

Questions Jesus Asked



Sermon Series Devotional

February 11 - April 6

Hinckley First United Methodist Church

Series Overview

Have you ever noticed that Jesus asks a lot of questions? Here I thought he was supposed to be the one with the answers! And the questions he asks are deep, personal, convicting. Questions like: What do you want me to do for you? Do you love me? Who do you say I am? During this sermon series we'll imagine Jesus asking us these questions, and reflect on what our answers would be.

Why a Devotional?

A vibrant and authentic faith is not grown merely in one hour on Sunday morning. This devotional will give you the opportunity to engage with God's word on a regular basis as you seek to become more like Christ each day. There is a daily Bible reading plan, as well as reflection questions that are linked with each week of the sermon series. You can use this devotional individually or in a formal or informal small group.

Daily Bible Reading Plan

February 11 - Worship
February 12 - Matthew 1
February 13 - Matthew 2
February 14 - Matthew 3
February 15 - Matthew 4
February 16 - Matthew 5
February 17 - Matthew 6
February 18 - Worship
February 19 - Matthew 7
February 20 - Matthew 8
February 21 - Matthew 9
February 22 - Matthew 10
February 23 - Matthew 11
February 24 - Matthew 12
February 25 - Worship
February 26 - Matthew 13
February 27 - Matthew 14
February 28 - Matthew 15
February 29 - Matthew 16
March 1 - Matthew 17
March 2 - Matthew 18
March 3 - Worship
March 4 - Matthew 19
March 5 - Matthew 20
March 6 - Matthew 21
March 7 - Matthew 22
March 8 - Matthew 23
March 9 - Matthew 24

March 10 - Worship
March 11 - Matthew 25
March 12 - Matthew 26
March 13 - Matthew 27
March 14 - Matthew 28
March 15 - John 1
March 16 - John 2
March 17 - Worship
March 18 - John 3
March 19 - John 4
March 20 - John 5
March 21 - John 6
March 22 - John 7
March 23 - John 8
March 24 - Worship
March 25 - John 9
March 26 - John 10
March 27 - John 11
March 28 - John 12
March 29 - John 13
March 30 - John 14
March 31 - Worship
April 1 - John 15
April 2 - John 16
April 3 - John 17
April 4 - John 18
April 5 - John 19
April 6 - John 20-21

- Begin your time with prayer. Ask God to speak to you, for Jesus to be revealed to you, and for the Holy Spirit to fill you as you read these words of Scripture.

- Slowly, thoughtfully, read God's Word. Pay particular attention to words or phrases that stand out to you. Write them down or take time to memorize them.

- Consider how this Scripture connects with your life today. What may God be inviting you to do, challenging you to learn, or calling you to change?

Ash Wednesday

Teach Us To Number Our Days

"Lord, teach us to number our days, so that we may gain a heart of wisdom."

- Psalm 90:12

- The season of Lent begins with Ash Wednesday. A day when we are marked with ash on our foreheads and thereby invited to reflect on our own mortality. Remember you were created out of dust and one day you will return to it. On Ash Wednesday we come face to face with the truth that our days are numbered. What thoughts and feelings does this bring to your mind today?

- When we truly embrace the reality that life is short, it helps us to gain perspective on what really matters in life. When our days are numbered we prioritize the people and the things that we love. It causes us to reflect on the things we spend our time doing... does this matter? It gives us perspective to not sweat the small stuff. Ash Wednesday invites us to make our lives truly count.

- How are you making your days count? Who are you loving well? How are you making the sphere around you a better place? For what will you be remembered?

- What changes does this inspire you to make in your life this week? Don't try to change everything all at once. What is one thing that you can do differently knowing your days are numbered?

Week 1

What are you looking for?

"Two disciples followed Jesus. Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, 'What are you looking for?'"

- John 1:37-38

- Read John 1:35-42. Reflect on the question that Jesus asks to the two people following him. "What are you looking for?" In the context of the Scripture what do you think these two disciples were looking for?

- It is fitting this question is asked by Jesus at the beginning of the Gospel. It is a question he may very well ask us the first time we read the Gospel, or the 500th time we read it. "What are you looking for?" Are you looking for hope? Are you looking for comfort? Are you looking for substantiation for what you already believe? Are you looking to grow closer to God?

- When you first started following Jesus, or going to church, or studying the Bible... what were you looking for?

- Has what you are looking for from Jesus changed over the years? How so?

- As we begin this study, and the season of Lent this year, what is something you are looking for from Jesus right now?

Week 2

What do you want me to do for you?

"As Jesus and his disciples were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed him. Two blind men were sitting by the roadside, and when they heard that Jesus was going by, they shouted, 'Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!'... Jesus stopped and called them. 'What do you want me to do for you?' he asked."

- Matthew 20:29-30, 32

- Read Matthew 20:29-34. Reflect on the question the question that Jesus asks the two men sitting on the roadside. "What do you want me to do for you?" Why do you think it's important that Jesus asked these men this question?

- Martin Copenhaver in his book *Jesus is the Question* writes, "Most of us have a tendency to assume that we know what another person needs or wants, particularly if that person is dealing with some kind of challenge or disability. But perhaps what the blind man wants, more than anything else in the world, is something other than the restoration of his sight." Had you ever thought of this story that way? What does it tell us about Jesus and his question?

- Imagine Jesus asking you this question right now. What would it be like to have Jesus ask you that question? How does that question make you feel?

- Be honest... what do you want Jesus to do for you right now?

Week 3

How much bread do you have?

"Jesus called his disciples to him and said, 'I have compassion for these people; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. I do not want to send them away hungry, or they may collapse on the way.' His disciples answered, 'Where could we get enough bread in this remote place to feed such a crowd?' 'How many loaves do you have?' Jesus asked."

- Matthew 15:32-34

- Read Matthew 15:29-39. This is the only miracle story (besides the resurrection) that is included in all four gospels. What do you think this says about the importance of this story?

- If you reflect on the question, "How much bread do you have?" and consider the whole story what deeper message might Jesus be trying to convey to the disciples?

- Martin Copenhaver in his book *Jesus is the Question* writes, "I think Jesus was looking for evidence that his followers had embraced what has been called a theology of abundance. This approach to life affirms that, through God's generosity, there is enough - and more than enough - to meet our needs."

- Do you believe and put your trust in a theology of abundance? Or are you more inclined to a attitude of scarcity? What does this mean in practical terms for how you live your life?

Week 4

Why are you afraid?

"Jesus got into the boat and his disciples followed him. Suddenly a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. The disciples went and woke him, saying, 'Lord, save us! We're going to drown!' He replied, 'You of little faith, why are you so afraid?'"

- Matthew 8:23-25

- What makes you afraid? When are you afraid? Where are you afraid? Why?

- Read Matthew 8:23-27. What tone of voice do you imagine Jesus using when he asked this question of the disciples? Was it harsh or with curiosity? What difference does it make?

- The fears that you reflected in in the first question. Imagine Jesus asking you the question, "Why are you afraid?" How would being asked that question help you to reframe your fear?

- Magrey deVega in his bible study *Questions Jesus Asked* invites us to ask the following questions when we are afraid: "1) Where does your fear come from? 2) Do you believe your fear is the truth? 3) What is the worst that could happen? 4) What would you be able to do if you weren't afraid?" How would these questions be helpful when you're afraid?

- Know this... Jesus wants to give you peace in the midst of your fear.

Week 5

Do you love me?

"When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?'"

- John 21:15

- Read John 21:1-19. As you read it recall the last scenes we saw Jesus and Peter together. In John 13 Jesus washes the disciples feet and then predicts Peter's denial. In John 18 when Jesus was arrested and Peter cuts one on the soldiers ears off only to be chided by Jesus. Then later in John 18 Peter does indeed deny Jesus. Given all of that, how awkward do you think this encounter was between the two in John 21?

- This question is one of the few questions that Jesus repeats. Why do you think that is? What tone of voice do you imagine Jesus asking Peter this question?

- Put yourself in Peter's shoes. What would you be thinking during this interchange? What would you be feeling? What would you say in reply to Jesus?

- What does this question tell us about Jesus? Likewise, what does his threefold response to Peter about "feeding his sheep" tell us about Jesus?

Week 6

Who do you say that I am?

"When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, 'Who do people say the Son of Man is?' They replied, 'Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.' 'But what about you?' he asked. 'Who do you say I am?'"

- Matthew 16:13-15

- Read Matthew 16:13-20. Jesus asks two questions in this passage. The first: "Who do people say I am?" and the second: "Who do you say I am?" What is the difference between those two questions?
- What have you heard other people say about who Jesus is? Make a list of the good, the bad, and the indifferent.
- Now, who do you say that Jesus is? How have you come to that conclusion in your life? What has made you choose that way of seeing Jesus as opposed to all the other views you listed in the last question?
- Now, what difference does your answer to this question make in your everyday life? If you say Jesus is a Savior, what does that mean for your life this week? If you say Jesus is love, how does that impact the way you live? If you say Jesus is hope, how does that change your perspective in life?

Week 7

Why are you crying?

“They have taken my Lord away,’ Mary said, “and I don’t know where they put him.’ At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus. He asked her, ‘Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?’”

- John 20:13-15

- Read John 20:1-18. Imagine you are reading this story for the first time. What stands out to you? What shocks you? What gives you hope?

- I can think of so many times as a parent when I have asked this question, “Why are you crying?” I’d say the answers I have received in response have been split 50/50 between legitimate reasons for crying (getting hurt, etc.) and ridiculous reasons (the bandaid was the wrong color). In the latter 50%, I try my best not to discount the validity of the tears, and instead offer condolence and seek to reframe the perspective of the crier. In what ways is Jesus doing this same thing to Mary?

- Call to mind something that has you down or sad right now. How does Jesus’ question, but even more his resurrection, help to reframe your perspective on that?

- We will still experience pain, heartbreak, and grief, but the resurrection of Jesus is a promise that because he lives we can face anything that comes our way not with tears but with unshakeable hope! What does that mean to you today?