesia* is used. *Ecclesia* means assembly. I love that we are gathered here this Sunday morning, wherever you are gathered with other believers, you are an *ecclesia*, an assembly of believers that have this one thing in common that Jesus is our Messiah.

And guess what? For those of us that have placed faith that are gathered here as an *ecclesia*, an assembly of believers, do you know what God says about this organization? He says the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. We just prayed for struggles that we are dealing with in our world and things that seem to be maybe falling apart. We must remember that there is no company that has this designation, no school, no government, no political party, not even any family that has this designation, such as the church which the gates of hell will not prevail against it.

As we ponder this question, "Who do you say that I am?" we ask the question, "Who do you say that Jesus is?" have you placed faith in "Christ? Is he your Messiah? Have you received the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven? If not, our prayer would be that today is that day for you. and when we are done here this morning, there are going to be prayer team members across campus, down here in the Castle, over in the Chapel, and around campus that would love to talk to you more about that and answer that you have for pray to receive salvation and the keys of the kingdom of heaven today.

I want to ask you a question now. Does God require us to be perfect? No. Stop for a moment because this question requires us to think a little bit more, requires us to ask a follow up question – perfect for what? Does he require us to be perfect to come to salvation, to come to him and place faith in him? No. Come as you are. It doesn't matter your current condition or anything – your past, what's going on, it doesn't matter, come to him. You don't have to be perfect.

But does God require you to be perfect to enter the kingdom of heaven? Yes, he does. But guess what? There is good news. One day each of us will stand before the judgement thrown of God and our life will be examined. And here on earth, today, right

now, if we declare that he is the Christ, he is the Messiah, he is my Messiah, he will stand in as that perfection so that we can enter the kingdom of heaven. You don't have to be perfect to come to salvation. You have to be perfect to enter the kingdom of heaven and Jesus is that perfection on our behalf.

In Verse 20 at the end of this passage, Jesus says something interesting. He says, then he strictly charged the disciple to tell no one that he was the Christ.

I don't know about you, but that's a little confusing to me. Why would he not want them to just tell everyone.? But, church, you know what he does today. He tells us to tell everyone.

Matthew 28:19 says, ***Go and make disciples of all nations.*** We're not to hold back in telling people who he is. So, as we may not fully understand we look back to that supervisor and we, the workers, may not fully understand something in God's Word that we read, we'll never fully understand everything in his Word, but remember wisdom is trusting and obeying just the same. And trusting and obeying is also telling everyone now and making disciples of all nations.

So, church, and visitors... anyone who has not placed faith in Christ, Jesus is asking each of us today, "Who do you say I am?" That's the question Jesus is asking. In the old Testament in the book of Deuteronomy Moses wrote the words and it was really declaration to the nation of Israel. He said, ***"hear O Israel the Lord our God, the Lord is one.*** That was their declaration. There is a God, there is one God, he is the Lord and he is our Lord

So, I'm going to suggest that today, this ecclesia, this assembly of believers, that we can make a declaration as well. That we would say, Hear O church, the Lord our Messiah, the Lord is Jesus. What does that mean? Church, there is a Messiah, there is one Messiah, he is Jesus, and he is our Jesus.

Father, we are grateful for your Word, we are grateful for the questions that stimulate us to think, to love you with our mind, father, as we go throughout the series, that you would examine each of our hearts, that the Holy Spirit would move in ways that reveal things to us that lead to examination, that we would seek your knowledge, your understanding, and your wisdom, that it would affect our lives, that it would affect the lives of those around us because of the change in our lives.

We continue to pray for the fallen deputies', families that they would receive peace, that you would guide them through these days and weeks and months ahead, Lord. Be with the leaders of our country as they make hard decisions. Be with those that are directly involved with that, sending loved ones overseas that are involved directly with the conflict. We pray for peace and protection for each of them

We love you and we give you praise and it is in Christ's holy name that we pray.
And everyone agreed and said... Amen