

1-12-25

## **Questions Only God's Word Can Answer**

### **2 Corinthians 9:15**

Do you think that the major communication and social media platforms of our society provide us with serious insight and counsel into the most important issues of life? I mean crucial questions like:

1. How can I, as a sinful person, have peace with a righteous God? How can I have my sins forgiven and his judgment taken away?
2. How can I know that beyond the grave there will be life and joy, not a fearful prospect of judgment?
3. How can I have the deepest longings of my heart satisfied - not just the superficial desires for comfort and prosperity, but the deep, deep heart-cries of the night?
4. How can I know God personally? Can I have a relationship with him now, and walk with him as with a friend?
5. Is there a power to love? Is there a power that can really change people, so they don't do drugs or steal or cheat or hate or kill?

These are the great issues of life. But where will we turn for insight and wisdom and counsel and truth? The great media powers of our

land—Facebook, Youtube, Instagram, —are silent on the greatest issues in the world.

And the effect this silence has is to spread an assumption throughout the mindset of our society that these questions are no more important than your preference for pizza toppings.

Blaise Pascal, the French mathematician and philosopher who died over 360 years ago said, "Man's sensitivity to small things, and his insensitivity to the most important things, are surely evidences of a strange disorder."

Pascal thought that if there is a possibility that there is a God in heaven, and if there is a possibility that there is eternity and judgment beyond the grave—just the possibility! — then reasonable people will be earnestly engaged in settling these matters for themselves and getting right with God and preparing for the endless ages of existence beyond this world.

But what do we see?

We see a modern culture that has no significant place for these questions at all. And we see people like the man I sat next to on a plane a few years ago. I struck up a conversation with him and he found out I was a pastor. He asked, "Are you happy in that line of work?" I said, "Yes, I think it is where God wants me, and I think I could be happy anywhere if I knew it was God's will for me to be there."

He responded, "Well, I'm not a very religious person."

I said, "If there's a God, nothing's more important than being right with him." He quickly responded, "Oh, I believe there's a God."

This is a portrait of millions of Americans: "I believe there's a God. . . but I'm not a very religious person."

It's like saying, "I believe there's a great doctor who could heal my terminal disease . . . but I'm not going to call him."

"I believe there's a rescue boat that could reach me adrift at sea . . . but I don't cry out."

"I believe there's a treasure hidden in a nearby field . . . but I won't sell buy it."

We live in a very dark and strange age.

What I've been praying is that none of us would be asleep on our watch - that God would wake us up to what really matters in life.

What I want to do this morning is take the five questions we started with, which seem to me to be the most important questions in the world and show from God's Word that Jesus is the answer—that Jesus is God's gift to the world and that he is so valuable the Bible calls him an *"inexpressible gift."*

## **1. Peace with God and Forgiveness of Sins**

How can I as a sinful person have peace with a righteous God?  
How can I have my sins forgiven and God's judgment taken away?

Every one of us knows that the Bible is right when it says, "*All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God*" ([Romans 3:23](#)).

We also know intuitively that God is just and must be reckoned with. As the Bible says, "*It is appointed to man once to die and after that comes judgment.*" We will give an account to God for our lives.

So, our hearts tell us loud and clear, we must find a way to get right with God!

Jesus is God's *inexpressible gift* to meet this need.

The Bible tells of the time a man came seeking healing from Jesus. Jesus looked on him and his friends and saw their faith and said, *"My son, your sins are forgiven"* ([Mark 2:5](#)). But some of the religious leaders sitting there said to themselves, *"This is blasphemy!"*

Now why did they think Jesus committed blasphemy when he said, *"Your sins are forgiven"*?

You can see the answer if you put yourself in this position:

Suppose during our greeting time I go up and punch Lance in the nose for no good reason. And before he has a chance to say anything or retaliate, you step in and say to me ...

"Now let me settle this before it gets out of hand:

Pastor Bill, I forgive you for physically assaulting Lance. There, now, all is well."

Lance would have a right to say, "What in the world do you think you are doing?

***He*** hit me, not you! You can't just step in here and forgive him. I have to forgive him!"

This, in essence, is what the religious leaders were saying to Jesus:

"Who do you think you are? This man sinned against GOD! GOD has to forgive him, not you! You are committing blasphemy because you act as though you were God."

To this Jesus calmly responded, *"The Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins."* And then he healed the man to validate his authority. Jesus did what only God has the right to do: forgive sins.

The choice we must make is this:



Either Jesus is a delusional liar, or Jesus is the Son of God who takes away the sins of all who believe in him.

Jesus is God's answer to our first great question. He came and suffered and died and rose again from the dead to pay the price for our sins. He is no charlatan.

When we trust him as Lord and Savior of our lives, we have peace with God, our sins are forgiven, and there is no more condemnation ([Romans 5:1](#); [8:1](#); [Ephesians 2:13–16](#)).

And we rejoice: "Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!"

## **2. Joy and Not Judgment Beyond the Grave**

How can I know that beyond the grave there will be life and joy and not a fearful prospect of judgment?

It's an amazing thing how little concern people have for eternity.

I remember asking a man if he was ready to meet God when he died, and he just laughed off my question, and said, "Oh, I'm sure God will just send me the other way when I show up at his door."

I tried to help him see how serious this matter was, and he just pulled back and wouldn't talk about it.

Believe me, the Bible is clear on this: there is a heaven and there is a hell. Both last forever. And where we spend eternity is chosen in this life.

Jesus said he is the way to heaven - the only way. *"For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whoever believes on him should not perish, but have everlasting life"* ([John 3:16](#)).

You can confidently and assuredly know that you have eternal life if you believe in God's Son Jesus.

"Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!"

### **3. The Satisfaction of Our Deepest Longings**

How can I have the deepest longings of my heart satisfied, not just the superficial desires for comfort and prosperity, but the deep, deep heart-cries of the night?

Gary Gaetti, the third baseman for the Twins, said that in 1987 he thought winning the World Series was the greatest thrill in the world. This was the peak of fame and fortune. But he writes,

Then in 1988 I came to know Jesus Christ as my personal Savior and Lord of my life. Believe me, friend, the World Series was great, but nothing compares to the thrill of having a personal relationship with God through Jesus and knowing you have your name written in the record books of eternal, everlasting life."

There is no denying that the world has some thrills to offer. But the older and the wiser you get, the more you realize they do not satisfy. They aren't deep enough to touch the longings of the heart and they don't last.

The reason is that the appetites of our hearts were made for God and they will not be satisfied until we feast on fellowship with God.

Jesus said, *"I am the bread of life; he who comes to me shall not hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst."*

Everybody is thirsty. Everybody is searching for a fountain of everlasting joy. When you find Jesus, the search is over.

Then the heart can sing, "Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!"

#### **4. A Personal Relationship with God**

How can I know God personally?

Can I have a relationship with him now, and walk with him as with a friend?

A quarter of a century ago, two Harvard astronomers had discovered a "great wall" of galaxies spread throughout the universe 500 million light years across. A light year is six trillion miles. So that makes the wall of galaxies three billion trillion miles across.

Now if you believe, with the Bible, that God created everything, then God is unspeakably great. And the bigger our universe gets, the greater our God gets.

But for some, this means he is farther and farther away and harder and harder to know and to love.

But Jesus is the answer. *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all thing were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made . . . And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father"* ([John 1:1-4, 14](#)).

God in the person of his Son has become flesh—human. And Jesus said to Philip, *"If you have seen me, you have seen the Father"* ([John 14:9](#)).

Jesus is God reaching out to us across the billions of galaxies. God wants to be known. He wants to be loved.

He wants to be a Father and a Friend. And though he is great beyond all imagination, he came near to us in Jesus so that we could know him. *"If you had known me, you would have known my Father also; from now on, you know him and have seen him"* ([John 14:7](#)).

We can know God—just as personally as you know anyone in this room.

"Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift."

## **5. Power to Love and Power for Change**

Is there a power to love?

Is there a power that can really change people, so they don't do drugs or steal or cheat or murder?

The answer to this question can be found in the Bible and can be found in the lives of those who know Jesus best.

In the Bible Paul said, *"I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me."*

And the life Paul lived by faith in the Son of God was an incredible life of love and sacrifice and joy for the good of people and the glory of God.

Paul had no doubt at all that there is a power that really changes people. Namely, the power of Jesus Christ when we trust in him.

## **An Amazing Story of God's Grace**



Let me close with a story that demonstrates God's power in a man's life. When I heard it, I knew God was giving it to me so that I could give it to you.

There was a black pastor named James Ford. He was the pastor at South Shore Baptist Church in Chicago. He recalled his amazing story of God's grace in his life.

He was the oldest of ten children and grew up on welfare in Pittsburgh. His dad was never at home. His mom told him early on that his dad was dead.

Then when he was older, she said he was alive and in prison in Tennessee. But before his dad could get out, he was murdered for selling drugs. Jim swore that if he ever had a son, he would not leave him like his dad left him.

But Jim began using drugs himself. He joined the military service, but in the service, he was put in jail for it at least once.

When he got out, he got married and had a son named Jay. But all this time he and his wife were using drugs. He would blow smoke into his four-year-old son's face to make him high and watch him do funny things.

Then his wife committed adultery. He said he resolved to kill her and the other guy and then die in the shoot out if necessary since he swore he'd never do jail time again.

But two things happened to stop him.

One day at work a man—a southern white guy—named Ray, who called himself a "ridge-running hippie from Tennessee," saved Jim's life by pulling him back from a falling crane. That made Jim willing to listen to Ray when he said ...

"Jim, whatever your problem is, Jesus is the answer." That's all he said.

Then Jim's brother talked him out of killing his wife and said he should just move out and leave her. So, he decided to spend one more night with her and then leave.

That night they were both on the couch high as a kite on what he called Columbia Gold laced with embalming fluid. Then something amazing happened.

Jim's wife asked, "What about Jay?"

And Jim said to me, "I could feel the high go straight out of me. It began at the top of my head and went down through my face and drained out of my whole body until I was stone-cold sober.

And the very first thing I did, right there in front of my wife, was hit the floor and start calling on God:

'God, don't hurt me! God, don't hurt me!'"

No one had to convince Jim he was a sinner.

All he had to be convinced of was that God was real, and now he knew that beyond any doubt. And that meant trouble.

But God didn't hurt him. He healed him. The next day at work, he went around telling everybody, "God is real. God is real."

His boss thought he had flipped out and sent him home. But on his way out, he looked up on a scaffold and saw Ray, and called out, "Ray, God is real."

Ray came down and gave him a big bear hug and took out his New Testament and showed Jim what really happened.

From then on for the next several months Ray would drive every Thursday afternoon from his suburb to the inner city of Pittsburgh to have a Bible study with Jim.

Jim told him once, "My old drug dealing buddies think you're a NARC and said they were going to kill you and me. Maybe you shouldn't come in anymore."

To this Ray said, "Jim, if Jesus can shed his blood for me, I can shed my blood for you."

Later, James Ford went on to have two more sons. His wife is a faithful partner, and he became a pastor.

### **God's Inexpressible Gift to You: Jesus Christ**

1. Is there a power to love? Is there a power that can really change people?
2. Is there a way to have eternal life?
3. Is there a way for sins to be forgiven?
4. Is there a way for your deepest longings to be satisfied?
5. Is there a way to know God personally and be his friend?

The answer is a resounding yes. And this yes is Jesus Christ, God's inexpressible gift to you.

If you have never personally received Jesus as the Lord and Savior of your life, I commend him to you. And I urge you to trust him and call upon him for all the help you need. *"Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved"* ([Romans 10:13](#)).

Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!

Now maybe your testimony about becoming to God isn't nearly as dramatic as Jim's. Maybe you quietly kneeled next to your bed one night and gave your heart to God.

There were no drugs, thoughts of abandonment, or murder.

This is good. God protected you from all that terrible stuff, but whatever your story is, embrace it and share it with others because others desperately need to hear about the hope they can have in Jesus that has the power to forgive, save, and transform our lives forever.

Now you know the answer to the biggest questions of life.

Share the Answer with others as God leads. Amen.