

# Questions Pt. 1

Pastor James Foley – Sunday, April 23, 2023

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## SETTING THE STAGE

**KEY 1** – In past years I have noted three key components to the teaching style of Jesus Christ...

### 1) Parables

Christ Jesus often used short, simple and memorable stories in order to communicate rich spiritual truths. Who can think of His ministry without considering classics like the Parable of the Sower, the Wheat and Tares, the Persistent Widow, the Unmerciful Servant, the Good Samaritan, the Lost Coin, Lost Sheep, Prodigal Son and the Parable of the Talents!

**Q. Did you realize that Christ offered some 30-plus parables in the Gospel record?**

### 2) Proverbs

Christ also used the proverb, aphorism or maxim throughout His earthly ministry. He used short, memorable statements to convey impacting truth. Who can think upon the earthly ministry of Christ without considering timeless and timely “one-line” declarations such as the following?

#### **Luke 6:31 (NIV)**

31 “Do to others as you would have them do to you.”

#### **Matthew 7:1 (OJB)**

1 “Judge not, lest you be judged.”

#### **Matthew 6:33 (ESV)**

33 “. . . seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”

#### **John 14:6 (NIV)**

6 “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

### 3) Questions

Finally, and of particular import for a new multi-segment series, He utilized questions throughout His ministry...

**Q1. How many realize that Q’s are vital tools used by teachers to ‘stimulate’ learning, growth and discovery?**

**Q2. How many realize that Jesus used 100-plus Q’s in the Gospels to ‘foster’ learning, growth and discovery?**

**KEY 2** – Thus said, I would like to begin a three-part teaching on this element of the teaching ministry of Jesus!

**KEY 3** – It is my intent to cover six questions per week for the next three weeks...

LET US DELVE IN...

## QUESTION #1

Our first query is recorded in the Gospel of Matthew. Let us note the following selection...

### Matthew 9:27–30a

27 As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him, calling out, “Have mercy on us, Son of David!”  
28 When he had gone indoors, the blind men came to him, and he asked them, “Do you believe that I am able to do this?”

“Yes, Lord,” they replied. 29 Then he touched their eyes and said, “According to your faith let it be done to you”; 30 and their sight was restored. . . .

### Q. Can we consider this query of Christ a bite at a time?

1) “**DO** you believe that I am able to do this?” (Emphasis Mine)

This is a Q with only one of two possible A’s—A’s which would serve to reveal the REALITY of their faith: Y or N.

2) “Do **YOU** believe that I am able to do this?” (Emphasis Mine)

This is a deeply personal and probing Q from which there is NO hiding, evasion and/or capacity for deflection.

3) “Do you **BELIEVE** that I am able to do this?” (Emphasis Mine)

This is a Q that reveals the degree to which these figures were willing and able to rely upon the Lord Jesus.

4) “Do you believe that **I** am able to do this?” (Emphasis Mine)

Faith always requires an object. Did they know the nature or wonder of the One to whom they prayed?

5) “Do you believe that I **am ABLE** to **DO** this?” (Emphasis Mine)

Cutting to the quick, to what degree did these men believe in the ability or capacity of Christ to perform?

6) “Do you believe that I am able to do **THIS**?” (Emphasis Mine)

Herein, Christ is asking them to be specific in their request and/or belief (i.e., trusting for Him to give sight)!

**APP** – This question, “Do you believe that I am able to do this?” was directed at two blind men millennia ago. However, to what degree does the Lord still ask this of us? To what degree are we willing to express a positive belief in the capacity and ability of Christ to perform some particular work or fulfill some identifiable promise! Let us remember that it is not our need that moves the heart and the hand of the Lord, but our faith...

### Matthew 9:27 (Emphasis Mine)

27 As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him, calling out, “Have mercy on us, Son of David!”  
28 When he had gone indoors, the blind men came to him, and he asked them, “Do you believe that I am able to do this?”

“Yes, Lord,” they replied. 29 Then he touched their eyes and said, “**According to your faith** let it be done to you”; 30 and their sight was restored.

**KEY** – I put forth that the principle remains true – so be prayerful as to what you utter as Christ ongoingly asks!

LET US CONTINUE...

## QUESTION #2

### John 5:1b–3\*

1 . . . Jesus went up to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish festivals. 2 Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades. 3 Here a great number of disabled people used to lie—the blind, the lame, the paralyzed \* . . .

**NOTE 1** – Most contemporary translations add a footnote herein where verses 3b–4 would read: “—and they waited for the moving of the waters. From time to time an angel of the Lord would come down and stir up the waters. The first one into the pool after each such disturbance would be cured of whatever disease they had.” According to tradition, this pool was believed to have “healing powers” through the “alleged” work of an angel.

### John 5:5–9

5 One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. 6 When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, “Do you want to get well?”

7 “Sir,” the invalid replied, “I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me.” 8 Then Jesus said to him, “Get up! Pick up your mat and walk.” 9 At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked.

#### **Q. What did Christ ask of the invalid?**

**A.** “Do you want to get well?” (see v. 6)

**NOTE 2** – This seems an odd question to ask a man who had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. You would think that the answer was self-evident, as the man had been waiting for nearly four-decades for his healing! Yet the query was asked/put forth anyway...

#### **Q. Why?**

**A1.** One reputable commentary notes that this question was posed “to rouse the sick man out of his lethargy and despondency. It was the first step towards the man’s having sufficient faith: he must be inspired with some expectation of being cured” (Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges).

**A2.** Perhaps the invalid had become so wrapped up in his misery and misfortune they had become his identity. If Christ healed him, who would he be after years of waiting? Where might he go and do (apart from his pain)? It never ceases to amaze me how people become so identified by their afflictions that they refuse to move on (i.e., even when the opportunity comes along to do so). Seriously...

**Q1. Do you believe Jesus is able to move in your life?**

**Q2. Do you even want and/or desire for Jesus to work?**

**QUOTE** – When we complain to God about our circumstances or give Him excuses as to why we are still in the same place, spiritually or emotionally, year after year, perhaps the question He still aims at our hearts is, “Do you want to get well?” Do you want to move forward, spiritually? Do you want to make progress emotionally? Do you want to go to a new place where God can be your all-in-all, not the situation that you have let define you?

### QUESTION #3

Let us consider a familiar scene from the Gospel record...

#### **Matthew 8:23–27**

23 Then he got into the boat and his disciples followed him. 24 Suddenly a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. 25 The disciples went and woke him, saying, “Lord, save us! We’re going to drown!”

26 He replied, “You of little faith, why are you so afraid?” Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm.

27 The men were amazed and asked, “What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!”

**NOTE 1** – This story culminates with the disciples asking the following rhetorical question...

#### **Matthew 8:27b**

27 . . . “What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!”

**NOTE 2** – Yet we cannot lose sight of the query Christ had for His followers amidst the storm...

#### **Matthew 8:26b**

26 . . . “You of little faith, why are you so afraid?”

**NOTE 3** – Of course, the answer seems rather obvious: they were in a dire situation! The passage reveals that a furious storm had come upon them, threatening to overtake the boat and doom those who were in it. You know that a storm is bad when experienced fisherman like Peter, Andrew, James and John are shaken! From a human point of view, how could they be anything but afraid?

**NOTE 4** – Yet this fails to consider Who (i.e., capital ‘W’) was on board! These men were with someone who had already demonstrated incredible demonstrations of supernatural power: a) healing of disease or sickness; b) casting out of demons; cleansing of lepers; etc. This was a man who was supernaturally affirmed by God at His baptism by John in the following way and with the following words:

#### **Matthew 4:16–17**

16 As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. 17 And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”

**NOTE 5** – By this point, they had seen enough where the faith should have been made of slightly sterner stuff! So why did fear surface in their hearts when they had the Creator the wind and the waves aboard their vessel?

**APP** – To what degree are we moved by the wind and waves of our own lives despite knowing this same Jesus? Why is it that we find it so much easier to traffic in fear over faith, failing to realize all that has come before? How many of us can testify of the power of God, yet we exhibit such little faith in our darkest of moments? Thankfully, Christ does not condemn us in our weakness. He does, however, expect and anticipate maturation!

**KEY** – Thus said, let us continue with the following...

## QUESTION #4

### Matthew 14:22b–32

22 . . . Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. 23 After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone, 24 and the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.

25 Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. 26 When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. “It’s a ghost,” they said, and cried out in fear.

27 But Jesus immediately said to them: “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.”

28 “Lord, if it’s you,” Peter replied, “tell me to come to you on the water.”

29 “Come,” he said.

Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. 30 But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, “Lord, save me!”

31 Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. “You of little faith,” he said, “why did you doubt?”

32 And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. 33 Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”

**NOTE 1** – Here we go again in a similar circumstance! Once again we the readers see: **a)** the disciples in a boat that is being buffeted by the wind and the waves; **b)** faith wavering in the midst of crisis; and **c)** Jesus posing an eerily familiar question...

### Matthew 16:31b

31 . . . “You of little faith . . . why did you doubt?”

**NOTE 2** – Note that this question comes, again, after much and even more experience. Since the prior episode of Matthew 8, Peter has seen more healings, seen the multitudes fed, and witnessed the raising of the dead! By this point, he has been used of Christ to perform the works of God, including but not limited to the casting out of demons, healing of the sick, cleansing of lepers and so much more...

**Q. So why did he doubt? Why was it so much easier for him to traffic in fear v. faith?**

**NOTE 3** – Likely for the same reason that doubt remains the default condition for us despite what we see. Fear, anxiety and disbelief remain built-in instincts that we must overcome if we are going to truly grow. Despite what you and I have experienced, we operate much like Peter, cowering in the midst of storms v. walking in victory above them. However, we do well to note two elements...

**NOTE 4** – Peter had grown in his of faith, even if it remained small. Do not forget he believed to walk on water!

**NOTE 5** – Moreover, this question is not meant to serve as a condemnation, but an invitation to greater faith. You’ll never grow to great faith without stepping out and failing at times. Yet, this is better than staying inside!

## QUESTION #5

Our final question this morning affirms the futility of fear...

### **Luke 12:25**

25 Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life?

**NOTE** – Let us move to a close by considering this passage in its greater context...

### **Luke 12:22b–32**

22 . . . Jesus said to his disciples: “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. 23 For life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. 24 Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds! 25 Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life? 26 Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?”

27 “Consider how the wild flowers grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. 28 If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you—you of little faith! 29 And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. 30 For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. 31 But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well. 32 “Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom.”

**APP** – A great many of us naturally find it easier to traffic in fear, hesitation, uncertainty, anxiety and/or doubt. What has this gotten us? How has it ever worked for you? Perhaps the time has come for us to put fear aside, taking the Lord at His Word! Perhaps it is time to abandon crippling, paralyzing and futile fear for an invigorating, vital and transforming belief!

**Q. What if the choice was truly ours to make? What say you?**

### **Matthew 9:28b**

28 . . . “Do you believe that I am able to do this?”

### **John 5:6b**

6 . . . “Do you want to get well?”

### **Matthew 8:26b**

26 . . . “You of little faith, why are you so afraid?”

### **Matthew 16:31b**

31 . . . “You of little faith . . . why did you doubt?”

### **Luke 12:25**

25 Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life?

## CONCLUSION

**NOTE 1** – Feel free to give either in person or online at [www.NewLifeBarre.org](http://www.NewLifeBarre.org).

**NOTE 2** – Check out our website for any of our beyond Sunday ministries (MM, WM & CYC).

### **2 Corinthians 13:14**

14 May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.