

LESSON ESSENTIALS

WHO IS JESUS?

LESSON 7: WHAT JESUS ASKS OF US

Have you ever received a great gift and wondered how you could be able to adequately thank the giver? Would you ever consider not showing gratitude to someone who acted towards you with great kindness? How do you pay back a debt you owe if you have nothing to give? Being able to respond, or knowing how to respond, appropriately to the good things in our lives is sometimes very difficult.

Jesus paid the highest price on our behalf and gave the greatest gift to us. How can we ever repay Him? Does He expect us to repay Him? What exactly does Jesus expect from us in exchange for what He did for us?

Jesus is calling you to respond to His great gift of love with your gift of faith. He calls you to confess your sins, to acknowledge your need of a Saviour, and to confess that you believe that Jesus is Lord. Won't you take some time to pray to Him right now? It is the most important conversation you will ever have.

When Jesus, the Son of God, came to earth as a man, He came with one mission: to seek and to save the lost. He came as the Saviour. He came to bear the punishment of our sin so that we might be made righteous. What Jesus did secured peace between God and man, and purchased eternal life with God for us. His sinless life, His death, His resurrection, and His ascension are the Good News that gives us life! It is the greatest gift we could ever receive, the solution to our greatest problem, and the satisfaction of our greatest need.

What does Jesus expect from us in return?

First, if you have not yet placed your faith in Jesus Christ and acknowledged that He is the true God, and the only one able to forgive your sins, then that is the response that Jesus is expecting from you. Before the world was formed, He had His children in mind. He knew that He would come and die and live again on your behalf, and was willing to do so out of His great love for you. Jesus is not surprised by what sins you have committed, or by the state that your life is in right now. He is calling you to respond to His great gift of love with your gift of faith. He calls you to confess your sins, to acknowledge your need of a Saviour, and to confess that you believe that Jesus is Lord. Won't you take some time to pray to Him right now? It is the most important conversation you will ever have.

Secondly, Jesus expects that we will respond to His great gift with obedience to His ways. Obedience is not His chief goal for us; rather, obedience is the means to a more important end. Jesus desires our sanctification -- that is, our growing in Christlikeness. As we obey His ways, we become more like Him and we are more able to be His ambassadors to a needy world. Lest you think this obedience is merely following a strict list of rules, the Bible teaches that the Lord is not impressed by flashy sacrifices or outward appearances. He is not looking for a show or a ceremony. He is looking for a changed life flowing from a changed heart. John 14:15 says, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments." This implies that we ought to be keeping His commandments out of love for Him, not out of fear or religious duty. In fact, religious duty from King Saul is what led Samuel to say, "Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice." (1 Samuel 15:22)

This life of obedience is received as worship by the Lord. Romans 12:1-2 reads, “I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” By presenting ourselves, heart, soul, and mind, in obedience to the Lord we are actually worshipping Him and learning to discern His will.

Further, Jesus expects gratitude from us. At one point in His ministry, Jesus healed ten lepers. Luke 17:14-16 recounts the details for us: “When he saw them he said to them, ‘Go and show yourselves to the priests.’ And as they went they were cleansed. Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; and he fell on his face at Jesus’ feet, giving him thanks.” Only one returned giving thanks. Jesus asked the man who returned, “Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?” Clearly, Jesus deserved to be thanked by all those He had healed. How often do we remember to thank and praise the Lord for all that He does in our lives?

How grateful would you be if you were suffering from a fatal illness and a remedy was found that healed you? You would be overjoyed! You would live with passion and gratitude because you’d been given a second chance at life. What we need to understand from the Gospel is that we were dead in our sins and trespasses. We were like dead people walking around in our sin. And then Jesus gave us new life! How ought we to respond to the One who gave us new life? Romans 6: 12 says, “Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, *but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life*, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness.” This is living a life of obedience out of gratitude because we’ve been given a second chance at life – and abundant life, at that!

To say, “What Jesus expects of us” is a little misleading. Jesus is not a petty child holding grudges over us because we don’t properly thank Him. Maybe the better question is “What is a proper response to Jesus?” or “What does Jesus deserve from us?”

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Our faith, our obedience, and our gratitude still seem like insignificant demonstrations of our love for Jesus considering all that He has done on our behalf. Still, the Lord who needs nothing delights in the praise of His people, so let's be people who praise Him with our whole lives!

IN REVIEW

- The greatest gift we could ever receive deserves the greatest response we've ever given.
- Our faith, our obedience, and our gratitude are three ways that we can appropriately respond to Jesus.
- Jesus is not like a selfish person or a demanding child forcing us to give Him what He wants. His 'expectations' of us are really only what we should see that He deserves.
- While Jesus is self-sufficient and does not need anything from us, He does delight in our praise and loves when we live for Him.

HAVE YOUR SAY

- If you have not prayed a prayer of salvation, you could do so now. This prayer should be in your own words but may be something like this: *“Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner. I have done many things that disqualify me from your family and from your Kingdom. I believe that You came to take the punishment for my sins. I believe that You died on the cross, and then were raised again to life! I believe that You ascended to Heaven and now sit with God the Father interceding on my behalf. I believe that the only thing that qualifies me to gain eternal life with God is Your righteousness that You have given to me. I am so grateful! And I freely proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord of my life.”*
- In what ways have you not been fully obedient to the Lord? Can you see some sins that you are still holding onto? Pray for forgiveness and ask the Lord to help you ‘present your body as a living sacrifice’ to Him.
- Spend some time in prayer just now praising God and expressing your gratitude for the work of Jesus on your behalf. A great way to express gratitude is to tell someone else about the Good News of Jesus. Who could you tell today?

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