

WHO TAKES JESUS OUT OF YOUR LIFE?

CENTRAL QUESTION:

What or who takes Jesus out of your life?

I. THE FOUNDATION: WHY WE WORSHIP CHRIST

Key Scripture: John 20:11-17 (Mary Magdalene at the tomb)

Jesus is the Ultimate Sacrifice

A. Old Testament Shadow: Blood Sacrifice as Atonement

- Genesis 4: God killed an animal to cover Adam and Eve's sin
- Leviticus 17: "Life is in the blood"
- Day of Atonement: Blood sprinkled on mercy seat yearly (temporary covering)
- Passover: Spotless lamb's blood on doorposts (protection from death angel)

B. Jesus Fulfills All Prophecy

- Over 460 Old Testament prophecies concerning Christ's life, birth, and death
- Mathematician determined it was impossible for one man to fulfill even 47
- Jesus fulfilled all 460 prophecies
- Jesus died at Passover (perfect timing, perfect fulfillment)

C. The Cross: Jesus' Sacrifice for Us

- Without shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin
- True repentance requires more than saying "sorry" (requires blood atonement)
- Jesus became the eternal, perfect sacrifice
- His blood covers our sins completely and forever

II. THE RESURRECTION STORY: CONTRASTING THREE RESPONSES

Key Scripture: John 20:1-17

A. PETER'S RESPONSE: Quick to Check, Quick to Leave

- Peter denies Jesus during crucifixion

- At the tomb, Peter runs inside, sees empty tomb and folded grave clothes
- Sees the napkin folded (Jewish custom = "I'll be back")
- Peter and John return home
- Represents checking things out but not sticking around

B. JOHN'S RESPONSE: Cautious Observation

- John "the beloved disciple" gets to tomb first but doesn't enter
- Only looks from outside, peeks in
- Also leaves with Peter
- Represents those who observe but hesitate to fully commit

C. MARY MAGDALENE'S RESPONSE: Devoted Persistence

- She had seven demons cast out (knew what Jesus did for her)
- She was the only one who stayed at the tomb
- She comes early in the morning to anoint Jesus' body
- She weeps outside the tomb
- She looks twice (human nature drives her back)
- She sees angels at the head and foot of where Jesus lay

The Key Difference: Mary's Love and Devotion

- She washed Jesus' feet with her tears and dried them with her hair
- She put her glory (woman's hair = glory) at his feet
- She loved him not just when convenient, but completely

III. THE ENCOUNTER: JESUS KNOWS YOUR NAME

Key Scripture: John 20:11-17

A. Mary's Confusion and Searching

- Mary weeps: "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him"
- She speaks to what she thinks is the gardener
- She asks: "Tell me where you've laid him, and I will take him away"
- She doesn't recognize the risen Jesus

B. The Power of Being Called by Name

- Jesus speaks her name: "Mary"
- When he speaks her name, everything changes
- She recognizes him and calls him "Rabboni" (Master/Teacher)
- Jesus knows each person individually by name
- He knows your problems, hangups, shortcomings, and potential

C. The Significance of "Touch Me Not"

- Jesus says: "Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my father"
- Two interpretations:
 1. She must shift from earthly teacher relationship to Messiah relationship
 2. Like the high priest in Old Testament, Jesus must remain clean until blood is applied in heaven
- Eight days later, Jesus tells Thomas to touch him (after ascension completed)
- This signifies: The atonement is complete and accepted

IV. THE CHALLENGE: THREE TYPES OF BELIEVERS TODAY

A. THE JUDAS: Complete Betrayal

- Betrays for personal gain
- Doesn't ask for forgiveness
- Takes own life rather than face consequences
- Represents complete rejection of Christ

B. THE PETER AND JOHN: Conditional Commitment

- Love Jesus as long as it's convenient
- Show up initially but leave when circumstances change
- Check things out but don't stick around
- Give up when things don't match expectations
- Only invested when comfortable or successful

C. THE MARY: Devoted Faithfulness

- Loves Jesus through all circumstances
- Refuses to leave, even in uncertainty
- Willing to serve and care for him
- Committed regardless of convenience
- Stays until she finds him

V. THE QUESTION FOR YOUR LIFE

What Takes Jesus Out of Your Life?

Potential Obstacles:

- Your job and pursuit of success

- The lust of your flesh (worldly desires)
- When everything isn't going your way
- When the situation doesn't match your expectations
- Convenience-based faith (only when things are good)

The Reality Check:

- We love Jesus as long as it's convenient
- We love him when Facebook problems can be vented
- We abandon him when we're struggling, down, or in the valley
- But God is still God even when things aren't going good
- God is still God in the storm
- God is still God when everything is upside down

VI. THE CALL TO COMMITMENT

A. Know That He Knows You

- Jesus knows your name
- He knows what you're going through
- He knows what you're capable of becoming
- He knows your potential if you let him have control

B. Choose Your Response Type

- Will you be Peter and John (check it out but leave)?
- Will you be Mary (stay devoted no matter what)?
- The choice determines everything

C. Keep Your Eyes Fixed on Jesus

- Pastor's testimony: "I just looked at Jesus"
- When hurting, keep eyes on him
- When down, keep eyes on him
- When wanting to quit, keep eyes on him
- This is how you make it through

D. Understand What Easter Really Means

- Not about Easter eggs and ducks
- Not about a holiday once a year
- It's about the blood sacrifice shed for you
- It's about being born again
- It's about peace and joy through atonement
- It's available every day, not just Easter Sunday

VII. THE INVITATION

Key Scripture: John 20:17 "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my father, and your father; and to my God, and your God"

A. For Those Without Christ

- What better day than Resurrection Sunday to give your heart to Jesus?
- The altar is open
- Come forward

B. For Those Struggling with Doubt and Fear

- Today is your day of blessing
- Don't stand there in uncertainty
- Make the decision to follow him

C. For Those Needing Rededication

- Maybe you've drifted like Peter and John
- Maybe you started strong but life pulled you away
- Maybe you're not where you need to be
- This is your day to come back

KEY TAKEAWAY:

The resurrection of Jesus isn't just a historical event or annual celebration. It's an invitation to choose your level of commitment. Will you be like Mary—devoted and faithful regardless of circumstances? Or will you be like Peter and John—checking things out but leaving when it gets hard? What or who is taking Jesus out of your life?

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION:

- What is currently taking Jesus out of your life?
- Are you more like Mary, Peter, or John in your faith commitment?
- How has God shown up for you in the valleys and storms of life?
- What would it look like to keep your eyes fixed on Jesus this week?
- How can you demonstrate Mary's level of devotion in your daily life?
- What does the "blood atonement" of Jesus mean for your personal freedom and peace?

Scripture References for Further Study: Genesis 4 | Genesis 2:7 | Leviticus 17 | John 20:1-17 | Psalm 139 | Hebrews 9:22