

Sermon Series: The Hard Sayings of Jesus
Sermon Title: Now That's a Good Question!
Sermon Text: Matthew 16:13-27

Jesus made a habit of asking good questions! They are good questions because they cut through the fluff, and get to the heart of what is really important!

We like to make "small talk" – about the weather, sports, what we did over the weekend, but in so doing we often avoid having truly meaningful conversations!

I don't know if Jesus ever made "small talk". His words always had purpose, and His questions were always meant to jar people out of a place of complacency!

- **Good Question #1: "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?"** - vs. 13

This was not as much a question about the opinions of others, as much as it was a question focusing on the importance of what people believe about who He is!

Jesus is concerned about what people believe about Him because He knows what's at stake! How much do we really care about what others believe about Jesus? What gets lost when all we do is make "small talk" is Jesus! Example

The devil wins, not only when we believe wrongly about Jesus, but he wins when we keep silent about Him!

What would it take for us to talk more about Jesus with the people in our lives?

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- **Good Question #2: "But who do you say that I am?"** – Vs. 15

It not only matters what others believe about Jesus, it matters what we truly believe about Him as well! What do you/I really believe about Jesus?

Have we ever really stopped to answer that question? And to consider how we arrived at our answers? There's no question in all of life of greater importance!

A lot of people believe that Jesus was a good man, but He is so much more than that! What hope would we have today in Jesus if he was only human?

A lot of people believe that He was a good teacher, but most people in our relativistic world today would not consider what He actually taught "good"!

A lot of people believe that he was a good and influential leader, and yet so many choose not to follow Him!

Peter, the "Rock", thought he had Jesus figured out, but he was shocked/appalled by what Jesus started saying about what he was about to do! Vs. 21-22

Peter missed what Jesus' true identity as "Savior" meant! Do we do the same?

Peter tried to dictate the terms, and Jesus rebuked him! – vs. 23

Is that ever true of us? Are we ever a hindrance to Christ? Do we ever have our minds set on the things of man, rather than the things of God?

What makes following Jesus so hard is that following Him is a journey to the cross! Vs. 24 - "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." How's that for a hard saying?!?

What Jesus is not saying is that His cross was not enough for salvation! His cross was sufficient to save us, but to follow Him is to set our own human will aside, just as He did when He went to the cross!

Taking up our cross is not carrying the burdens of our lives in a sacrificial way; it is identifying with Christ in sacrificing our own way for the sake of His!

Vs. 25 – "For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it." Another incredibly hard saying of Jesus!

No one wants to have to sacrifice their own wants and desires. No one wants their lives, and their pursuits, to be altered in any way! But the Christian life is a life of self-denial, and that is not a message that sells!

- **Good Question #3 & #4: "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?"** - Vs. 26

Gain in this world at the cost of eternity is just not worth it! Gain in the world to come, by sacrifice here and now, has eternal reward!

Jesus asked really good questions, so here are a few questions I think He would ask us today if He was here in the flesh with us this morning:

- What sacrifice(s) would need to be made for you to be more faithful in worship? _____
- What would you have to deny yourself to be in God's Word more & study it together with other believers? _____
- What hindrances need to be removed to be able to serve God, & others more, intentionally? _____

These questions are hard to answer, but necessary if we are to truly follow Jesus

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