

What Will You Do With Jesus?

Joe Slater

“What will you do with Jesus? The question comes to you! And you must give an answer, for something you must do.” So begins James Robinson’s well-known hymn from nearly a hundred years ago. The song is right! There are places aplenty to be neutral, but this isn’t one of them. No one can encounter Jesus without responding in some way. In Matthew chapters 26 and 27 we find at least seven ways in which people responded to Jesus in the last hours of His life. Here is one:

Judas Iscariot, what will you do with Jesus? Judas answers, “I’ll betray Him!” For thirty pieces of silver, the price of a slave (Exod. 21:32), Judas sold the sinless Son of God into the clutches of His most fanatical foes (Matthew 26:14-16; 47-49). He used a kiss, the customary greeting of friendship, to identify Jesus to the mob that came to arrest Him. No wonder the name Judas carries such a negative connotation! A Judas goat leads the other goats or sheep into the slaughter house, then returns for another group. And one who turns his back on a friend is labeled a “Judas.”

No one today literally turns Jesus over to His enemies to be crucified; but that doesn’t mean we can’t betray Him. Regarding once faithful but now fallen Christians the Hebrews writer said, *“they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame”* (6:6). By their actions, they shame Jesus as a fake, an imposter, a fraud, just as His enemies claimed when they had Him crucified. We loathe Judas for selling Jesus for thirty pieces of silver, but is our price even less? Will we sell Him for the thrill of physical pleasure? For the approval of worldly friends?

Indeed, what will you do with Jesus?

From The Inside Out

God seeks rule over more than just our bodies; He desires our hearts and minds as well.

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (Romans 12:1-2). We offer to God our bodies as living sacrifices, conjoined with, or perhaps more accurately, resulting from, the renewing of our minds.

This inward affection for God is referred to by Christ as *“the first and greatest commandment”* (Matthew 22:38).

Heaven’s message has ever sought to operate on the heart of man. Peter’s inspired message on Pentecost *“cut to the heart”* of those who heard it (Acts 2:37). The word of God, *“sharper than any two-edged sword,”* pierces *“even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart”* (Hebrews 4:12). *“The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul”* (Psalm 19:7).

Without a sincere change of heart, outward expressions of obedience are both hollow and ineffective. We are *“set free from sin”* and become *“servants of righteousness”* after obeying God’s teaching *“from the heart”* (Romans 6:17-18).

A new birth results in a new life, but the new birth itself concerns the spirit. *“That which is born of the Spirit is spirit”* (John 3:6). We *“have purified our souls in obeying the truth”* (1 Peter 1:22).

Conversion, to be genuine, must include the whole man. While our behavior must manifest fruits of repentance, while we must live right and do right, we must first freely offer to the Lord our hearts, souls, and minds. Jesus said, *“If you love Me, keep My commandments”* (John 14:15).

Ours is more than merely a regimented religion of doing; it is one of being and becoming. *“These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone”* (Matthew 23:23).

The only way God makes a Christian is from the inside out.

--Dalton Key (Tulsa, OK) via Old Paths

WHAT DID I JUST SAY?

“Let the words of my mouth and the mediation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my rock and my Redeemer” (Psalm 19:14 NAS).

I wasn’t reared in a Christian home. Jesus found me at age twenty and I believed and was baptized. However, from about the fifth grade on I had learned all the “four letter words” and used them like my peers. Over the years those words were reinforced in my mind through co-workers, books, and movies.

I learned to control myself so they never crossed my lips. They were still there inside me close to the surface. One day I was climbing up a ladder built on the side of a building to inspect the high roof. I was only about ten feet above the main roof, but that was twenty feet above the ground and the ground sloped away from the building making it look like I was fifty feet up. As I grasped the rung above my head, it slipped out of the wall.

Those words that I hadn’t used for years flowed out of my mouth. As soon as that happened, I felt my face burning. As James says, *“From the same mouth come both blessings and cursing”* (James 3:10a).

Paul writes about needing to control the tongue. *“Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth”* (Ephesians 4:29a).

The problem I find is that even if those words are not spoken, they pop-up in my thoughts. Therefore, I am learning to take *“every thought captive to the obedience of Christ”* (II Corinthians 10:5b). Like the Psalmist wrote in Psalm 119, I am meditating on God’s word. I am also learning to dwell on what is true, honorable, right, pure, lovely, and anything pleasing to God (Philippians 4:8).

--Ed Wittlif (Denver, CO)