

Wrestling with Questions

22 - Walking with Jesus
Church on the Park | Sunday, 26 July 2015

Texts: Exodus 34:5-7; Psalm 13

Theme: Walking with God causes many questions to arise in our hearts. The Lord himself is the answer to these questions.

Intro: Throughout the Bible you see men and women of God wrestling with questions. Some of these questions were so overwhelming that they were tempted to turn back. Yet, God revealed himself as light in man's darkness. Today, we will focus on Moses and the questions he wrestled with as he walked with God. We will see how God answered him and how he answers you. Let your **questions** be a **quest** to know God more.

1) The Bible is an honest book and unashamedly records the questions we wrestle with about life and God (Psalm 13).

- The story of Moses **reveals** all the **questions** he and the people **wrestled** with.
 - Like **Jacob**, Israel wrestled with God. Moses wrestles with God. We all need to wrestle with God and he is not **afraid** of your **questions** and doubt.
 - The **name** and **glory** that God revealed to Moses was (if he had eyes to see) the answer to all his questions.
 - And God's name and glory is the answer to all of ours.
- "...abounding in lovingkindness and truth, who **keeps lovingkindness for thousands...**"
- When we were **driving home** to Brisbane from Corindi, we randomly stopped a small country town because we were hungry. We had a very lackluster meal at a cafe that was way overpriced. Afterwards, we were walking to our car when I hear someone calling, "Glen, Glen!"
- I thought someone else in the town was named Glen, but then discovered it was **Pastor Matt Prater** from New Hope Church. We had a great chat and then he invited me to his **radio** show (which I did this week).
- What I did not realize was first it was **national**, not local radio. It was broadcast to hundreds of stations **throughout Australia** simultaneously.
- Also, I did not realize it was **talk-back radio**. In other words, people called in asking questions and giving comments.
- Well, one of my first questions was from someone who identified himself as a transgender homosexual. Now, this is my first time on radio and I was thrown into the **deep end**.
- We are **filled** with **questions**. Is gay marriage right? What version of the Bible is best to read? Why aren't some people healed? Does God care? Etc.
- **Psalm 13** is one of the classic Psalms that wrestles with questions.
 - "**How long, O Lord?** Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me?..."
- When I **first came** to **Australia** to plant this church I thought I'd be here for only **five years** and then **move** on.
- After about a year or two I realized God wasn't on **my time** and **his vision** would take a lot longer.

- His vision is a **generational vision** (*Deu. 7:9). He is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Each **godly generation** passes the **baton** to another.

2) God's call will cause many questions to arise in your heart (Exo. 3:1-6:30).

- Look at Moses (Exo. 3:3-9) [God first established who He is]
 - First Moses questions, "**Who am I?**" (Exo. 3:11ff)
 - Questions of **identity** plague our generation, but they also **distressed** Moses
 - **God's answer:** "It's not who you are, it's who **I AM**. I will be with you."
 - God further reveals his **name** and identity to **Moses**.
 - And when Moses and his people are in another **grand crisis**, God further **reveals** his **name** to Moses in Exodus 34:5-7
 - You need to **know** your **God**
 - Second, Moses questions, "**What if?**" (Exo. 4:1ff)
 - Here, Moses is **worrying** about the future. He is **spiralling** down a **vortex** of **anxiety**.
 - Watch out for falling into all sorts of 'what ifs' about the future.
 - **God's answer:** "I have given you **authority** (the staff); I am sending you. You are my ambassador."
 - Remember, your **authority in Christ** and that God has sent you into this world to be his witness.
 - Third, Moses questions, "**How?**" (Exo. 4:10-13; 6:12, 30)
 - **How** can I **speak**? I am slow to speech. I am not eloquent.
 - **God's answer** is a **question**: "Who has **made** man's mouth?..."
 - **Later, Moses faces **great opposition** when he **confronts Pharaoh**. Israel's **oppression intensifies** when he does God's will rather than **diminishes** (Exo. 6:12, 30).
 - Moses asks, "Behold, the sons of Israel have not listened to me; **how** then will Pharaoh listen to me, for I am unskilled in speech?"
 - **God's answer: Keep at it!** He gives them a charge to bring the sons of Israel out of the land of Egypt.
 - Fourth, Moses questions, "**Why?**" (Exo. 5:22-23)
 - **Why** have you brought **harm** to these people? **Why** did you ever **send** me?
 - This was when their oppression intensified as we saw in the third question
 - **God's answer: Watch** what I will **do** now. Now, I will show you my **faithfulness** and **power**. I will keep my covenant made with your forefathers.
 - The fifth question is **implied**. It is "**When?**"
 - **When** are we going to escape Egypt? **Pharaoh** would **not listen** to Moses over and over. It took ten massive plagues.
 - I can hear Moses saying, "**How long, O Lord?**"
 - And then when they were in the wilderness the people wondered, "**Where** is this **promised land** you spoke of?" (*leads in to the next question*)
 - **God's answer: perseverance!!!** Endurance! Keep obeying his call. Don't give up.
 - The last questions is "**where?**" (Num. 11:13).
 - This comes up after they escape Egypt.
 - "**Where** am I to get food to give all this people? I alone am not able to carry all this people, because it is too **burdensome** for me" (Numbers 11:13)
 - **God's answer:** I will give you **elders** and pour my **Spirit** on them. **Think** also about **Pentecost**.
 - Also, the people implied this question "Where are we?"
 - This is no promised land—this is the wilderness. Where have you led us Moses?

3) God's call will always mean a battle and calls for perseverance (Heb. 11:27).

- Remember, God loves you, but **God's plan** is not **centered** around you—it's a **generational** plan (Exo. 34:6-7).
- You play a **part** of showing God's **lovingkindness** to the **next generation**.
- God's work usually takes much **longer** than you first expect.
- Only through **perseverance** will you make it to the end to pass out the baton.
- Hebrews 11:27 says Moses persevered because he saw him who was invisible, that is the Lord.
- You will also persevere when you see the Lord and what he is doing.

Conclusion: Walking with God causes you to ask many questions—who, what, when, why, how and where. But when you see the Lord and his plan more clearly these fade away. Questions will arise, but you will find your answers in him.

END NOTES

“who keeps”

Keep - to watch, guard, protect, watch over (like a watchman); guard from dangers, preserve

Moses persevered because he saw him who was invisible (Hebrews)

I'm sure Moses was asking “when?”, especially when one plague after another came and Pharaoh's heart was still hard. (How long, O Lord?) For Joseph it meant 13 years. Lastly, questions of “where.”

God will bless and protect your children. His kindness does not just extend to you, but those you care about the most.

Why do we need to hear this? Because we worry about our children. We also need to hear this because we are in a rush to win the world for Jesus, and we need to have smaller vision before ever seeing a bigger vision.

The story of how I met Matt & Carol Prater in Woodburn. Then a week and half later he had me on his radio show. I had know idea of the immensity of the broadcast—it goes to hundreds of stations throughout Australia. Someone even said online that they were listening from England.

What does thousands mean in this passage? The answer is in Deuteronomy 7:9.

- Look at Noah. His sons and their wives are saved and blessed because of God's love toward Noah.
- Look at Abraham. Lot is saved from Sodom and Gomorrah because he is related to Abraham. The kindness of God then flows down to Isaac, Jacob and all of Jacob's children.
- To Abraham God's kindness starts off like a small stream at the top of the mountain. But it gains great strength, velocity and breadth as it goes down the mountain of the generations. The more the generations, the more the multiplication.

God always think generationally.

This is what I had to learn when I first came to Australia. I had planned to be here only five years. To plant this church and move on to something else. But after about a year or two I realized that what God had put in my heart would take much longer. This was not something that could be done overnight or even in a few years, it would take generations—one generation passing on God's Word to the next, imparting blessing and truth.

The promises of God are like seeds which fully develop in the generations after us.

What if you don't have children? Well, God is calling you to have spiritual children. Everyone who matures in Christ can then take another on the journey of maturity. We were born again to reproduce other believers.

The journey from dream to destination.

Joseph

Joseph had a dream, a God-given dream (Gen. 37:1-17).

Dreams are dangerous things. Dreams that are God-given push us beyond the status quo. They also disturb the peace of the established order of things. Joseph by sharing his dream is disturbing the peace. He has no idea of the revolutionary nature of God's word.

It took 13 years for this dream to begin to blossom. The dream only developed through distress. (Find other 'd' words).

You have been given a coat of many colors by your heavenly Father. The Bible tells us of his multifaceted blessings on us. While we wear this favor with joy in our Father, it also brings opposition.

Being blessed will also mean a battle.

Look at Moses after God called him. (The great call of God and the generations, Exo. 4:24-26.)

Disorientation

The journey calls for perseverance.

While you are asking God "when", he is making you into a winner.