

THE GREAT QUESTION

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Matthew 16:13-28

1. Years ago I attended a conference led by a man named Avery Willis, the author of a great discipleship study titled, "MasterLife."
2. At some point he asked us if we loved Jesus, and everyone enthusiastically raised their hands.
3. His follow-up question was, "Do you obey Him?"
4. No one can truly claim to love Jesus who does not obey Him. John 14:21-24
"He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him." 22
Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, "Lord, what then has happened that You are going to disclose Yourself to us and not to the world?" 23 Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him. 24 "He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me."
NOTE: From a biblical standpoint we show love by what we do; not just by what we say.
5. Questions that are honestly faced have a wonderful ability to help us evaluate various areas of our lives.
6. For instance:
 - a. Are you a Christian? How do you see yourself in relationship to Christ?
 - b. Are you Christ-like? How do others view you?
7. Jesus began this conversation with His disciples by asking two questions; the second of which I would call The Great Question.
8. Peter gave an enlightened answer as to who Jesus was, but the remainder of the passage makes it clear that he did not fully understand what Jesus was all about.
9. This passage teaches four important truths.

I. We need to know who Jesus is. 13-17

A. Jesus first asked the disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" (What have you heard about Me?)

NOTE: People had a high view of who Jesus was, but their views were wrong.

1. Many today see Jesus as a great prophet or teacher, and some even see His as a divine being.
 - a. Muslims believe Him to be a great prophet.
 - b. The founders of Unity taught that Jesus was King David reincarnated.
 - c. Mormons believe that He is the firstborn of God's many spirit children.
 - d. Jehovah Witnesses teach that Jesus, the Christ, is a created individual and the second greatest Personage of the universe-the first and highest creation of God.
 2. Jesus then asked, "But who do you say that I am?"
 - a. Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."
 - b. Jesus told Peter that he was blessed because God had revealed the truth to him.
- NOTE: There is a big difference between being convinced by another person and being impacted by the Holy Spirit.

II. We need to make Jesus the foundation upon which we build our lives. 18-20

- A. Jesus is the Chief Corner Stone, the foundation upon which the church is built.
Paul wrote, "According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it. 11 For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." 1 Corinthians 3:10-11
- B. Those who have founded their lives on Jesus Christ have the authority to represent Heaven on the earth.

III. We must set our minds on God's interests. 21-23

- A. Jesus began to reveal to His disciples God's redemptive plan and how it involved His going to Jerusalem, His suffering, His death, and His resurrection.
- B. Peter responded forcefully, "God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to You."
- C. Like Peter, many readily identify with some things Jesus said; while refusing, or finding it difficult to accept other things.
- D. Jesus' response was blunt and to the point, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me, for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's."
- NOTE: Appealing to man's interests is not the way to advance God's Kingdom.
- E. The Church must faithfully proclaim not only who Jesus is, but also what He is about.
1. A. W. Tozer wrote, "I must be frank in my feeling that a notable heresy has come to being throughout our evangelical Christian circles-the widely-accepted concept that humans can choose to accept Christ only because we need Him as Savior, and that we have the right to postpone our obedience to Him as Lord as long as we want to."
 2. Darrell Bock, a professor at Dallas Theological Seminary, wrote, "The question is not, 'What will you do for me, God?' But, 'Lord, how can Your purposes be fulfilled in my life.'"
- NOTE: In other words, we are servants in God's Kingdom; not just consumers of God's services.
3. Sadly, there are many today, who have chosen to tone down the issues of sin, repentance, sacrifice, service, and the holiness of God, in favor of an emphasis on the love of God, the mercy of God, and God's ability to help us feel good about ourselves while helping us to achieve our goals in life.

IV. We must follow Jesus. 24-28

- A. Following Jesus involves:
1. A desire to follow Him.
 2. A willingness to die to self and self-interest.
NOTE: Dying to this world and to self is a painful process, but God, in His wisdom and love, knows how to accomplish it. It is not for us to critique and second-guess what He will and will not do. He will do whatever is necessary.
 3. Daily cross bearing by fulfilling God's plan and purpose for our lives.
 4. Understanding what is really valuable and important.
- B. What really matters is living a life that will bring praise at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

APPLICATION

1. Who do you say Jesus is?
2. Who does your life declare Jesus to be?