



# ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT QUESTIONS EVER ASKED

*TEXT: Matthew 27:22.* This presentation is on “one of the most important questions ever asked.” The most important *subject* any person will ever consider is *salvation*—so the most important question is “What must I do to be saved?” That question might be phrased various ways. The Jews on the Day of Pentecost asked, “Brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37). Saul of Tarsus, on the road to Damascus, asked, “What shall I do, Lord?” (Acts 22:10). The Philippian jailer asked Paul and Silas, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” (Acts 16:30). However, one time, a man asked a question directly relating to his salvation—even though he did not realize it. I refer to Pilate’s question “Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?” (Matthew 27:22). Many others have since asked, in effect, “What shall I do with Jesus?” This is “one of the most important questions ever asked,” for at least three reasons.

## THE QUESTION IS FOR YOU

In the first place, this is one of the most important questions ever asked because it directly concerns you. Questions we personally must answer are usually more important to us than matters over which we have little or no control. For example, questions a doctor asks you about your health are more important to you than questions you might be asked about the latest epidemic in another country. You are more concerned about providing your family’s next meal than about the food that will be served by your national leaders at a state banquet.

The question “What shall I do with Jesus?” is a question *you* must face, a question *you* must answer. After one learns the truth about Christ, he can never be the same again. He must do *something* with Jesus.

Pilate discovered that he could not avoid the question. The governor knew that Jesus was innocent, but he did not want to make the Jews unhappy. He tried everything he could think of to get rid of Jesus. He sent Him to Herod. He hoped that having Him beaten would appease the crowd. He gave the mob a choice between a hardened criminal and an innocent Man. However, none of Pilate’s stratagems worked. That is when he desperately asked, “What shall I do with Jesus?”<sup>1</sup>

Even as Pilate could not get rid of Jesus without doing *something* with Him, neither can you. Here are some of your choices:

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<sup>1</sup>This paragraph could be expanded. Regarding Pilate’s dilemma and his efforts to release Jesus, see “The Life of Christ, 12,” pages 22–24 and 29–33.

## You Are for Him or Against Him

Jesus said, “He who is not with Me is against Me” (Matthew 12:30a).<sup>2</sup> All responsible people can be divided into two classes: those definitely for Jesus and those definitely against Him.

One option is to take your stand with those who are for Him: John, the beloved disciple; Peter, the big-hearted disciple; Paul, the courageous disciple; and all that noble company of men and women who have committed their lives to the Lord. The other option is to take your stand with those who are against Him: Pontius Pilate, Herod, Annas and Caiaphas, Judas Iscariot, and all people who have opposed Him.

If I knew your heart as well as God does, I could draw a line down the middle of this building,<sup>3</sup> label one side “for Christ” and the other side “against Christ,” and place everyone present on one side or the other. Either you are definitely for Him, or you are definitely against Him.

## You Can Confess Him or Deny Him

Jesus said, “Therefore everyone who *confesses* Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever *denies* Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 10:32, 33; emphasis mine). There is no middle ground.

## You Can Obey Him or Disobey Him

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said,

“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness’” (Matthew 7:21–23).

On another occasion, He said, “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments” (John 14:15). What are some of those commandments?

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<sup>2</sup>Some would use Mark 9:40 to contradict Matthew 12:30. For a discussion of Mark 9:40 and Matthew 12:30, see page 14 in “The Life of Christ, 7.”

<sup>3</sup>Adapt this to fit where you are speaking: “down the middle of this room,” “down the middle of this open area,” or whatever.

1. Christ tells the unbeliever to have faith in Him (John 8:24; see 3:16). Either you believe, or you do not.
2. He tells the believer to repent of his sins (Luke 13:3). Either you repent, or you do not.
3. He tells the believer to confess His faith (Matthew 10:32, 33). Either you confess Him, or you do not.
4. He tells the penitent believer to be baptized to be saved (Mark 16:16; see John 3:5). You have been baptized, or you have not.
5. He tells His followers to live faithfully (Revelation 2:10). Either you do, or you do not.

## You Can Accept Him or Reject Him

Jesus said, “He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day” (John 12:48). He also said, “. . . he who rejects Me rejects the One who sent Me” (Luke 10:16).

Each of us either accepts Jesus or rejects Him. Once more, there is no middle ground. Some think they can remain neutral—but they cannot. Suppose that a young man named Charlie asks a young woman to be his wife. She does not wish to accept his proposal, but she does not want to reject it because that would hurt his feelings. Thus she says, “Charlie, I don’t *accept* you as my husband . . . but I want you to know that neither do I *reject* you.” What does Charlie think when he hears that reply? In spite of her denial, he *knows* that he has been rejected. When you leave here today,<sup>4</sup> you will have either definitely accepted Jesus or definitely rejected Him.

“What shall I do with Jesus?” You must make a choice. You are for Him or against Him. You can confess Him or deny Him. You can obey Him or disobey Him. You can accept Him or reject Him. This is one of the most important questions ever asked because it is a personal question that *you* must answer.

## THE QUESTION IS ABOUT JESUS

Second, our question is one of the most im-

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<sup>4</sup>This wording (and similar wording elsewhere) assumes that this presentation will be used as a sermon.

portant questions ever asked because it is about the most important Personality who ever walked on the earth: Jesus Christ. If the question were “What shall I do with David Roper?” or “What shall I do with Eddie Cloer?”<sup>5</sup> it would not be overly significant—but the question is not about some man. The question is “What shall I do with *Jesus*?” In order to give an answer, we must first ask, “Who *is* this Jesus?”

### **He Is the King**

Peter said, “Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36). The word “Lord” means “ruler.” The word “Christ” means “anointed one,” which, to Peter’s audience, signified “king.” John wrote that Jesus “is Lord of lords and King of kings” (Revelation 17:14; see 19:16). Thus, if you reject Jesus, you are rejecting the divinely appointed King. In political terms, you are guilty of high treason!

Throughout the years, no crime has been viewed as more serious by civilized nations than that of high treason. Examples come to mind of men who were accused of high treason.<sup>6</sup> During their trials, no questions were asked regarding their character. The only question asked was whether or not they had tried to overthrow their rulers and their government. If they were found guilty, punishment was often swift and sure.

If you have rejected Jesus, you are guilty of high treason against heaven’s King. If that is the case, I pray that you will lay down your arms of rebellion and give your allegiance to the “Lord of lords and King of kings”!

### **He Is the Son of God**

Near the end of John’s Gospel Account, he wrote,

Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that *Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God*; and that believing you may have life in His name (John 20:30, 31; emphasis mine).

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<sup>5</sup>Substitute your name and the name of someone who is present and is known to most of your listeners.

<sup>6</sup>If you know of any examples with which your listeners will identify, insert them here.

Some deny that Jesus is the Son of God—but denying a fact does not alter the fact. Some religions deny the existence of sickness and death,<sup>7</sup> but their adherents still get sick and die. Some deny the existence of an eternal hell; but, in spite of all their denial, that terrible place will be waiting for them after death unless they repent. Even so, some try to escape the ramifications of faith in Christ by denying that He is the Son of God. However, their denial does not alter the fact that He is uniquely God’s Son; it just robs Him of the honor and respect that is due to Him.

Time will not allow an extended discussion of the multiplied proofs of Jesus’ deity, but think about these divine testimonies:

1. the testimony of the divine life He lived—for He lived as no man had ever lived.
2. the testimony of the divine words He spoke—for He spoke as no man had ever spoken.
3. the testimony of the divine works He did—for He did things no man had ever done.
4. the testimony of His divine influence—for He influenced history in a way no other has ever influenced it.
5. the testimony of the Resurrection—for this proven, historical fact was God’s stamp of approval on the claims of Jesus to be the Son of God (see Luke 22:70; Romans 1:4).

If you deny that Jesus is the Son of God, it does not make Him less than He is. It merely makes you guilty of denying Him the trust He should receive, the submission He should have, and the glory He is due.

### **He Is the Savior**

Most important, He is our Savior. Referring to the suffering of Jesus on the cross, Isaiah wrote,

Surely our griefs He Himself bore, and our sorrows He carried; yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

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<sup>7</sup>One example is the Christian Science religion, which claims that all matter is an illusion and physical problems are therefore not real.

But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed. All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; but the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him (Isaiah 53:4–6).

In reading this passage, let each make personal application. Each of us can say, “He was pierced through for *my* transgressions. The chastening for *my* well-being fell upon Him. He left heaven with all its glory and came down to earth with all its shame<sup>8</sup>—to die upon the cross for *me*. He was blindfolded, spit upon, scourged, and crucified for *me*.”

Once a man told a preacher, “I’m a good husband and father, a good neighbor and citizen, and an honest businessman. I’m respected by all who know me. Yet you say I am lost if I do not accept Jesus. That does not seem fair.”

The preacher asked him, “Does your mother love you?”

The man was surprised at the question but answered, “Yes.”

“Does she love you more than life itself?”

“Most definitely, yes.”

“Then,” asked the preacher, “what if you treated everyone else in this world right but neglected your mother?”

The man frowned and said, “I would be a scoundrel.”

“Then think about this,” said the preacher. “Jesus is nobler than your precious mother. Jesus loves you more than your mother does. Jesus made greater sacrifices for you than even your mother has. He was pierced for *your* transgressions. He left heaven and came down to earth—to die upon the cross for *you*. He was blindfolded, spit upon, scourged, and crucified for *you*. Therefore, consider this: What if you treat everyone on earth right, but neglect this One who gave His life for you? What does that make you?”

The man thought about it a while and said, “That makes me an ungrateful scoundrel.”<sup>9</sup>

“What shall I do with Jesus?” is one of the

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<sup>8</sup>See Philippians 2:5–8.

<sup>9</sup>This illustration was adapted from an illustration in R. A. Torrey, *Soul-Winning Sermons*, vol. 1 (Westwood, N.J.: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1956), 189–91.

most important questions ever asked because it is a question about heaven’s King, God’s Son, and our Savior. I pray that you will not be ungrateful for what He has done for you.

## THE QUESTION IS ABOUT BLESSINGS

### Our Becoming Children of God

Finally, I would suggest that this is one of the most important questions ever asked because it involves the most important blessings in this world and the next. For instance, our becoming children of God depends on what we do with Jesus. In John 1:11, 12, we read that Jesus “came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name.” Only those who “receive” Jesus by believing “in His name” are given “the right to become children of God.” They can then exercise that right by responding to Him in loving obedience. However, that door of opportunity is never opened to those who do not receive Him.

### Our Acceptance Before God

Our acceptance before God depends on what we do with Jesus. John wrote, “He who does not believe [in Him] has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God” (John 3:18b). People sometimes say, “I am as good as those folks down at church,” implying, “If they are saved, so am I.” That might be a correct conclusion if salvation were based on how good we are—but it is not. Our salvation is based on our relationship with Jesus. The “folks down at church” are still sinners, struggling to overcome their weaknesses, but they have a saving relationship with the Lord: They believed *in Him*; they confessed *Him*; they obeyed *Him*; and now they are living *in Him*. That is why they have hope.

### Our Finding Peace

Our finding peace depends on what we do with Jesus. Paul wrote, “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:1). The world tries many methods to find peace.

Some try to find peace of mind by changing their lifestyles and leading better lives; but that, by itself, is not enough. Some try to salve their consciences by doing good works to make up for the wrongs they have done, but deep inside they know this will never suffice. Some turn to the wisdom and philosophies of men, only to find these inadequate in the end. Some try the religions of men, but these are deceptive. The only true peace is “with God,” and it comes “through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

### **Our Finding Joy**

Our finding joy—deep, satisfying, lasting joy—depends on what we do with Jesus. Peter wrote to Christians concerning Christ, that “though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory” (1 Peter 1:8). All mankind is searching for happiness and joy. Unfortunately, many are seeking in places where these cannot be found: in wealth, in pleasure, in art and music, in study, in philosophy. The happiness these bring is always fleeting. The only deep, satisfying, lasting joy comes through accepting the Lord and His way.

Several years ago, a woman who lived in England told of two contrasting visits made within a few days of each other. The first was to a friend who lived in a magnificent mansion. As soon as her friend saw her, she broke down in tears. Although she was surrounded by splendor, her heart was filled with sorrow. Her second visit was to a poor, blind woman who lived in a cold, damp cottage. When asked how she was, her face brightened and she said, “I’m happy. I’m a child of the King, hurrying on to the mansion He has gone to prepare. How could I not be happy?” True joy and happiness do not come from this world, but from our relationship with the Lord.

### **Our Obtaining Eternal Life**

Our obtaining eternal life depends on what we do with Jesus. John wrote, “God has given us

eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life” (1 John 5:11, 12). True life is found only *in Christ*.<sup>10</sup> If you accept Him, you are accepting the life He offers. If you reject Him, you are rejecting that life.

## **CONCLUSION**

What more can we say?<sup>11</sup> When Jesus stood before Pilate, it was a time of crisis for him. He could listen to his conscience and do what was right, or he could listen to the crowd and crucify an innocent Man. Whether he realized it or not, determining what to do with Jesus was the most important decision he would make in his whole life—and he made the wrong choice. Today is also a time of crisis for you. You will make no more important decision than this: to accept Christ and His way or to reject Him. All of heaven is waiting for your decision.<sup>12</sup> If your heart tells you to accept Him through loving trust and obedience,<sup>13</sup> listen to your heart even today—and respond!

## **NOTES**

This sermon is based on two sermons in R. A. Torrey, *Soul-Winning Sermons*, vol. 1 (Westwood, N. J.: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1956): (1) “The Most Important Question That Any Man Ever Asked or Answered” (pages 157–75) and (2) “Who, Then, Is Jesus?” (pages 176–93).

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## **WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH JESUS?**

What will you do with Jesus, my friend?

Neutral you cannot be:

Some day your heart will be asking, O friend,  
“What will He do with me?”

Albert Simpson

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<sup>10</sup>This is a good place to pause and explain how we get “in Christ” (Romans 6:3, 4; Galatians 3:26, 27).

<sup>11</sup>At this point, you could review the main points made in this sermon.

<sup>12</sup>See Luke 15:7, 10; Matthew 10:32, 33.

<sup>13</sup>You may want to review what you said earlier about obeying or disobeying Christ.

*The lessons on the “Life of Christ” that are referenced in this article are not available on biblecourses.com, but are available in commentary form. Contact Truth for Today for more information.*