



“What do you want me to do for you?”

Mark 10: 46-52

June 28, 2020

Sermon Series: Questions Jesus Asked

Rev. Dr. Henry Hansen

GETTING STARTED

1. How is your summer going? On a scale of 1 (rock-bottom) – 10 (excited, content, and grateful), how are you doing?

LEARNING & LIVING OUT SCRIPTURE – Read the assigned passage

2. What did you learn about Bartimaeus and this Scripture during the message?

Consider for example the meaning of his name: Bar (son) and Timao (honor). His name means Son of Honor.

3. The phrase “cheer up, get on your feet,” is communicating to Bartimaeus that it is his lucky day. Though amidst a large crowd, Jesus heard him calling out and gave him attention. How does this make you think about the love, care, and attention of Jesus and how Bartimaeus experiences him?
4. Jericho was a place of triumph for the Jewish people because of the miracle of the walls of Jericho coming down in Joshua. How does this theme carry forward for the Jews both based on who Jesus is and what happens to Bartimaeus?
5. What is significant about Bartimaeus call out to Jesus “Jesus son of David, have mercy on me.” Remember its poignancy in Mark’s Gospel and how the primary theme in Mark is how Jesus becomes King.
6. Describe the meaning behind the question Jesus asks – “What do you want me to do for you?” What does that communicate about Jesus?
7. What do you think is the most important outcome in this Scripture?

LIVING OUT “REAL LIFE”

8. This Scripture is about many things, one of which is limitations. How does God use limitations? How has God used yours?
9. What do you want Jesus to do for you today? If you prayed that same prayer on behalf of our nation right now in light of so much societal unrest with COVID-19 and other tensions, what would your prayer be?
10. Why is it important to think about and meditate upon the questions Jesus asked of his audiences and followers?
11. Every day this week, pray your prayer need in response to Jesus’s question “what do you want me to do for you?” Reflect on the meaning behind the question and how God might shape your life as a result of his response.

SHARING & PRAYER REQUESTS

Pray for our world right now as people suffer loss because of COVID-19. Pray also for whatever other societal unrest you feel compelled to pray for in our nation.

“Why Do You Worry?”

Matthew 6:24 - 34

July 5, 2020

Sermon Series: “Questions Jesus Asked”

Rev. Ray Medina

GETTING STARTED

1. Check in with each other about how you're doing and how COVID-19 is affecting you directly. Be mindful of understanding the other as this is discussed

LEARNING & LIVING OUT SCRIPTURE

Together, Reread the biblical text for the morning: Matthew 6:24-34. If your group wants to read more biblical references that speak to worry, read Philippians 4:4-7

2. Ray said that we can treat our faith (e.g. church attendance, prayer, Bible reading) like an exclamation point or a vending machine. Does this inspire you, irk you, or create further inquiries? (irk-inspire-inquire)
3. Ray said that Jesus' use of questions means that sometimes the question is equally as valuable as the answer. Does this irk, inspire, or create inquiry?
4. Jesus said “Strive first for the kingdom of God and God's righteousness, and all these things (e.g. food and clothing) will be given to you as well” (Mt. 6:33). What does it look like for you to “strive” or “seek” the kingdom?
5. Ray wondered if loving our neighbor (e.g. a younger brother who lives far away or our literal neighbor) adds to our worries or transforms our worries from self-centered striving to strive for the kingdom. Does this irk, inspire, or create inquiry?
6. Ray said that we can preach the gospel to ourselves every morning (the gospel = our trust in the God who cares for us and values our life). How would you or do you preach the Gospel to yourself?
7. Ray's emphasis was on loving our neighbor as a way to transform our worries. He gave examples through his story about the Syrian Uber driver of empathetic listening, sharing our lives with others, and being present to others as best we can. What now might the Lord require of you in light of this teaching?

SHARING & PRAYER REQUESTS

Pray for the containment and elimination of the Corona Virus. Pray for healing for those who are sick from it.

“Fan or Follower?”

Luke 6:46

July 12, 2020

Sermon Series: “Questions Jesus Asked”

Rev. Shannon Coon

THE BIG IDEA

Jesus asks a “Why?” question this week. Questions which start with “Why?” can often put us on the defensive. But what if we took this as an opportunity to really assess whether we are just a “fan” of Jesus’s or a “follower.” A fan can admire someone and stay personally detached. But a follower wants to become like the person he/she admires. Jesus’s disciples were “followers.” They didn’t just literally follow him around (although they did do that!), but they became his apprentices – observing him, learning from him, putting into action in their own lives the things he was modeling and teaching. When Jesus asks, “Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord’ and do not do what I say?” he really wants to know, “Why aren’t you obeying me?” And we may have a myriad of excuses (let’s admit it – loving our enemies is HARD!). We can make the decision to become Jesus’s apprentices by putting into practice the kinds of actions Jesus takes in his own life – which all start first and foremost with certain spiritual practices like solitude, silence, prayer, Sabbath observance, worship, fasting, service. Out of these practices of Jesus’s, he was able to enact in his life the kind of obedience to God the Father that is unparalleled. It is up to us if we want to be a “fan or follower.”

GETTING STARTED

Can you think of a time in your life when you have gotten really defensive about something? Can you think of a time when you asked someone a “Why?” question and you put them on the defensive?

LEARNING & LIVING OUT SCRIPTURE

Together, read **Luke 6:46-49**:

1. After Jesus asks why we do not do the things he commands (in verse 46), he launches into a great illustration of two builders (verses 47-49). Keep in mind that builders started out as apprentices and learned the trade before they built their own structures. Both of these builders had started as apprentices, but only one of them truly put into practice what he had learned. Which one? In Jesus’s illustration, stormy and turbulent weather conditions came upon the builders’ houses. What do you suppose Jesus’s message is to us about the storms of our lives?
2. What is the difference between someone who is a fan or admirer, and someone who is a follower? Jesus’s followers were called disciples, which is pretty synonymous with the word “apprentice.” What do apprentices do? What do you think you could put into place in your life that would make you more of an apprentice of Jesus?

LIVING OUT “REAL LIFE”

This question is a good opportunity for us to examine our relationship with Jesus. If Jesus is truly “Lord” of our life, obedience is important to us. Jesus is asking us in this question, “Why aren’t you obeying me?” This is a hard question to look at. Following is an exercise you could use to help you assess the role of obedience and apprenticeship in your own life.

St. Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556) developed a series of exercises for growing in closeness to Christ. One part of the exercises is called the Prayer of Examen. It can be extracted out of the exercises and practiced alone. In

fact, St. Ignatius called it the most important part (even just 15 minutes!) of a person's day. Originally designed to pray twice daily, it is very beneficial if done just once a day (usually in the evening), to look back over the last 24 hours. Or, it can be prayed every 2-3 days, looking back over the last 48-72 hours. It really can be done in 10-15 minutes minimum time.

There are five basic movements to the prayer. The first is to look back over the day/s and identify where God was present and where God's blessings can be found, and then to give praise and thanks for these gifts. The second step is to invite the Spirit to help you get honest with yourself, not to hide in denial, self-righteousness, or a victim mentality. The third step is (relying on the Spirit to aid you) to identify the parts of the past day/s that didn't go so well - acts, words, thoughts that either hurt us or hurt others. This includes painful or negative emotions and thoughts, and sinful thoughts, words, actions. The fourth step is to ask God for forgiveness where sin was present, and/or to ask God for guidance on how to handle certain situations better. Sometimes this step also includes asking God for healing from hurts which may have been inflicted upon us by others. The final step of the Examen is to pray about the next day/s. Ask God to help you envision how you might think or act differently going forward, how you might better align yourself with God's will.

Let's apply these steps to the very specific Scripture for the message on July 12. Take 15 minutes to yourself in a quiet place, preferably in the evening but it could also be first thing in the morning, looking back over the last 24 hours.

"Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord' and do not do what I tell you?" (Jesus asking his disciples in Luke 6:46)

- 1) Take about 60 seconds of silence, just breathing deeply. Try to feel God looking upon you with a loving and compassionate gaze. When you are ready, ask God to help you identify the moments, people, places, feelings that you had over the last 24 hours in which you felt God's presence, or that you can recognize as God's blessings upon you. (This includes big things like the gift of a good friend, to the little things like ripe vegetables in your garden.) Take time to thank God for all these blessings and to praise God for how God works and interacts with you in your life. This is the time to recognize how the Lord of your life wants to bless you and shows his protection, care and love for you. *"Lord, Lord!"*
- 2) Ask God to fill you with God's Spirit so that the Spirit can lead you through a time of honest soul-searching. Ask God to help you steer clear of denial or self-righteousness and self-pity or self-loathing.
- 3) Looking back over the past day (perhaps hour by hour), think about the ways in which you *"...did not do what I tell you..."*. In reliving your past day (with God guiding you through it), how did you depart from following Jesus? Identify concrete times when you did not turn the other cheek, when you did not consider "the least of these," when you did not pray for your enemies, etc. This comes in the ways we think about people and situations, as well as the words we use toward and about others, and certainly in the actions we take (or fail to take) which are most often self-centered. They are the times when we have not let Jesus be "Lord, Lord," but we've taken matters into our own hands. Do not be afraid of the failures and mistakes, no matter how big or small.
- 4) Admit to God any sins you have committed, ways in which you have fallen short, ways in which you may have hurt others. Ask for God's forgiveness where necessary, as well as the strength to change and to live into doing more and more of what Jesus tells us to do.
- 5) Let God's forgiveness, mercy and grace to fall upon you and ask God to help you envision the next day/s ahead. How might you better follow Jesus going forward? Do you need to apologize to anyone? If there is a troubling or difficult situation, ask God how to handle the situation. Ask God to help you in the moments when you may be tempted to fail in the same way again. Close your prayer in a way that is meaningful to you, perhaps by reciting the Lord's Prayer, the Serenity Prayer, the Prayer of St. Francis, or by reading a Psalm.

SHARING & PRAYER REQUESTS

“Do You Want Freedom?”

John 8:2-11

July 19, 2020

Sermon Series: “Questions Jesus Asked”

Rev. Shannon Coon

THE BIG IDEA

The question Jesus asks in this Scripture: “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” is a question that needs to be looked at in the context of the entire story. While Jesus is being “trapped” by the Jewish religious leaders who are out to get him, he uses the encounter to teach freedom from an unhealthy and erroneous picture of God. God is not the legalistic, condemning, angry and punishing God who those ready to stone an adulterous woman think he is. On the contrary, he is a God who knows that no one is without sin and he desires to invite each one of us to freedom from living sinfully. Jesus represents a picture of God that is compassionate, non-judgmental, forgiving, merciful, loving. Each one of us can be free from some of the negative images that we carry around with us about God, because through Jesus Christ each one of us is invited into the freedom of living without sin. Jesus gives this woman freedom from being stoned to death, but also gives her the freedom of going from there and living a life free from the bondage of sin. Do we want that freedom too?

GETTING STARTED

Shannon told the story about being “found out” when she was an adolescent and snooped around looking for her Christmas gifts. Do you have a story from your life about a time you may have been “found out” or “caught in the act?” How did you feel about yourself when it happened?

LEARNING & LIVING OUT SCRIPTURE

Together, read **John 8:2-11**:

1. Which part of this story has an effect on you – the religious leaders trying to “trap” Jesus? The woman who is terrified for her life? The frenetic scenario of people present who are getting ready to stone the woman? The beautiful “pause” that Jesus creates in the middle of it all? The question that Jesus asks the woman? The final words and actions of Jesus in the story?
2. There are three things Jesus frees this woman from:
 - the judgment and condemnation of other people
 - the image or picture of God being a condemning God
 - living her life in sin

Which type of freedom do you feel you need most in your life right now?

LIVING OUT “REAL LIFE”

Pastor, author and seminary professor Trevor Hudson says, “Every idea and assumption we have about God must be measured against the person of Jesus.” This is a useful experiment to try: Take two pieces of paper and on one piece write the word “God.” Brainstorm your immediate responses to this word and write them under it. Now write on the second piece of paper the word “Jesus.” Write your immediate responses to this word under it. Compare your lists. What do you note about your image of God?

SHARING & PRAYER REQUESTS

“Where is Your Faith?”

Luke 8:22-25

July 26, 2020

Sermon Series: “Questions Jesus Asked”

Rev. Tammie Veach

THE BIG IDEA

When life’s storms come, where do you get your strength? What gets you through?

GETTING STARTED

1. Share at least one good thing that has happened during this shelter in place. (i.e. getting to participate in an event across the country because it was put on Zoom, having more phone conversations with friends or family over the phone)
2. What things have helped you get through this pandemic? What has encouraged you and how have you encouraged others?

LEARNING & LIVING OUT SCRIPTURE

Together, read **Luke 8:22-25**

3. From the sermon, what cultural beliefs about the water would impact the way the disciples felt? How does Jesus’ rebuke of the wind and waves impact this belief?
4. In verse 24 do you think the disciples are asking Jesus for help or informing him of their situation? Why do you think this?
5. There are 2 questions in this passage “Where is your faith?” and “Who is this?” Spend some time talking about the importance of these questions as well as your answers.
6. Read Mark 4:35-41. How is Mark’s version different from Luke’s? Do the differences cause you to see anything differently? Explain.

LIVING OUT “REAL LIFE”

7. Jesus is always in the boat with you. How can you strengthen your faith that he has the power to take care of you? Examine how you answer the question “Who is this?” How does that answer impact your faith?

THE “EXTRA-MILE”

8. Read the rest of Luke 8 to see the other 3 miracles Jesus performs on this journey. How do they influence your answers to the 2 questions?

SHARING & PRAYER REQUESTS

“DO YOU WANT TO BE MADE WELL?”

John 5:1-9

August 2, 2020

Sermon Series: “Questions Jesus Asked”

Rev. Dr. Henry Hansen

GETTING STARTED

1. How’s your summer going? On a scale of 1 (rock-bottom) – 10 (excited, content, and grateful), how are you doing?

LEARNING & LIVING OUT SCRIPTURE – Read the assigned passage

2. What stands out to you about the question “do you want to be made well?”
3. Describe in your mind what would happen to a person having been an invalid for over three decades in terms of dependency and “captivity,” as Henry described in the message? Consider the reference he made by CS Lewis that so often times a familiar captivity can be more desirable than an unfamiliar freedom.”
4. Consider the commands given by Jesus to “stand up, take up your mat, and walk.” What does this tell you about our own willingness to be made well and its role in living out the Christian life. Think beyond physical limitations toward other imprisonments we may share.
5. The pool in Bethesda was a pool of legend that was thought to be one that healed people when the water stirred because the stirred water meant an angel was visited there.

What did the alcoves where the disabled people laid symbolize?

LIVING OUT “REAL LIFE”

6. Reflect on the commands “Get up. Take up your mat. And walk.” Which of these three per Sunday’s message is most needed for you as you look toward deeper wellness in your life?
7. If there’s a familiar bondage you’ve suffered from that you need to let go of (your proverbial “mat” by the pool), what might that be? What’s a familiar captivity you need to completely abandon?
8. A Christian’s greatest calling is to enjoy and glorify God no matter the circumstance. Has COVID-19 and social or political unrest caused you to forget and neglect that higher purpose? Are you “walking” toward God’s higher purposes or perseverating on something that isn’t of God and reflecting the King?

SHARING & PRAYER REQUESTS

Pray for our world right now as people suffer loss because of COVID-19. Pray into this Scripture and how it may speaking to your life.

Do You See Anything?

August 9, 2020

Series: Questions Jesus Asked

Mark 8: 22-26

Rev. Dr. Henry Hansen

GETTING STARTED

1. How did your week go? On a scale of 1 (rock-bottom) – 10 (excited, content, and grateful), how are you doing?

LEARNING & LIVING OUT SCRIPTURE – Read the assigned passage

2. What stands out to you about the question “do you see anything?”
3. This is the only place in all the Gospels where Jesus did a healing that was completed on his first attempt. Talk about that and why you think that occurred. Consider some of the thoughts shared in the message about why this was the case.
4. A group of people took the blind man to be with Jesus. What meaning does that have?
5. Talk about the role of “touch” in caring for others. Note that Jesus held this man by the hand. How is touch meaningful and how does Jesus holding someone by the hand affect how he relates to us.

LIVING OUT “REAL LIFE”

6. How is your 2020 vision since the pandemic began?
7. What are some practices you’ve discovered in your life that help you see more clearly? Example: gratitude or praise, and so on.
8. Who are you surrounding yourself with right now that helps you to have a laser focus on Jesus and his purposes in your life?
9. What’s the “slow work” that God is doing to bring the inward healing you need to confront uncertainty in your life and in the world (the pandemic and so on).

SHARING & PRAYER REQUESTS

Pray for teachers and students as the school year starts with students learning remotely.

What Concern Is That To You?

Series: Questions Jesus Asked

August 16, 2020

John 21: 15-23

Rev. Dr. Henry Hansen

GETTING STARTED

1. What are you most looking forward to this upcoming week? Who will you be with and where will you be?

LEARNING & LIVING OUT SCRIPTURE – Read the assigned passage

2. What stands out to you about the question “what concern is that to you?”
3. This is a post resurrection occurrence. Explain to others in your group where Peter and Jesus had left things before his trial and execution. Example – consider the denial of Peter of Jesus and his failure. In light of this, how do you hear Jesus’s words to him “Do you love me?” What does he ask this question three times? And what do you make of Jesus’s response to “feed his sheep?” What’s he asking of Peter?
4. Why is Peter wound up about what Jesus may ask of John rather than focusing on himself?
5. Name 5 characteristics you learn about Jesus, his style of ministry and character, as a result of this passage?

LIVING OUT “REAL LIFE”

6. Henry drew out the tendency of Peter to compare himself to others, and namely here – to John. Remember too Peter’s need of shining a light on himself as a top-dog throughout Jesus’s ministry “I will never deny you,” “Should we forgive someone 7 times,” and so on, as examples of his need to be out in front and prove his value.

Do you have a tendency to “compare?” If so, what might be an area where it leads to a lack of contentment? Remember, the reference given in the message “When comparison begins, contentment ends.” When we’re not content we’re using some metric we’re comparing ourselves to.

7. Share ways our society promotes the habit of comparison or shows symptoms of what psychologist call “comparison-itis.” Example: social media and commercials.
8. What are habits one can cultivate to be satisfied in Jesus and to trust and obey his plan or desires for our lives?
9. Henry talked about how one of Peter’s crowning achievements would be St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome, built long after he died. Are you content with the idea that perhaps your greatest impact will be felt long after you die? If not – explain. Consider the long and slow work of God and how he may apply your faithfulness of today to prosper generations to come.

SHARING & PRAYER REQUESTS

Pray for teachers and students as the school year starts with students learning remotely.

“How Much Bread Do You Have?”

Matthew 15:29-39

August 23, 2020

Sermon Series: “Questions Jesus Asked”

Rev. Ray Medina

GETTING STARTED

1. Check in with each other about how you're doing and how COVID-19 is affecting you directly. Be mindful of understanding the other as this is discussed

LEARNING & LIVING OUT SCRIPTURE

Together, reread the biblical text for the morning: Matthew 15:29-39. If your group wants to read other biblical texts referenced, read Matthew 15:21-28, Matthew 22:34-40, Matthew 14:13-21, and Matthew 28:16-20.

2. Ray said that the church's faith isn't multiplying among young people / faith isn't getting passed on to young people. Does this inspire you, irk you, or raise new inquiries? (irk-inspire-inquire)
3. Ray said that faith multiplied in the Gospels because people told their stories of encountering Jesus. What does a story of encountering Jesus sound like today? How can we tell more of these stories?
4. Ray said that for faith to multiply today, we need to hear and empathize with the stories of others, loving those whom Jesus loves, especially others who are different from us in terms of race, politics, age, sexual orientation, etc. Does this irk you, inspire you, or raise new inquiries?
5. Ray said that for faith to multiply today, we need to not only “pass down” the faith by teaching others, but also allow others to teach us, learning from them in a posture of humility. This is “passing around” the faith in a community of “very different, somewhat lost, often confused, far from perfect” disciples. Does this irk you, inspire you, or cause new inquiries?
6. Which of the three aspects that Ray drew from the feeding of the 4000 most resonates with you: telling your story, hearing and empathizing with the stories of others, or learning from others in humility? Which of these could you actually do this week or this month?

SHARING & PRAYER REQUESTS

Pray for the containment and elimination of the Corona Virus. Pray for healing for those who are sick from it.