

Why Did Jesus Ask So Many Questions *Series*

Questions About Identity

8-30-23

I. Announce:

- A. **Slide1,2 Jen:** Building on Faith.
- B. **Slide3,4 Community Groups:** Community Groups start meeting next week! These are co-ed groups for both singles and couples. Singles please join in! **Our new group on Thursday night in Temecula, as well as our Tuesday afternoon group in Lake Elsinore, still have openings.** Contact AP if you have any questions.
- C. **Slide5 Foundations:** This class **introduces** and **organizes** core doctrines to help you form a *biblical worldview* and be more prepared to share with unbelievers. This will be held on Sundays during 2nd service in the Learning Center. Enroll online CM.com/classes
- D. **Slide6 R&R Study:** Ladies, join us for our Fall Reasons to Rejoice Bible Study. The book is \$5.00 which you'll pay online when you register, and you'll receive the first night. You can choose **Mon nights at 7pm** or **Tues morn at 9am**. Childcare provided on Tuesday only. Please register online for this session that runs from mid Sept. to mid Nov. Contact Kelly for any questions.
- E. **Slide7 Calvary Kids Volunteers:** Calvary Kids has some exciting **volunteer opportunities** for our church body. As summer comes to a close, we are looking for **teachers, assistants and small group leaders** to serve on **Sun morn's and Wed evenings through the next school year.** We will provide you with all of the training and supplies you will need to experience the joy of serving in Children's ministry. Contact Jasmine for more information.
- F. **Slide8 Church Baptism and Classes:** Mark your Calendar for our **Baptism on Sun Sept 24** at 3pm. We will have a **baptism class** for those getting baptized on either **Wed Sept 13** or **Sun Sept 17.**
- G. **Slide9 Prayer:**

II. Intro: Questions About Identity [identity questions grouped]

- A. **Identity Questions:** *Who do people say that I am? But who do you say that I am? What do you call me good? Woman, what does that have to do with me? Who is my*

mother? Who are my brothers? What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he? Man, who appointed me as judge or referee between you and your brother?

- B. **Slide10a** What is your name? ... that could be a **simple** question, **or** a profound one¹
1. It depends on the **circumstances**, **and** **who** is asking the question.
 2. If it's a **barista** asking you your name the question's pretty **straightforward**. **But** when **Jesus** asks the question, **What is your name?** as He asked **the possessed man** in Luke 8, it's completely different ...
 - a) **Slide10b** After all, **to know another's name is the beginning of relationship**.
- C. Names are more than mere **labels**. We **identify** with **our names**. In a sense, **we are our names**.
1. Shakespeare's **Juliet** famously asked *actually the opposite*, **What's in a name?** Then she answered her own question: **"That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet."** **But** if Juliet can easily change the name of a **rose** it's probably because ... she's not a **rose** herself.
 - a) She would not be nearly so **casual** if the name to be changed were **her own**. **If someone insisted on calling her Juliet or Jules**, she might protest.
 - b) **Think of all the ways your own name has been changed**. The one's you **like**, the one's you **don't**. (*Jish*, just my siblings! - Brian, Bri, BB, B, PB)
 2. We are intimately tied to our names in ways that are **powerful** and even rather **mysterious**.
 - a) **George Forman** named all 5 of his boys **George**, **but** that's a little strange. **We usually don't want to share our name**.
- D. **Slide10c** You know why organizations do **name tags** at events ... we recognize that it is hard for any kind of relationship, *even a casual one*, to develop **if you don't know each others names**.

¹ Copenhaver, Martin B.. Jesus Is the Question (p. 25). Abingdon Press. Kindle Edition.

1. **And** if someone does not bother to learn your name *after multiple times*, it might be an *indication* that *they don't really care to*. (now we all feel a little bit guilty). This also is why it is sometimes painful to have your name *forgotten*

a) For the most part, *we remember the names of important people or people who are important to us*. (That's why it's hard, even when it's *innocently done* from *loss of memory*)

E. Slide11 Isaiah says God calls us *by name*. Is.43:1 *But now thus says the Lord, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.*

1. It implies that God is *not* an impersonal force. If God knows me by name, it means that ... God is a being **and**, a being who seeks to be *in relationship with me*.

2. It is one of God's ways of reaching out to me - in all of **who I really am**.

III. Slide12 **HE CALLED HIM LAZARUS (Lk.16:19-31)** 1st Story

A. One of Jesus' parables, commonly called *Lazarus and the Rich Man*, includes an *interesting, and telling, use of Names*. **READ**

B. *Licked by dogs* - *not* like your pampered pet that comes up and greets you with a kiss and a lick, *no we're talking diseased stray dogs*.

1. **Yet** this *mangy mongrel, the dog outside* the gate, showed more compassion **than the man inside!**

C. *These guys cannot be more different*. One rich, one poor. One feasted, one starved. One covered in purple, one covered in sores. One with enough money to meet his needs and throw parties, the other man *with a name, unlike the other guy*.

1. If you are **rich**, it seems that everyone knows your name.

2. The names of **rich people** often are spoken like magic words. Those names have *the power to open closed doors*. **And yet, Jesus** gives no name to *the rich man* in the parable.

3. It's also safe to assume that the rich man of the parable does not know the name of the beggar who sits at the gate of his house. But in the parable (as in the eyes of God) the beggar has a name - **Lazarus**.

D. **Lazarus**, the only character named in Jesus' parables ... maybe because of what his name means ... *When God Helps!*

1. Think about this: *Lazarus is unclean, penniless, he's covered with sores, he desired what fell from the rich man's table, and even the dogs licked his sores.* Yet his name means, *When God Helps* ... wait, does He?
 - a) How many people *mocked him* because of his name. *Doesn't look like you're getting helped by God!* - But this is not the end of the story for Lazarus.
 - b) In the end it shows **God really was his Help**. His suffering came to an end, and then *the Great Reversal*.

IV. Slide13 **WHAT IS YOUR NAME?** (Lk.8:26-39) **READ** 2nd Story

A. Luke says that the man is possessed by **demons**, he might also have had *symptoms of serious mental illness, specifically multiple personality disorder*. In either case, the poor fellow *clearly is suffering*.

1. Slide14a When the man sees Jesus from a distance, he runs to him and fell down down before him. Jesus asks, **"What is your name?"** This is **not** an *insignificant* question, particularly here. It is the question one human being asks another. **Remember it's the beginning of relationship.** (I met *Rayla*, Liz's granddaughter in our break room today, *my 1st question*)

B. This man had been exiled from his community and had been left for dead. **We can only imagine how long it has been since he has been asked his name.**

1. Probably he has not been asked since he first had been tormented, and that in itself would have *added to his torment*.
2. Slide14b During his time of distress I'm sure he has been known by **labels** rather than by a name: *a madman, a demoniac, naked guy, dangerous beast*. But Jesus asks, **What is your name?** Under these circumstances,

the question sounds like *nothing less than an invitation to life*, the first step in healing.

- C. Slide14c The man replies, *Legion is my name*. It is another poignant name. A **legion** was a unit of the Roman army of **6000 soldiers**, who often **brutalized** those who lived in occupied lands. So when the man says, *Legion is my name*, he is testifying to **how many** demons occupy his soul **and** how **destructive** they can all be.
1. Then, in an odd twist to the story, Jesus commands the demons to leave the man alone **and** to enter a huge herd of pigs instead. **The pigs then madly run off the edge of a cliff into the sea of Galilee.**
- D. The man, now in a new set of clothes and in his right mind, *asks if he can follow Jesus on his travels*. Jesus has another idea. He tells the man to go to his home so that his friends and family can hear this amazing story and see the transformation for themselves.
- E. **So the man goes back into his hometown and does just that.** He tells the story of the miraculous thing that has happened and about how he has been restored to life.
1. Slide14d I imagine him *beginning his story* by saying, the 1st thing Jesus did was ask me, **What is your name?** [now, *Ahat* is my name] #1, not 6000.

V. Slide15a **IDENTITY RECEIVED**

- A. Any identity that is **achieved** *rather than* **received** has to be **excluding**.²
1. **Another words**, you feel good because these *other people* **aren't** as **good** as you, **or** as **enlightened** as you, **as conservative** as you, **as hard-working** as you.
 - a) That's often, *how we feel good about ourselves*.
 2. Slide15b You need recognition. You need somebody **Outside** to come in and speak to you.
- B. **Who Do You Need?** You need somebody on the outside, **but** what kind person should they be?

² Timothy Keller

1. You need the **love and approval and esteem** of someone you esteem, if you want any esteem yourself.
2. You want someone who will **never let you down** or **disillusion you**.
3. You can't have someone who is **fickle**, who is up and down with you, depending on **how well you perform**.
4. Slide15c You need the **adoration** of **Someone** who **adores** you. You need to know that **the God of the universe loves you**. That would have to give you the **most powerful basis and stablest identity** possible!

C. Slide16 How do you get that?

1. Knowing you're **adopted** into his family, *that's a new identity!*
You're a **new creation**. You're a **citizen** of heaven. You are **His own**. You're a **child** of God. You're a **friend** of Christ. You're a **family member** of Christ. You're a **bondservant** of Christ. You're His **bride**. You're His **poem**. You're the **apple** of His eye. You're His **beloved**.
2. And Jesus didn't show up just to *give you a new name*. He died for you!

D. Slide17a John Piper said, "*Who do you believe has the greatest power to determine who you are and what you are worth? That is your god.*"

1. Slide17b Timothy Keller said, When you're struggling with what **your culture** says about your identity because you're **not good looking** enough, **not strong** enough, **not smart** enough, **not successful** enough. You have to **learn how to pull out your identity & push it to the top of the deck**.
2. When you are worried about your **status** and **reputation**, go to Phil.2, and remind yourself that **Jesus wasn't afraid to give up His**. *Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave.*

E. Slide17c Key: don't just believe this - take it to the center of your imagination, *through worship, through thinking, through applying it*, at that moment.

1. If it doesn't go to *the top of the deck* ... you're back where everyone else is **in cultural captivity**.

F. Slide 17d So How are you getting it **down** into your heart? Take it to the *naming* level.

1. Remind yourself again & again, *What do I know to be true*. (not **feel!**)
2. I think that's why the song, "*I Am A Child of God*" became so popular.
We all need it sung over our lives. *Over & over & over again*. [end]

G. Keywords: identity, name, questions.

H.4 Things:

1. **We are saints**, not sinners. (1:1) saints 9x's.
2. **We are adopted**, no longer abandoned. (1:5) [when adopted 3 things happen: Father pays all debts. You receive all fathers privileges. Unable to be unadopted, a parent could not sever legal guardianship].
3. **We are sealed** w/promise of HS, no longer at risk. (1:13)
 - a) Sealed = we are made secure as a sign of *authentication* or *ownership*.
4. **We are His poeima**/masterpiece, no longer valueless.

I. Paul uses *In Christ* (or similar) more than 160 x's. (Jerry Bridges *Who Am I?*)

J. Quick reminders: **Roles** are what you do. **Identity** is who you are.

1. You aren't what you **do**, **but** what Jesus **has done**.
2. You **aren't** what's been done to you; **but** what **Jesus** has done for you.