

Week 30 – Tough Questions – “Hey – let’s hear from the kids”

Hey, this is Tim Perry, pastor of Spiritual Discovery at Christ Community Church. I want to welcome you to the Tough Questions blog. We’re going to try something a little different for the next couple of weeks. Project 4:4 is an adventure that the entire faith community that we call Christ Community Church is on. We hope that you’re joining us on that journey as you click on these different questions and follow along from week to week.

What we want to do for the next couple of weeks is include our kids here at Christ Community. Kids have great questions for God, and I think as we listen in as adults we might learn something, too. So I just want to welcome you to a little different look and a little different format for a couple of weeks, and then we’ll get back to the way that we used to do Tough Questions maybe three or four weeks from now. We’ll let our kids submit some questions for us and follow what their curiosity is showing them. Thanks for your patience and hope you’ll enjoy the next couple of installments of Tough Questions.

Well, here’s the first question we’re going to tackle this week – Kyle asks this question: **When are you coming back? And I think what Kyle is after there is – Jesus – when are you going to come back?** Kyle, that is a great question. People throughout all history have been wondering the very same thing. In fact Jesus’ disciples were very curious about that and they asked him about that at the end of his earthy ministry. Jesus, we know that you’re going to go to heaven, but when – when exactly – are you going to come back?

Well, it’s interesting to note that even Jesus himself didn’t know the time when he was going to come back. But in the Gospel of Matthew – he gave us a couple of really important hints that will help us be prepared – whenever that is. Let’s look at a couple of things Jesus said. Here in Matthew 24, Jesus said:

“And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.” Matt. 24:14

So whenever that’s going to be, it’s connected with the mission of Jesus in the world – of giving the Gospel to all of the people groups all over the world. And as that job gets accomplished, the end will come. We don’t know exactly when that is. We’re making some really good progress on that goal in the world through missionaries taking the Gospel to other cultures, but God’s word does tell us that God wants his Gospel to go out to everybody before the end comes.

Here’s another scripture in that same chapter that Jesus says:

“But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.” Matt 24:36

So the Father does know when it's going to happen and when the time comes, he's going to send Jesus to earth. The best thing for us to do is to always be about the mission of giving the Gospel to other people. That's what God expects from his followers. So great question, Kyle – keep the questions coming.

Well, here's Question #2 sent in by Elizabeth and this is a great question. Lots of people wonder the very same thing. **"Why did God let my Grandpa die?"** Elizabeth, that is a great question and it's a question I've asked myself this last year. This last year, both my Mom and my Dad died. And I had to ask the question, "God, why did you let that happen now? Aren't you strong enough, powerful enough to keep my Mom and my Dad alive? Can't you heal their bodies and keep them going?" Well, the truth is that we just wear out – our bodies get old and they get tired and they wear out. So nobody is going to live forever in this body that we inhabit here and now. We all know that, but it just hurts so much when somebody we love and that we know dies.

Here's another way to look at that question, too. God made everybody – so God actually longs to be with the people that he's made. So when we die, it's like we're walking through a doorway from this world into a world where we get to be with God. In fact, here's one thing that God says about how He feels when people die. It's right here in the Bible in Psalm 116:

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his faithful servants." Psalm 116:15

That just means that if we serve God and we live for God and we long to be with God then it's very special to God to be able to have you with Him. So our death is just a natural experience we all go through so that we leave this world and we go get to be with God.

Here's another verse that I want to encourage you with:

"We believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus all of those who have fallen asleep in him."
1 Th 4:14

Now that doesn't mean that Jesus is going to bring people who just fall asleep. This is a way that the writer is saying – those that have died – those that have died believing in Jesus. Because of Jesus resurrection, we can have hope that we're going to be resurrected as well after we die. So Elizabeth, when you had to say goodbye to your Grandpa, that's just a temporary experience – some day if your Grandpa was a follower of Jesus and if you are a follower of Jesus – you're going to be reunited with him in God's presence. So we don't have to grieve like people who have no hope. The Bible tells us that we have a lot of hope even though death is a painful experience for us. Elizabeth, thank you for asking that question. God cares an awful lot about your Grandpa and God cares about you. So the best way to prepare for that experience of death – whether it's our own experience with

death or someone else's, is to keep following God – to have Him as our focus of hope. Thank you for asking that really good question.

Well our third and final question comes from Von. He asks, **“Why did you make this planet?”** Wow – big question! Here's a few big numbers about planet earth that some of you might know if you have studied some science. Do you know that our earth travels through space at a speed of 67,000 miles per hour? That's even faster than your Dad drives! How about this one? Our planet is 93 million miles away from the sun. That means that when the sun gives off a ray of light, it takes 8 ½ minutes for it to reach the planet earth. That's a long distance! Or consider this – the hottest temperature every recorded on earth – can you guess what it is? – it was in the country of Libya in 1922 – 136 degrees! Wow – we thought 104 was hot this week!

Here's another couple of interesting things. Did you know that there's an incredible array of life on planet earth? Do you know how many different kinds of creatures God has made and populated the world with? Scientists can only estimate but their best estimate to date is 1.9 million different critters on planet earth. I'm going to show you a picture of the biggest living organism on earth. What do you think it's going to be? Here's a picture of it – a mushroom – you guessed it! There's a single solitary fungus that is the size of a state out East. Isn't that incredible! It's a fungus that's called the honey mushroom and it covers 2,200 acres – incredible!

But Von's question is a little bit different. Von is asking the “why” question. There're all kinds of great reasons why our world is big and huge and interesting, but listen to what the Bible says about why God created everything that he did. It says here in Psalm 19:

“The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of His hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge. They have no speech, they use no words; no sound is heard from them. Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.” Psalm 19:1-4

The writer of that Psalm is making the simple point that everything that God has fashioned with his hands, tells us something about God himself. God made anything that he's ever made for his own glory. That's so God can express who He is – how big, how awesome, how creative He is. That's why God made our planet.

Here's another scripture that helps us answer the question:

“Praise God in His sanctuary; praise Him in His mighty heavens. Praise Him for His acts of power; praise Him for His surpassing greatness. Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD!” Psalm 150

And in case you didn't hear that – he repeats it at the end – Praise the Lord! So the reason why God made this planet, the reason why God made you and me and your

family and anybody else is for His own glory so that we can praise Him. It's a way to worship God for how big and awesome and great He is.

Well, thanks a bunch for tuning in to Tough Questions this week. Kids keep your questions coming. They're great opportunities for the rest of us to learn, too.

This has been Tim Perry, Pastor of Spiritual Discovery at Christ Community Church. We'll see you next week.