

Gospel
INFLUENCE 2.0
ASKING INTENTIONAL QUESTIONS



(Theme Slide)



It may be cute when babies do it, but putting our foot in our mouth just doesn't look good on most of us.

TR: One of the moments when we feel the awkwardness crash into us is as a big toe slams into our throats, is when we suddenly realize who we are talking to. In that moment we quickly replay what we've been saying to see if we've made an idiot of ourselves.

**“Do you know
who that is?”**

Perhaps someone asked . . . READ SLIDE

-- Or maybe we found out some other way . . .

-- But, telling someone that the girl you want to ask out is “hot” gets awkward when the someone is her brother, or even worse, her dad!

-- Or when you complain about one of the players on the field and then realize that you are talking with his mom (this really happened when my dad’s passion for soccer turned off his inter-personal radar.

-- We treat people by who we think they are. We imagine that we treat everyone the same, but that’s not really true.

-- Even today, WE TREAT JESUS BY WHO WE THINK HE IS.

TR: Even Jesus Himself pushed people into the socially awkward situation of having to discuss who they think He is.

**“Who do people
say that I am?”**

**Imagine me going into a diner and asking, “What are people saying about me?” OR . . . READ SLIDE
-- That would be awkward.**

-- At least it is a bit better that Jesus was asking the disciples about what they hear people saying.

TR: Pick up the account in Matthew 16

Matthew 16:13 page 911

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, **“Who do people say that the Son of Man is?”**

ESV

In Matthew 16, on page 911, we read . . . READ SLIDE
-- Jesus and the gang are about 25 miles north of the Sea of Galilee, in Syria.
-- And He asks the awkward question that most of us avoid.

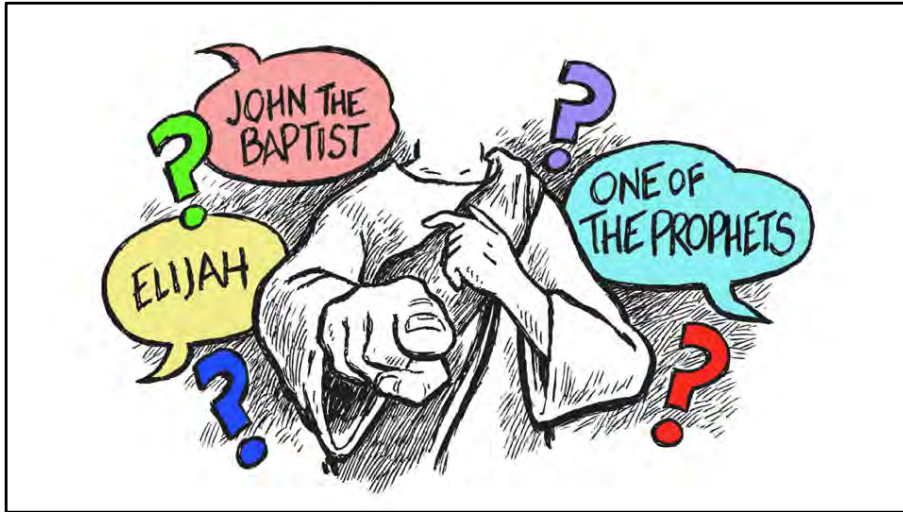
TR: And the answers are diverse but all related.

Matthew 16:14

And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

*ESV***READ SLIDE**

TR: How we treat Jesus depends on who we think He is.



Jesus had done a lot of miracles, like Elijah.

-- He had taught fearlessly, like the now beheaded John the Baptist.

-- He had an authority about Him of being sent from God, like one of the prophets of old . . .

-- . . . and perhaps as THE prophet Moses had spoken of.

TR: But, Jesus wasn't content to allow the awkwardness to dissipate by focusing on EVERYONE ELSE'S ANSWERS. He said to them . . .

**“Who do you say
that I am?”**

. . . READ SLIDE

-- Yet, we think can get out of the awkwardness by answering some polite religiously-correct answer by saying what others are saying . . . right?

TR: No, Jesus keeps things awkward, especially for Peter.

Matthew 16:15-16

He said to them, **“But who do you say that I am?”**

¹⁶Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

ESV

READ SLIDE (first section)

-- Simon, who had been given the nickname of “Rock” by Jesus, that is, Peter . . .

-- . . . speaks for the disciples, as he often did. Jesus asks the question of “you” in the plural. “Who do you ALL say that I am?”

-- READ SLIDE (second section)

-- Peter says that Jesus is the Messiah, the Anointed One, the Christ.

-- He says that Jesus is the Son of the living God.

-- Whether Peter fully understood Jesus’ divinity or if this was just affirming that He was the Messiah, it is hard to tell.

TR: Jesus responds . . .

Matthew 16:17-18

And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.”

¹⁸“And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

ESV

READ SLIDE

- Interestingly, the account in Mark does not focus as much on Peter.
- Peter, also called Cephas, which is Aramaic for “rock”.
- Petros in pre-Christian literature refers to “stone” but the Aramaic which underlies it is Kepha, which means “massive rock” (D.A. Carson)

- But what does it mean “on this rock?”
- “. . . if it were not for Protestant reactions against extremes of Roman Catholic interpretation, it is doubtful whether many would have taken “rock” to be anything or anyone other than Peter.” (D.A. Carson)

-- It is upon Peter, as an Apostle, that Jesus would build the Church . . . as well as the other apostles and their declaration of the Gospel.

-- Jesus will build His “called out ones,” His church.

-- And the very strength and power of Hades itself will not be able to prevail against it.

-- Some make much of the “Gates of hell” and the church being on the offensive. That may be, but “gates” may be a reference to the power and forces of Hades.

-- Others make much of [Hades] in ancient literature and therefore focus on the power of death being unable to stand in the way of God’s people’s ultimate victory.

-- In any case, the Church, Jesus’ called ones, will be victorious in the end.

TR: Jesus continues . . .

Matthew 16:19-20

“I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”

²⁰Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ.

ESV

READ SLIDE

- Pictures and statues of Peter in great cathedrals most always show him with the keys.**
- But in Revelation, it is Jesus who has the keys.**
- Similarly, in 1 Corinthians, Jesus is the foundation. But, in Ephesians, the apostles and prophets are the foundation of the church.**
- In John 9, Jesus is the light of the world. But, in Matthew 5, his disciples are.**
- SO, we must be careful to read a passage within its immediate context before making theological conclusions about what the whole Bible teaches on some matter.**

TR: What does this tell us about Peter?



-- Peter certainly is not presented in the rest of the NT as infallible, nor the ultimate leader of the church. He is reprimanded by Paul, and seemingly “outranked” by James at the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15.

-- I think we can understand what Jesus is saying to Peter about his role by . . .

-- . . . comparing Luke 11:52 . . . we read of Jesus putting down the teachers of the law who “have taken away the key to knowledge” and have failed to enter the kingdom and have “hindered those who were entering.”

-- So, as Peter, the disciples, and even we, proclaim the gospel clearly, we are binding and loosing as people respond to the claims of Jesus.

TR: What does it mean that these are the keys of the kingdom?

Matthew 16:19-20

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²⁰Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ.

ESV

(SAME SLIDE)

- We must understand that in the New Testament, the Church and the Kingdom are different. Related to each other, certainly. But, still different.**
- [church] refers to Jesus' people, His community.**
- [kingdom] refers to His rule or reign. The messianic reign is calling out the messianic people.**
- Peter is the first of the disciples, first among equals, the first stone laid in the foundation, having “salvation historical primacy.”**

- But Matthew 18's clear instructions, just a few chapters later, on the church's role in discipline, binding and loosing,**

makes clear that the authority was not JUST for Peter.

-- Then . . . Jesus charges them all to keep this to themselves. He refuses to make an explicit claim that people would twist to make mean what they wanted.

-- He desired them to step into messianic faith under the revelation of Himself by the Father.

TR: So, the first question Jesus throws into the conversation that makes it feel a bit awkward is . . .

**“Who do you say
that I am?”**

. . . READ SLIDE

TR: But Jesus turns up the awkward factor, by pressing Peter and the disciples even further, in a sense asking them . . .

**“What kind of
‘Messiah’ do you
think I am?”**

READ SLIDE

- What we call the OT had been given so that folks like Peter could understand what Jesus meant when He presented Himself as the Messiah.**
- But, selective memory or misunderstanding led to thinking the Messiah would not be the suffering servant of Isaiah 52-53.**
- More to the liking of most folks was that He would be a prophet like Moses, Elijah, Elisha . . . with all their powerful displays of miracles.**
- Or, perhaps, a fearless, authoritative teacher, like John the Baptist.**

- For Peter, it was in those moments, that Jesus was a Messiah of great victory and glory . . . but not One Who would die.**

TR: Jesus then predicts His death, which then transitions to the implications of the kind of Messiah He really is.

Matthew 16:21

From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.

ESV

READ SLIDE

- Whatever Messianic expectations Peter and the crew had, Jesus forces them to reexamine their answer that He was the Christ.
- Peter had given the right answer . . . but Jesus keeps it a bit awkward by in a sense asking, “What do you mean by ‘MESSIAH?’”
- Jesus had already hinted and alluded to His passion, but now, in light of the disciple’s beginning understanding that He was the Messiah, He begins to EXPLAIN things more clearly.
- Jesus tells of His impending suffering and death and

ultimate resurrection.

TR: Mark's gospel says that Jesus said this PLAINLY, then Peter puts his foot in his mouth . . .

Matthew 16:22-23

And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you."

²³But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man."

ESV

READ SLIDE

- Did Peter understand Jesus was saying He would die. Of course, otherwise what would Peter's rebuke be about.
- Did Peter BELIEVE the Messiah had to die . . . clearly not.
- "NEVER!" – Peter just confessed Jesus is the Messiah and then speaks implying he knows more of God's will than the Messiah Himself!

- Peter the rock is now called a different kind of rock, a stumbling block
- Earlier, as recorded in Matthew 4, Satan had offered Jesus the kingdom without suffering, and now Peter suggests the same thing.

-- In that moment of salvation history, Peter switched sides . . . he moved his mind from the things of God to the things of man.

TR: Jesus' predictions forced Peter to remain in the awkward conversation . . . moving from . . .

**“Who do you say
that I am?”**

**“What kind of ‘Messiah’
do you think I am?”**

READ SLIDE

TR: To the even more awkward question . . .

**“What kind of
follower are
you?”**

READ SLIDE

-- To avoid awkward moments, many suggest we avoid conversations about politics and religion.

-- But, Jesus certainly didn't do that.

-- It is an awkward moment when we ask someone to review their thoughts about who they think someone is . . .

-- . . . but it is even more touchy we ask them about who they think they are . . . what kind of person are you?

TR: Following the rebuke to Peter, the rock turned stumbling block, Jesus says to his disciples . . . Mark says Jesus addressed the disciples and the crowd around them when He said . . .

Matthew 16:24-25

Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. ²⁵For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it."

ESV

. . . READ SLIDE

- In light of His predicted death and resurrection, disciples were to deny themselves absolutely, a kind of death to self (as D.A. Carson puts it).**
- This is not "bearing the cross" of our heartburn, incorrigible mother in law, or a tough professor.**
- This is taking up the implement of extreme torture and execution.**
- This is so understanding that Jesus is Messiah, that we would give everything to follow Him.**
- Like Jesus' parable of the Pearl of Great Price . . . we are**

willing to buy the whole field to get the pearl.

TR: This losing our life sounds like a lot to give up, but not when one remembers the pearl.

Matthew 16:26

“For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?”

ESV

READ SLIDE

- One's soul, one's life, one's self . . . all ways to render what Jesus is talking about.
- Our eternal destiny hangs in the balance.
- Certainly we want a better life now, but a “good life now” or even a “best life now” isn't a bargain if we have the worst eternity ever . . . forever.
- To “live” now, but then “die” then and forever is not a deal.

TR: Not only does Jesus' example motivate us to be willing to declare Him our Messiah, so does the eternal impact of our choice. And then, in verse 27, the reality of when His kingdom is consummated motivates us. This happens at

Jesus' second coming.

Matthew 16:27

“For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done.”



ESV

READ SLIDE

- Jesus clearly points to His divinity again.
- He uses the title, Son of Man
- He claims to come with HIS angels
- He says He will come in the glory of His Father
- He says He will come as the Judge

TR: The account in Mark's Gospel includes a bit more of what Jesus said . . .

Mark 8:38



“For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”

ESV

READ SLIDE

- Our response to Jesus and His words is what determines our eternal futures.**
- If the awkwardness of a conversation about eternal destinies causes us to back away from Jesus, then we have made a choice.**

TR: Because of Jesus' question, “Who do you say that I am?”, with its follow-up probings, we are faced with the awkward moment . . .



**RESPONSE
REQUIRED**

... because of a ... **READ SLIDE** ... kind of question.
-- As we read in previous weeks, Jesus did not come to condemn the world ... we are already condemned by our sin.
-- He came to save the world by giving Himself as a ransom.
-- But we must choose to declare Him with our lips and our lives to be the Messiah, the Christ, the Lord and Savior of our lives, for Whom we die to ourselves.

TR: Who do we say Jesus is? The most common answer today seems to be, "a good teacher." But, as C.S. Lewis said ...

You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, **but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher.** He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.

C.S. Lewis Mere Christianity

READ SLIDE

TR: For us today, and for you in your conversations with those in your communities, Jesus uses the truth of the Gospel message to . . .

Luke 11:52

**Woe to you lawyers!
For you have taken
away the key of
knowledge. You did
not enter yourselves,
and you hindered
those who were
entering."**



ESV

- ... unlock or lock-down people's hearts.**
- Today, I've wanted to make sure that I did not take away the key of knowledge from you.**
 - I did not want to hinder you from entering the kingdom.**
 - And in a moment, I want to lead you in a prayer that will help you answer Jesus' question, Who do you say that I am?**
-
- Many of us have already declared Jesus to be the Christ, the Messiah. We have publicly declared Him to be our King and have perhaps even vowed to sacrifice all to follow Him.**
 - Today we want to make sure we are not hindering others by withholding the key of knowledge.**
 - Yes, it may be an awkward conversation and some will be**

offended . . . but the eternal consequences are too great not to make the offer on behalf of the Savior.

-- Perhaps there are some who know all the right religious things to say, but you believe we can earn our way into God's kingdom by doing our best or at least being better than others . . . then we are like the lawyers . . . we have not entered ourselves and our legalism is hindering others who want to enter.

-- Who is Jesus? The Christ, the Son of the Living God. What kind of Messiah is Jesus? One who died for our sins and rose again on the third day. What kind of followers are we? Those who deny themselves, take up our cross, and follow Him. Those who choose to lose their life so that they can save it and find it. Those who will not forfeit their eternal soul, self, life for anything.