

When Jesus Doesn't Answer Questions

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Do you ever find yourself searching for something bigger than you? For a community to be a part of? A place founded on truth and love. A place to worship the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, and the Son of God. Welcome to Founded in Truth, where we're more than just a fellowship. We're a family, so welcome home. Shabbat Shalom, everybody.

Thank you for coming and worshiping with us today. It's so good to come together every single week. I know that we're in 2022. It doesn't feel like the stress has gone down in the world over the past couple of years. If anything, we have new stresses, right? Stress, stress. What's the plural? Stress. And busy. Anyone feel busier than they have been? Just busy. And you try to slow down. The brakes don't work. Just don't work. What's going on? Stress, recession, just all kinds of stuff. New health thing. And it's so good to come into his rest today within the community that we're a part of. I mean, it's one thing to enjoy his rest at home. Don't get me wrong. I love it. But it's another thing to come into the community. And I'm just so blessed to be a part of the community with you. So thank you for that blessing.

Questions Jesus Asked

Today we're going to talk about some neat stuff. What does it mean when Jesus doesn't answer? When questions are asked, but no concrete, direct answers are given? Today we're going to take a look at the many questions that Yeshua himself asked, the questions he was asked, and how very few times Yeshua gives a direct black and white answer when he's asked a question. What does that tell us about our expectations of Yeshua's words? And how should that change the

way we view each other, view sinners, view the world and view our mission as the image bearers?

It seems Jesus asked 40 times more questions than he answered directly. 40 times. I don't know why that is, but maybe instead of looking for answers, Yeshua is inviting us to do something else. Maybe he's inviting us to meditate on the questions themselves—meditating and searching and cultivating the wisdom we need to be equipped with to be sent out into the nations to teach everyone what he taught and to emulate him as his hands and feet.

So join me in prayer as we go into this message. Thank you, Father, for this time of gathering on your special day, your holy day. We thank you for the testimony of Yeshua that has brought us together. And Father, I ask that you would open our hearts today to hear your words as they're spoken, your questions, that we would be able to humbly come before you and meditate on these words for transformation, for hope, for encouragement, and for you to further equip us to not only do your mission out in the world, but also grow closer to you. In the name of Yeshua, we pray. Amen.

There's a neat book that helped formulate and motivate this sermon. It's by an author, Martin Copenhaver. And it's "Jesus is the Question: The 307 Questions Jesus Asked and the Three He Answered." So if you're interested in diving in further on this topic, there's a great book. I put the link to it in the YouTube description.

So yeah, the questions of Yeshua. "Can any of you, by worrying, add a single hour to your span of life?" Jesus asked all of these questions and many, many, many more. And his followers asked a lot of questions of him. And some seem simple enough, and the answers to others may appear obvious. But through his questions, Jesus called his listeners to reflect more deeply on his message and the things that he taught. At times, his questions also challenged them to go beyond their preconceived notions of what it meant to be his follower or to love God or to be in a truly right relationship with other people.

Teaching Through Questions

Did Yeshua have to ask questions? Did he know all the answers? Of course. And I need to preface this. We believe Yeshua was in constant communion with God, the bearer of God's name, the very presence of Yahweh in the flesh, the perfect exact representation of God, not seen with such clarity ever before, according to [Hebrews 1](#). I think Yeshua had the answers to all of the questions. I think he had all the direct answers, and he could have shared all of them in very black and white, concrete ways.

But sometimes we ask questions that we already know the answers to. Sometimes we want someone to admit, maybe in an interrogation, admit what they think, what their opinion is. If they're truly allegiant to the enemy, which side are you on? Sometimes we ask questions casually to start a dialogue. Hey, man, how you doing? Men, we know about this question, don't we? Right? Hey, man, how you doing? And, of course, the only answer that you are allowed to say is, fine, yeah, fine, bleeding out everywhere, fine, good, good. Guys get it? It is what it is.

But one of the most powerful ways to utilize questions is in the scope of education, teaching and learning. From a teaching perspective, having the answer is different from understanding the answer. Because once you understand the answer, then you can navigate other questions better, solve other problems. I was speaking with Jeremy White, a very good friend of mine, and he is an incredible teacher in North Carolina. And for this message, I asked him why questions are important when teaching. And here is what he said.

He said, the more students can explain to you, the more you know they know. Google can give you every answer in the world. That does not mean they understand physics like Tiffany does, right? He went on to explain that good teachers get their kids to explain their line of thinking when they're solving a problem so they can figure out the gaps in the student's understanding and fill them in.

The Sky is Blue

Two plus two equals? I love it when you ask a question and everyone knows the answer, but they're scared. Like if I speak out and everyone hears me, maybe I don't and I'll mess up. Four. But if a child doesn't understand why two is one plus one, do they really understand two?

Why is the sky blue? Is it because our ocean is blue and the light from the ocean is reflected off into the atmosphere so it looks blue? Or is it because of the wavelengths of the sun? Or did aliens or Nephilim paint it with blue paint? What will the answer be?

And as a teacher or a parent, when you ask a question, you unlock something. You enter into a domain. If you're legitimately asking a question—humbly, not trying to reinforce an answer that you want to hear—if you truly ask a question like a curious child, you unlock this imaginary world where all is possible. It could be anything if you don't know. What could it be? And you ponder, could it have been aliens? Is it the ocean? What could it be? You don't even know what the possibilities are.

It's a beautiful thing when children come and ask you a question because sincerely, they don't know. The sky is the limit for all the things they might ponder. And as a teacher or a parent, you

can just tell them the answer, right? The atmosphere scatters certain frequencies of light, giving a blue contrast to the atmosphere. Done. Done. Cool. That answers the question, right? Seventh grade science? Remember? Okay. We've totally forgotten middle school science, haven't we? Yeah, totally forgotten it.

The Job of a Teacher

As a teacher or a parent, your job is not to give answers. You're trying to exercise the brains of the students so they can be critical thinkers. You're not trying to make people and kids into encyclopedias. Especially encyclopedias that are biased, because that's called indoctrination. Hear the facts and you do not deviate from them.

I'm very intentional about teaching my son and girls to solve problems and be critical thinkers. When it comes to everything—how they spend money, how they respond to situations, their politics, even their faith—I want them to ask questions and explore that and understand so they can navigate it. And I want them to feel comfortable navigating any and all information out there. And I want them to recognize things like propaganda so they can discard them from the equation. I want them to never be afraid to ask questions and to always be suspicious of people that tell them not to.

And so if someone asks why the sky is blue, you could tell them the answer or you could jump on the treadmill with them. And you do that by responding to their question with questions. You're trying to make them run this race. Well, okay, the sky is blue. Well, what's the atmosphere? What's the sky made of? Say molecules, air molecules. Mostly nitrogen, a little bit of oxygen, pollution, junk like that, but mostly nitrogen and oxygen. Air molecules.

And how can we see the sun? Well, it gives off light, photons, right? Does light travel in different wavelengths? What's the answer? Yes. And visible light like blue and violet have the shortest wavelengths of the visible spectrum. That's how we see color.

Light and Wavelengths

When white light comes—which is what the color of the sun is—it contains all the wavelengths, all the colors, right? And when it hits something, some wavelengths are absorbed and some scatter, right? Light scatter. Something truly black is absorbing all of the wavelengths of light. That's why you don't see a reflection from it. So it's pretty cool, right?

Something that's blue is absorbing all of the wavelengths except for the shortest ones. So you see blue. Someone's wearing a blue shirt, the light is hitting their shirt, some of the wavelengths are being absorbed, and the blue ones are scattering out and you're seeing blue.

How Your Eyes Process Light

Pretty gnarly, huh? At least that's how your eyes process it. Pretty cool. So the blue light scatters from an object—that's how you can tell. What would happen if the density of air molecules in the sky allowed most wavelengths of light through but scattered some of the shorter wavelengths, like blue? The sky would then appear with a shade of what? Blue. Sky blue. Sky blue is a very light blue, right? When you look outside, it's kind of a light blue. That's the crayon, right? Sky blue.

And when the sun sets or rises, the light that's traveling from the sun is going through more of the atmosphere to reach you. And so does the sky get lighter colored or does it get darker—darker blue, more intense blue? You've seen those beautiful sunsets. More intense blue. More blue is being scattered before it reaches your pupils.

And then what color does the sun typically look like when it's setting or rising? Usually bright yellow, but most of the time it's all the blues. More blue is coming out from it, which turns the sun orange or red. That's why. Pretty cool. I love blue—creation and science. It's really cool.

So I say all that to say: now, if you were talking to a child that asked that question, they have a better understanding and a whole other world that they're learning to navigate in order to answer other questions as well.

There Are Many Types of Questions

And there are many types of questions, you guys know. Closed questions—yes or no, black and white. Open questions—how are you feeling since you got the vid? Better? Foggy? Some questions are simply used to influence people and are not meant to be answered. These are called rhetorical questions because they come for the purpose of rhetoric, if you will.

Who will pay for all of this if the government takes over healthcare in this country? It's not meant to be answered. It's meant for you to ponder.

So many types of questions. But questions are all meant to get you thinking or to respond a certain way, especially the types of questions that Yeshua asked. And I say all of that—it's a grand introduction—to say that questions are powerful.

How many questions were asked concerning the blue sky inquiry? What color is the sky? How many questions is that? One. And how many questions did I ask in response to try to give an understanding, not just an answer? Five or six.

Jesus Asked 183 Questions

In the gospel accounts, Jesus asked approximately 183 questions to his followers, to spectators, to Romans, to religious leaders, to high priests. Out of these 183 questions, he only directly answered somewhere around eight. Some scholars look at the language and argue that he only directly answered three. I don't see that, but whatever. Three, eight—not a lot. Not a lot. Not a lot.

Yeshua, on the other hand, chose to ask a question 307 times in the gospel account. 307. Yeshua doesn't want to be your Google. If he's raising up followers or disciples—students—for them to follow him, he wants them to eventually outgrow the student status and begin to teach others. That's what the calling becomes, as Matthew shows in the Great Commission. He's not portrayed as the guy who gives all the answers. He's portrayed as the guy who asks the questions because he wants you to understand. He wants you to learn and cultivate the wisdom that comes from meditation and wrestling with those questions.

Because if you walk into a world of conflict having answers but no understanding, right outside these doors, you're going to appear as nothing more than a fundamentalist that is radical and wanting to indoctrinate everybody, especially in the realm of human relationships. Because it's easier to strip someone of their humanity in the name of right answers than it is to engage another person and try to understand them.

Jesus' First Recorded Words

In the Gospel of Luke, we see the very first time Yeshua is depicted as speaking to anyone. We see this in Luke chapter 2, when Joseph and Mary went to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover. And they brought 12-year-old Jesus with them. And like good parents, they lost him.

Now, I know we've all experienced that. If you've ever had that drop in your heart—parents, any of you—some of you had a leash, didn't you?

You're one of them, right? Helicopter with a leash. Yeah, you've had that drop, whether it's in Walmart, the grocery store, the kid is no longer behind you. I was reading these dang organic, gluten-free ingredients, and they're gone.

But here's something to make you feel better: at least you didn't lose Jesus, right? Right? The king of the world. The angel came to announce him—virgin birth, divine decree that he is the climax of the Davidic lineage and kingdom. This is the long-awaited king whose dominion will reign forever. He's important. They lost him.

And they didn't just lose him in Walmart. Back in the day, if you were a kid and got lost, you'd go up to the front customer service desk and call your parents. It was a shame game. But they didn't lose him in Walmart. They left Jerusalem and left the boy there.

Home alone—they ripped their plot off from the Bible. Kevin! This is what happened, right?

And so we turn to [Luke 2](#), verse 46. It says Jesus was in the temple. We always focus on that part—wow, he's in the temple engaging people, asking questions—but we skip over something. Three days. They went back and did not find him for three days. Did they sleep? I mean, after three days? If your kid ran off and it took you days to find them, how would you feel? You'd probably have some mixed emotions, right? Not knowing whether you should hug them.

But the first time here is when Yeshua is described as speaking. And what's he doing? He's asking questions. And the teachers at the temple were amazed at how he answered and his understanding.

So again, real life question. If you are with your spouse and you lose your child because they ran off, when you find the child, I have a question for married couples: Which spouse is going to take the lead on being vocal? Men are scared to answer. Is it going to be the wife? You think so? Let's see.

Mary rolls up in verse 48. When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you."

She's upset.

12-year-old Yeshua. "Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my father's house?" But they did not understand what he was saying to them. Would you?

Look at what Yeshua does though. Mary asks him a question, and he responds to his mother's question with two. It's starting. I don't know what took place in that moment between Mary and Yeshua. But I do not believe for a moment Mary was amused. Case in point, verse 51: "Then he went down to Nazareth with them, and he was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart." Anyway.

"And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man."

He begins by asking questions. And we see the very last thing he speaks on the cross is also a question: "Why have you forsaken me?"

What Are You Looking For?

"What are you looking for?" That's the first thing Jesus says in the Gospel of John. Question: What are you looking for? John looks up, sees Yeshua walking, and he says, "Behold, the Lamb of God." And then two men begin to follow him. Disciples now.

So he turns to them as they're following him, and he says, "What are you looking for?"

When the soldiers came to arrest Yeshua in the Gospel according to John, they arrive, and Yeshua asks them a question. He says, "Who are you looking for?" He knows. "Who are you looking for?"

What's interesting is Yeshua then asks that very same question again, except it's right after his resurrection when Mary is at the tomb. She's crying. He comes up and asks her, "Who are you looking for here at this empty tomb?"

What are you looking for and who are you looking for?

Now, if Yeshua asked those questions right now, what would your answers be? What would they be? You're following him. What are you looking for here? What are you chasing? It may not even be him. That's the thing. Or maybe you're chasing the things you really want through him or under the guise of following him—because we never do that, right?

I would say many of us are looking for peace if we get down to it. We're all looking to be loved, humans. Ultimately, I believe what everyone is chasing is a sense of rest—rest that we know and we come to believe is only found in the person of Yeshua. But sometimes we don't believe rest is found in the Yeshua we follow.

What Are We Really Pursuing?

So we tend to shroud our pursuits with Jesus—our sense of security, perhaps through finances, money, our sense of popularity that ends up getting us in trouble as we gossip with false concern for others to get attention and feel like we have something to offer the group that we want to be a part of, so that they give you attention and give you value.

Identity. Sometimes we use Jesus to facilitate our own identity instead of allowing him to be our identity. We do this in many ways. One way that we're especially susceptible to is blending politics and patriotism and making it synonymous with our faith. Christian nationalism is what Nazi Germany promoted.

We do this to feel like you're part of a community, but sometimes we end up making the church we attend just a social club that we get to be a part of. When it's actually supposed to be an embassy for a kingdom of God, a shining beacon of hope and mercy and reconciliation, where you are not just an attendee that gets to hang out with your friends and your children get to come and hang out with their friends, but you are an ambassador of Yeshua. And this is a community that orbits the mission of Yeshua through prayer and worship and study and learning and loving.

What are you looking for? Is the question he asked. And who are you looking for? When you stand with arms in your hands and swords drawn and armor ready to fight and arrest someone, he asks, who are you looking for? Yeshua is asking that every time you armor up for conflict, I believe. Who are you looking for in this moment? He also asks it when you're standing before an empty tomb. Who are you looking for? Are you actually looking for Yeshua? A Yeshua that is resurrected, a Yeshua that defeated death, a Yeshua that reigns as king forever, a Yeshua that lives. Or are you satisfied with just an empty tomb? One calls you to act, one calls you to do, one calls you to get dirty, while the other doesn't have to acknowledge his actual presence standing there. It just requires you to say that you believe. It's an empty tomb.

Yeshua's questions cause us sometimes to examine what we are truly longing for. And when we realize what that is, things start to make sense in our lives, right? Why we turn to specific vices in our lives. Why we get so angry with certain people. Why are we drawn to certain hobbies? Why are we not generous in how we give? Or why are we so generous in how we give? The things we long for are the things we chase.

Do You See This Woman?

Yeshua's questions also call us to compassion, like in Luke chapter 7. Yeshua goes and has a dinner meeting with a Pharisee, Simon. He gets invited into this Pharisee's home. The Pharisee was a teacher of the Torah. He understands the great importance of the Torah and the commandments within it. He's an expert at keeping the commandments and understanding the priority of Torah. He kept them all. And he saw Yeshua with some regard to invite him over for dinner.

And a woman bursts onto the scene and she falls and she weeps and she washes Yeshua's feet with her tears and her hair and she pulls out oil and she anoints them with oil. The Pharisee, the religious righteous one, right?—the one who made the Torah his identity instead of living out the heart of God's righteousness. He thought to himself, man, if Yeshua only knew the sinful lifestyle that this woman lives, if he was really a prophet, he wouldn't let this woman touch him with those hands.

And Yeshua knows what's in his heart and he calls him out. He says, hey, I got a question. Two people have a debt to a patron. One of them owes him 500 denarii, say \$5,000. The other one owes him 50. And neither one can pay back the debt. And so the patron forgives both—they don't owe anything. Which one loves the patron more? The one that owed \$5,000, of course, not 50. And then Yeshua asks a question. He looks at the Pharisee and he says, do you see this woman?

That's the question. Do you see this woman? Luke is very intentional about putting that. It's irrelevant to the story. Of course, the Pharisees saw the woman. Of course, she's right there. He saw her. He's judging her. Do you see this woman? Everyone saw the woman. She's right there making kind of a big deal, kind of a big scene. But that's not what Yeshua meant, I don't believe. Do you see this woman? He says, I came in and you gave me water for my feet, but she washes them with her tears. You didn't give me a kiss at all and she can't stop kissing my feet. You didn't give me oil for my head, yet she pours oil out on my feet. Her sins are forgiven, so she pours out her love.

And then he says, those who are forgiven little, love little. Those who are forgiven little, love little. Do you see this woman?

Identity and Stereotypes

Sometimes we hide behind our identity as believers and we build up this mentality of us versus them all the time, divisions, lines in the sand. We build up these definitions of evil versus good to justify why we draw lines in the sand. And of course, both terms become relative to whatever we want them to be. And because our identity is anything but Yeshua himself, we are forced to view everyone through the lens of stereotypes as a way to reinforce who we think we are.

The Pharisee, Simon, saw a stereotype. This is the one, one of those who has a sinful sexual lifestyle. One of those people. There's no way Yeshua would ever let one of them touch him, come close to him, find rest in him. Bible says to stone him. Actually, he didn't see a woman. The Pharisee didn't see a human being. He just saw how much better he was.

I got news for everybody here. There are people here and in every church that come because they want to validate their identity as righteous. And there are those that come here to worship the one that they know has forgiven a debt so insurmountable that all they can do is lift their hands and cry out. They come here because just like the woman who lives a sinful lifestyle, they want peace from that sinful life. And they may be struggling with it, but they come loving the master because they have felt the power of his forgiveness.

And what's so fascinating is the two groups of people worship together in the same room. In the same room. And one spends their time looking at Yeshua while the other spends their time looking down at the other.

Yeshua had a parable about this. Do you see this woman? Do you see the human behind your stereotype? Do you see the person crying out for a savior or in need of a savior? Do you see someone who needs compassion and mercy and grace and forgiveness? Are you unable to empathize because you don't realize just how much debt has been forgiven in your own life? Because you don't actually acknowledge how much God has done for you. You can't help but see things that you can judge.

What Do You Want Me to Do for You?

In Mark chapter 10, Yeshua is traveling. And there was a struggle with the crowd, but there was a blind man. And this blind man begins to scream, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" He was loud and he was annoying. It's annoying, right? One of those people screaming down the street that you just kind of ignore. People tell him to shut up. Just shut up already. No one wants to hear that. Stop it. You're annoying. But he didn't listen. He yelled louder. Son of David, have mercy.

Finally, Yeshua hears him and he says, bring him here. And the text says that they pulled him up. And the same crowd that told him to shut up is the same crowd that pulled him up. And then they said, cheer up, he's calling you. Or, hey, cheer up, he's calling you. I think it was the first, but whatever. Are you happy now? He's calling you, go on.

And he approaches Yeshua, blind man. And Yeshua asks him a question. And it's a question that as believers called to engage the world around us with the love and the mercy and the grace of Yeshua, it can teach us a lot. What do you want me to do for you? What do you want me to do for you?

Okay, where's Captain Obvious, right? What do you think the man wants you to do for him? He's blind. But Yeshua here does not presume he knows what the man really needs in that

moment. He doesn't presume he knows what the man is screaming out for. Because that type of attitude can often be arrogance painted with righteousness. Look at the poor. I know what they need. I'll give it to them.

Permission to Help

How many of us see someone in need or disabled or maybe the poor, or maybe it's a family that lost their source of income? How many times do we look at those situations and we can't help but act like God, right? This God complex. And don't get me wrong, hear my heart. Oh, look, someone needs something to be fixed. They need me. That's where arrogance can sneak in. They need me. So you take it upon yourself to force yourself upon them.

Maybe the family that lost their income had been diligent and responsible with their money for years, and they had a nest egg. No big deal. And you force patronage on them as if they need it, and you end up kind of offending them a little bit. Who do you think? I mean, we were responsible. Offending the parents that had already prepared or had been responsible for years trying to do this.

Imagine someone being in a wheelchair. This happens and it is so audacious of people. Maybe you see someone in a wheelchair and you think, "Oh look, there's a curb coming up. They're gonna struggle." So you grab the wheelchair and forcibly help them get over this obstacle that you know they need help getting over. How demeaning if they didn't need help? How demeaning. But you viewed them as a stereotype instead of as a human.

If there's one thing I learned from marriage, just because I have a solution doesn't mean I have permission to implement it. Yeshua teaches us here not to stop helping people. Please don't clip this out.

No, but he teaches us something here. He teaches us how to show respect to fellow human beings. Not for a blind man, but a human, a fellow human. Because this man is screaming out for something, and maybe it's something else than the obvious. His deepest yearning may be on behalf of his child that's sick, like so many others in the scriptures, or his parent, or maybe his family may be starving because of his disability, and he's crying out for he needs some of that gold-spitting fish that he pulled out and showed the disciples. Maybe he needs something else, and you will never know until you ask. Here, Yeshua, by asking, is not presuming. He's asking, and he's listening. He does not define this man by what he sees and assumes. You're supposed to be willing to help in a boundaryless scope, every single one of us as believers. But all of that is worthless without humility. He asks, and then the man responds, I want to see. Okay, okay.

He's healed, and after that, he follows Yeshua. Our relationship is actually made, right? I don't know, something just struck me about that. Yeshua approaches the man with humility and respect, like a servant. And he asks a servant's question, what can I do for you? What can I do for you? This is how he teaches us to respond to the world around us, as a servant. Never looking down and never labeling someone anything other than a human being just like you.

Yeshua's Questions

Yeshua's questions also sometimes challenge our potential of how far our love can reach. What must I do to have eternal life? The teacher of the law asks in Luke chapter 10. Does Yeshua give him a direct answer? No. He asks him a bunch of other questions in response. What does the Torah say? How do you interpret what the Torah says? Nothing too complicated here. Pretty easy. Love the Lord your God with a heart so might. Love your neighbor as yourself. Yeshua says, good job. You got it right. Good job. That's it. But this man was not accepting that. He wanted to justify himself. So he asks another question. Who is my neighbor then? Justify himself. He's asking Yeshua who he's obligated to love. Is it his family? Just the people in his synagogue? Only the people that agree with how he reads the Bible? Where's the line? There's got to be a line, right? And he already knows where the line is for him. He wants to justify himself because he wants to validate where he's already drawn that border, drawn that line. He does not want to change and wants to know the limit of how far his love has to reach. So Yeshua tells which story? Good Samaritan. And we know the story. The Samaritan helped the Judean man when the alleged most righteous representatives did not. And Yeshua asks the man, who was the man's neighbor in this story? And the answer, of course, is the one that gave mercy. In the story, the parable, because a parable is a story that teaches a lesson. In the story, the Samaritan is singled out, not because he helped the man. He's singled out because the entire world, like at that time, he was the least likely person to ever show mercy in the world. Least likely.

Savage Enemies

During this time, the Jews and the Samaritans were savage enemies. Savage. The news stations in Judea would talk about how awful the Samaritans were. And the news stations in Samaria would talk about how bad these Jews were. And the Judeans would post insulting memes mocking the Samaritans. And they would attack each other. And they all did it in the name of God, by the way. By the way. Because we are the ones on God's side, not you. You are the ones corrupting the world. And here Yeshua flips the script. The one that showed mercy in the story

was the neighbor. In other words, the stereotypes, the demographics, all of it flew right out the window concerning that question. Why? Because our love is capable of reaching that far. That's the point. And that is the scope of who our neighbor is. So, who's the Samaritan in your life? A question. That always doesn't have a black and white answer, does it? Who's the Samaritan? Not the good one. Who's the Samaritan? The type of people you stereotype but have never actually talked to. The type of people you stereotype but have never been generous to. Never given any ounce of grace to. Now, we'll give grace and mercy if they repent or if they admit they were wrong or if they, if, if, if. That's your line that you've drawn. If. That's the line. That's how far your love reaches.

Love Your Enemies

If. In Luke's telling of the Sermon on the Plain, Matthew, it's the mount, Luke, it's the plain. Sermon on the Plain, Yeshua asks the rhetorical question, if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even the sinners love those who love them. If you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is it to you? Even sinners do that. If you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is it to you? Even the sinners, the wicked, whatever, fill in the blank, do that. Everyone else does that. But love your enemies. Do good to them and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. That's tough. Love your enemies. I'll be nice. I won't call them names. Lend things to them. Money. It's cringy. I don't like that. Pull my line back. And here is the verse that messes me up. Then your reward will be great and you will be the children of the Most High. Why is that? So you're gonna act like your father. You're gonna act like God now, correctly. Because he, God, is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. God's kind to the wicked. Be merciful just as your father is merciful. Reflect God's mercy the way that he does. Lines, lines. That's what divides the sheep and the goats, I guess.

Messing Up Our Witness

Guys, I feel you may not. Everybody say, that's okay. Okay, we got good, that's okay. Good, a couple, no. I feel like we as Christians have messed up over the past few years. We've messed up from my point of view. We've messed up our witness. We've messed up our claim of reflecting Yeshua. We've messed up the claim that God's love and mercy pours out from us limitlessly as his followers. Young people are leaving the faith in droves—leaving their churches, leaving their communities. And it's not because they didn't study the Bible. And it's not because their parents didn't do a good job teaching them about the Bible and apologetics and the evils of the world and light and darkness and to stay away from that. It's not because of that. It's not because they

want to just become woke and follow the devil. It's not that. No, the results are in. Majority of the young people who have left church or are questioning their entire faith—it's because they saw how their parents acted the past few years. They saw how their communities, their church communities acted the past few years. They saw how everyone acted and what they did and what they said and what they called other people. And they said, if that's a reflection of God, that's not really something I want to reflect and be a part of.

Absorbing the Offense

Mercy, humility, grace, forgiveness. That means if someone calls you a name, you absorb the offense because that's how you stop evil. You don't reciprocate it. That's how you stand in the way of evil. That's how Yeshua taught us to do it. Humility means you're not better than other people. Do you see this woman? What can I do to help you? How can I serve you? Your sinful lifestyle is not a good enough objection for me to not ask you those questions. It's not. Your animosity toward me is not a good enough objection for me not to ask these questions to you. Your opinions that I disagree with are not a good enough objection for me to forfeit following Yeshua. I'm not perfect. Those of you who know me know I'm far from it. Guys, I'm called to preach hard things and I'm called to preach the truth of God's word. Knowing it's not what people want to hear when they come to a social club. Not saying you think this is that, but all the same. Because maybe you're here because you understand the weight of what God has done for you. And I hope you have. So hear my heart today. Because I have misrepresented God so many times due to what I wanted my identity to be, not wanting to take upon myself the identity of Yeshua. And I justified drawing lines of where my humility would stop, where my grace stops, where my mercy stops. And I repent of that. God help us.

Low-Hanging Fruit

Guys, the president is expected to release an announcement any day about a national health crisis tomorrow. That seems to be occurring in our country. It's a new kind of infection that is spreading very rapidly. You've heard about it, the monkeypox, right? Weird name, weird, monkeypox. If you don't know about it, it's all in the news and everything. It spreads through skin-to-skin contact. Think of chickenpox or shingles, remember? So you don't want to touch people because then they'll get, yeah, that's how it spreads. And currently, men, women, and children can be and are infected with this virus because that's how it's transmitted, touching. But back in June, mid-June, I believe, is the last study of everybody who was infected. The overwhelming majority of the population that was infected were men who had relations with

other men, right? And man, that is just such low-hanging fruit, right? For those of us who find ourselves in the conservative side of things, as well as being Christian, such low-hanging fruit to justify throwing apples at people. Low-hanging fruit, just too perfect for us to see and already see it, already see it. So easy to trip on that landmine. Oh, this is God's judgment for the wickedness. This is it. This is the plague. It's the same thing that people said about COVID a few years ago. And not everyone who said that is still around, and it's heartbreaking.

I say all that to say we are maybe entering into a crazy time again. You can sigh—really? We may be entering into a crazy time. And I want you guys to prepare yourself to be able to navigate that in a way that shows the light of God's kingdom. Because you're going to be pulled in so many different directions, just like we all have been the last few years. People are gonna draw lines and say, well, you're on this side or that side. False dichotomies everywhere. If you're on this side, they're your enemy. If you're on that side, they're your enemy. And then people bring those lines into the house of God.

Prepare yourself for what may or may not happen. Prepare yourself to focus on the mission and see how you can engage a world that is so far from God that they probably have never had someone show them the mercy and grace and love that Yeshua showed—which allowed sin to just fall off people when they encountered and ate with him. This is what rest feels like? This is what it feels like? Yes.

Yeshua says, the measure of judgment that you give will be the judgment that you receive. And we'd love to ignore that because, gosh, it feels good. I say that. It feels so good. So I say all that to say this. The doctors believe this could turn into something big. Hopefully not. It didn't go away. It doesn't look fun at all. Numbers are spreading fast and trigger warning—they're talking about a vaccine.

Humility Before Your Opinions

Do you see this woman? Do you see this man? Do you see this doctor? Do you see? What can I do to help you? We can have opinions, guys. Lord knows I have a lot of opinions. We can talk about opinions. That's great. But humility needs to come first. And if people do not see your humility, your opinions will never escape the echo chamber that you shout them into. And your identity will always be a self-reflection instead of a reflection of Yeshua to the world.

I believe this monkeypox thing is going to give us the opportunity and the potential to reflect Yeshua. Or we can choose to reflect ourselves.

Elections and How We Respond

How about 2024? It's coming up quick. Or 2028, depending on when you watch this video. Or 2032, as elections are our tradition in this pretty neat country and how we devised it. We get to vote. We're going to have another presidential election. And I believe this one is going to be just as bloody as the last one. It seems gone are the days of watching debates on important topics and measuring how these candidates are going to tackle these sometimes easy subjects, sometimes hard, complicated subjects. Gone are the days when we choose a candidate like that. No, now we are subjected happily to a scene at a middle school where insults just fly towards each other. And because we've already chosen our candidate, we reflect that same gesture to everyone who is not supporting them.

Do you see that Republican? Do you see that Libertarian? Do you see that Democrat, that human being apart from the stereotype that we want so badly to place on them? Do you see that liberal, that conservative, that progressive, that far-right, that human being?

The Value of Every Human Being

Yeshua calls us to embody the ethic of loving someone as ourselves. And I'd like to reframe that because we tend to view the universe as revolving around us a lot of times and so we don't really think about the fact that there are other people in the world. I mean, is that not true? Do we walk through life like these are just players in a video game, but it's all about me, right? We tend to do that quite a bit.

But when you see another person, they could be the opposite of everything you think a person should be. It happens, fine. When you see another person, I want you to realize that they breathe just like you do. They have parents. They might have kids. They get scared. They have joy. They have stress, anxiety. They long for rest just like you do. And they have insurmountable value just like you. And the moment that you take their status of having insurmountable value in the eyes of God away from them, you've stopped following Yeshua. You've stopped following the example of Yeshua.

Being an Example to the Next Generation

We, I, you. I have to be a better example and a reflection of Yeshua to the world. And if I don't do it for myself, I need to do it for our children because I am the example of the Jesus I serve and follow in their eyes. They are watching me to show them the teachings of this Jesus. The next generation is watching us.

What is our God known for in the eyes of the rest of the world? We've taken upon ourselves entering into this covenantal love with the king of the universe. We've taken onto ourselves a pretty big responsibility. And we have a bad habit of ignoring that and then blaming other people when the results begin to show. And I can only speak from my experiences. I know where I've been. I know where I'm at. And I know where I want to be. And I need to keep going.

Yeshua's Questions, Not Answers

Yeshua asked 307 questions but only gave about eight direct answers. Because Yeshua wants to teach us how to solve problems and develop wisdom on how to respond to each unique situation, circumstance, or conflict. And where we tend to mess up is not listening when Yeshua asks us these questions. Because we do not want to respond to conflict or stressful or scary situations with humility, with grace, with respect for other human beings. We mess up because we don't want to have that patience. We mess up because we don't want to be accountable for our anger.

Will You Run Into the Fire?

And so I hope that you guys heard my heart today because the world is on fire. Are we going to contribute to it or are we going to be bold enough to run in it? Are we going to be bold enough to follow the example of Yeshua in the hardest situations, in the hardest conflict, in the face of people yelling and screaming and calling him names, in the face of people saying that our religion is stupid or Jesus is dumb, people who are calling us these stereotypes based on what they assume about our politics, which we're a pretty diverse group. I'm proud of that. In some regard, yeah.

How will you respond to these people? And when you respond, will humility be first? Because there's a different goal than winning when it comes to reflecting Yeshua. And that goal is showing them the mercy and the grace and the love and forgiveness that they obviously need in their life and giving them a sample of the rest that they can have. That's the invitation of the gospel of the good news of Yeshua.

A Time of Reflection

And so, guys, we're going to have a time, maybe a minute, of reflection. And it may be a little awkward, and I don't care. So we're going to put up just a few of these slides. And these are, I think, eight or nine questions that Yeshua asked. Out of 307, it's not bad. And I just want you

to reflect on the questions that Yeshua asks. A variety of people in a variety of situations. But right now, he's asking you. So let's go ahead.

Questions to help us understand. Sometimes we don't achieve the goal by giving a direct answer because every situation is different. Why? Because we're not dealing with stereotypes out in the world. We're dealing with individual, unique images of God just like you, no matter where they are. Do you see the human being that is just like you?

So please stand. Guys, we're going to end in a time of worship. And during this time, you can worship. You can lift your hands. You can praise God. You can sit. You can close your eyes. You can reflect. You can pray. That's what this time is meant to be. And so I invite you to do that.

If you need prayer today, for any reason, we're going to have a prayer team—prayer warriors—on either side of the stage. You can take advantage of that if you want someone to come alongside you and lift you up.

Alvino Malcano, our father, our king, Father, we thank you for the challenge, the challenge to deny our flesh, the things that we want, the identities that we want to have that only make us look more like the world, but not represent you, that you would empower us to be the warriors of your kingdom, not with judgment, but in a new way, the way that Yeshua taught, and that is through mercy, grace, forgiveness, love, compassion, showing rest to a world that knows not such a thing. We ask that you would empower us to be true reflections of you, to be your image bearers, to speak life, to push evil and wickedness away from our fellow humans. We thank you, Father.

And then this Shema: Shema Yisra'el Donai Yisra'el Donai Yisra'el Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is one. Blessed is the name of his glorious kingdom for all eternity.

And say this with me: May the God of patience and encouragement grant you to be like-minded with one another in the manner of Messiah, so that together with one voice you glorify the God and Father of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah. May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you. May the Lord lift up his countenance towards you and give you peace. Amen.

Shabbat shalom. Shalom.

We pray this message has blessed and encouraged you and your relationship with God. And we hope that it has made the Bible more beautiful and more powerful in its impact on your life. Founded in Truth Fellowship exists to build a community that bears the image of God and lives the redeemed life only Yeshua gives.

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