

Life's Two Greatest Questions

Steve Berger April 1, 2018

Resurrection Sunday

Before we get into serious stuff—some not so serious stuff... some of life's NOT greatest questions...

- How come Grape Nuts cereal has no grapes and no nuts in it?
- Is it actually possible to change the direction of a bowling ball by waving your hands?
- When Dutch people go out to eat, do they always split the bill?
- If you traveled at the speed of light in a car and turned the lights on, what would happen?
- Whose idea was it to make the word 'abbreviation' so long?

Believe it or not — *there are more important questions to answer in life!*

Today I'm going to ask you to answer life's two greatest questions – they are the greatest, because how you answer them determines at least three things:

- the **quality** of your life on earth — today's life expectancy: women 81, men 77,
- **where** you will spend eternity — with God, or separated from God
- **how** you will spend eternity — joy unspeakable, full of glory — or regret, full of torment
- **life is long, eternity is longer**—*so how and where you spend it is a big deal*

Jesus has been ministering, teaching, healing the multitudes...

- **Jesus** is alone with His disciples at Caesarea Philippi — a place of demonic pagan worship
- **Matthew 16:13-14**
When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, "**Who do people say that the Son of Man is?**" "Well," they replied, "some say John the Baptist, some say Elijah, and others say Jeremiah or one of the other prophets."
- They were in a religious culture, in a religious place, when He asked, "Who do people say I am?"
- **John Baptist**— preached repentance, turning to God from sin, turning to mercy from judgment, turn to life instead of death!

FACT — **Jesus preached *repentance*, loves you too much to leave you alone!**

- **Mark 1:15**
"The time promised by God has come at last! The Kingdom of God is near! Repent of your sins and believe the Good News!"
 - *Jesus still calling repent and believe! A gift from God, giving us a second chance.*

- **Elijah**— a powerful miracle worker, from increasing wheat and oil to raising dead

FACT — Jesus is a powerful miracle worker—fever, fishes/loaves, walking water, sick, dead!

- **Matthew 15:30**

A vast crowd brought to Jesus people who were lame, blind, crippled, those who couldn't speak, and many others. They laid them before Jesus, and He healed them all.

- *Jesus is still healing people today; He is the same yesterday, today, forever*

- **Jeremiah**—weeping prophet, compassionate, hurt for people's conditions

FACT — there is no one more compassionate than Jesus, He came to feel our pain

- **Matthew 9:36**

When He saw the crowds, He had compassion on them because they were confused and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

- *Jesus has compassion for you today*

- **one of the prophets** — not sure who, but a loving, inviting, healing, miracle worker sent by God can't be denied.

Interesting — throughout history people have had their opinions about who Jesus is...

- I believe that what Jesus and Mohammed and Buddha and all the rest said was right.
~John Lennon, Beatles
- Jesus was the first socialist, the first to seek a better life for mankind.
~President Mikhail Gorbachev USSR
- Jesus is not only “king of Israel” and “king of the Jews,” but “also a drag king” ... with cross-dressing and other queer desires.
~Dr. Benny Liew, Holy Cross University

FACT — throughout history whether its entertainment, politics or religion, people have had their opinions about who they think Jesus really is! *Who other people say Jesus is, is NOT one of Life's Two Greatest Questions.*

“But who do you say I am?”

...the First of our Two Greatest Questions

- **Matthew 16:15**

Then Jesus asked them, "**But who do you say I am?**"

FACT — ultimately it doesn't matter who others say Jesus is, that won't determine YOUR future, who YOU say He is, is all that matters for YOU!

- **Matthew 12:37**

“The words you say will either acquit you or condemn you.”

FACT — **your** words, fueled by **your** belief about Jesus, will either be your **salvation** or your **condemnation!**

Question — *What answer came from the disciples?*

Answer — Simon Peter answered...

- **Matthew 16:16**

"You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

- **Messiah** — Christ, Anointed One, whom prophets foretold from Genesis to Malachi — OUR HOPE!
- **Son of Living God** — Son of God in human flesh; **Isaiah 7:14**, Immanuel, God with Us; Jesus affirmed, Great I AM, **John 8:58**
- **He's the Door** — **John 10:9** — *I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved...*
- **He's the resurrection and life** — **John 11:25-26** — *I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in Me will live, even after dying. Everyone who lives in Me and believes in Me will never ever die. Do you believe this?*
- **He's the Way, the Truth and the Life** — **John 14:6** — *I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through Me.*

LISTEN — Jesus is very clear about Who He is! Who do you say Jesus is? Is your answer based on Jesus' statements, personal opinion or worldly influence?

What are you going to do with Jesus the Messiah?

...the Second of our Two Greatest Questions

As Pontius Pilate argues with the angry mob about what sentence to carry out with Jesus, he asks the question...

- **Matthew 27:22**
"Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?"
- The crowd, the majority, asked for Barabbas, “son of abba, father.” The crowd picked the wrong Son of the Father. They rejected Jesus, the Son of the Living God, for Barabbas, the criminal son of a human father.

FACT — the longer I live, the more I realize how wrong the majority is about Jesus' identity, and therefore they make a wrong decision about what to do with Him.

Jesus foretold this very thing...

- **Matthew 7:13-14**

Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

LISTEN — if you are on the way with the majority who tell you who Jesus is and what to do with Him so your sins can be forgiven, so you can have eternal life—you're on the wrong way! The majority of this world is on the way toward eternal destruction, not salvation!

- **Proverbs 14:12**

There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.

The “right way” of society — Jesus is a good guy, great teacher, moral example, but that's all, no different than other religious leaders, all are kind of the same... it seems right, the broad way — but it leads to death and destruction... don't go there!

The great CS Lewis challenged this way of thinking about Jesus:

I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept his claim to be God. That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic — on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg — or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us.¹

**Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the Living God,
your only hope of forgiveness, salvation and eternal life.**

What are you going to do with Him?

- Reject and perish eternally? I sure hope not.
- Repent, believe, receive, confess? Mark 1:15, John 1:12, Matthew 10:32
- You must make your choice: *to be undecided for Him— is to be decided against Him.*
- He has love for you, compassion for you, just like you are, wants you, inviting you—**Come!**
- He has power to heal, to deliver, to give new life—**Come!**

Discussion Questions

1. Who do you say Jesus is?
2. What are you going to do with Jesus the Messiah?

¹ Josh McDowell, Sean McDowell, *Evidence That Demands a Verdict* (Thomas Nelson, Nashville, Tennessee, October 3, 2017) 196