

**Introduction to the series:**

In using questions to stimulate a thoughtful response, Jesus was following in the tradition of Jewish Rabbis and Greek philosophers.

**Paul Woolley, CEO, London Institute for Contemporary Christianity, writes:**

*“Jesus is often thought of as giving answers but, actually, he’s full of questions. Even as a boy, he was found sitting among the teachers in the temple asking them questions. ‘And all who heard him were amazed’ (Luke 2:47).*”

*In fact, Jesus is recorded as asking 307 questions in the Gospels. In contrast, he directly answers only three of the 183 questions he is asked. Just three. And on at least one occasion he does not know the answer to a question addressed to him (Mark 13:4a and 32). Jesus asks questions that can be easily answered (Matthew 5:13) and questions with no obvious answer (Luke 18:19). And he answers questions with questions of his own, either to drive home a point (Luke 7:42) or to expose duplicity (Mark 12:14–15), or to get people thinking.*

*It can be tempting for Christians to spend time attempting to give answers, even to questions no one is asking. In all of this, we can remain deaf to what’s actually going on around us. But Jesus’ approach is radically different. In inviting all and sundry to live in God’s kingdom, Jesus is acutely aware of what’s going on around him, and he asks questions accordingly. Jesus uses questions to confer dignity on people, initiate conversation, and lead people to a deeper knowledge – of God, the world, others, and self. In doing so, Jesus opens up the possibility of a new world for those with eyes to see.”*

In four of the six questions of Jesus in our sermon series, Jesus is interrogating his disciples:

- Who do you say I am?
- Why do you worry?
- What good is it to gain the whole world but lose your soul?
- Do you love me?

The other two offer us insights into his interactions with needy people:

- Who touched my clothes?
- Has no one condemned you?

Allow yourselves to be drawn into these dynamic situations. Put yourself into the scene. Allow Jesus to interrogate you!

## 1 Jesus' question



**This is surely the most important question Jesus ever asked, and he asks it still. He asks us, 'Who do YOU say I am?'**

Read the passage several times, aloud and silently, maybe taking the parts of the various speakers.

During his early ministry, Jesus travelled around many cities, villages, and towns, healing and proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom. Caesarea Philippi was given its name by King Herod Philip, in honour of Tiberias Caesar and himself. Roman emperors after Augustus were worshipped as gods.

- Why might Jesus choose such a place for this conversation?
- Why were people associating Jesus with Elijah? See Malachi 4. 5-6. What did Jesus say about John the Baptist? Matthew 17. 10-13.
- What sorts of things have you heard or read that people say about Jesus today? What would you say if someone asked you who you think Jesus is? Has the way you would answer changed over the years?
- So, in your own words, attempt to answer Jesus' question.

## 2 Peter's answer

- Do you think Peter surprised himself by his answer? Does Jesus' response confirm this? See 1 Corinthians 12.3.

## 3 Your response

- Return to the question, 'Has the way you would answer Jesus' question changed over the years?' Are you aware of the Holy Spirit revealing truth to you? See John 16. 12-14
- Spend some time in silence reflecting on this. Pray for one another, that the Holy Spirit will reveal more about Jesus to you.

## 4 Worship

- If possible, watch the first 4 or 5 minutes of <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=73i-apU9Zn8>

Jesus, at Your Name we bow the knee,  
 Jesus, at Your Name we bow the knee,  
 Jesus, at Your Name we bow the knee,  
 And acknowledge You as Lord. [2]  
 You are the Christ  
 You are the Lord  
 Through Your Spirit in our lives  
 We know who You are.

## 5 Outcome

*If we are to be authentic disciples of Jesus, asking questions seems like an important practice to develop. Starting from an understanding that the better way is to listen before we speak, what questions could we ask of those on our frontlines today? 'What are you enjoying most at the moment?' 'What challenges are you facing?' Or, perhaps, a good place to start is with one of the questions Jesus asked, 'What do you think?' **Paul Woolley, CEO, LICC***

- Pray for opportunities to have conversations about who Jesus is, in the coming week. Come back and share next week.