

I Want MORE (Part 5)

Sunday, April 9, 2023

For several weeks our series has been "I want more" based on

Matthew 5:6

6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

We began by asking...

1. Do I BELIEVE MORE is AVAILABLE?
2. Do I DESIRE MORE in MY LIFE?
3. Am I WILLING to MAKE ROOM for MORE?
4. WHAT will I ASK God for MORE OF?

So far we have sought to answer the desire for more with these suggestions...

I WANT MORE OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD

I WANT MORE TRUST AND PEACE (In my own life and in the lives of those in the body of Christ)

I WANT MORE FRUIT (Again... In my own life and in the lives of those in the body of Christ)

On this Resurrection Sunday my hunger and thirst for more is that there would be...

MORE RECOGNITION OF WHO JESUS IS

Granted, this desire is not so much about my own personal need for more, but rather my hope and earnest desire that many would come to recognize the truth of Jesus' existence, His divinity, His love and mission on this earth, His death and resurrection, the necessity of believing in Him for eternal life and His imminent return. I want more!

In John 14:6 Jesus declared...

John 14:6

6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

If there is anything that is under attack in our world today it is the truth and validity of the man Jesus Christ. The enemy wants desperately to discredit the very reality of His existence. If he cannot succeed in doing that; then he at least wants to downplay any

suggestion that Jesus was anything more than a good man, a teacher, a construct of his disciples imaginations and desires to create a religious icon.

But God is not an elusive thought or idea, a concept or construct of our imaginations. He is not a positive energy. He is a real person and we get to see him in the person of Jesus Christ. God in the flesh. Satan knows that once you come to know the truth about who Jesus is, he has lost. As Jesus said in John 8:32...

John 8:32

32 Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

As we consider this desire for more, let's take time to listen to the voices and testimony of those who were eyewitness to this man called Jesus. I pray that their testimony would open your eyes to the truth of who Jesus is, perhaps for the first time, or at least reinforce what you already know to be true.

I Want More To Recognize That Jesus is The Son of God

One of the loudest of those voices comes from a man we know very little about. But that is exactly what makes his testimony so powerful. He had nothing to gain. He was not one of Jesus followers and his declaration could have created great problems for his life. As a soldier, he had been given the charge of overseeing Jesus crucifixion - I'm sure not his first. If anything the hardness of heart that would have resulted in carrying out execution after execution would lend itself towards criticism and ridicule. And yet all three gospels record his words at Jesus' death

Matthew 27:54

54 When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, “Surely he was the Son of God!”

Mark 15:39

39 And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, saw how he died, he said, “Surely this man was the Son of God!”

Luke 23:47

47 The centurion, seeing what had happened, praised God and said, “Surely this was a righteous man.”

The centurion recognized what so many fail to every see. That Jesus is the Son of God and even more than that, Jesus is God in human flesh.

John 1:18

18 No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.

In fact that's why the Jews, by their own admission, wanted to kill him...

John 10:33

33 “We are not stoning you for any good work,” they replied, “but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God.”

“If Jesus is not God, then there is no Christianity, and we who worship Him are nothing more than idolaters. Conversely, if He is God, those who say He was merely a good man, or even the best of men, are blasphemers. More serious still, if He is not God, then He is a blasphemer in the fullest sense of the word. If He is not God, He is not even good.” - J. Oswald Sanders

My prayer is that many more would come to see that Jesus is the Son of God

I Want More To Recognize That Jesus Is The Sacrifice For Sin

Let's listen to some more voices from Jesus life...

John the Baptist declared... "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the World" (John 1:29) and he did

1 John 2:2

2 He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

Romans 3:23-26

23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. 25 God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement,[through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished— 26 he did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.

Again turning to the testimony of someone who had nothing to gain, listen to what the thief on the cross said about Jesus with his last few breaths.

He started out by mocking Jesus along with the other thief that was crucified next to Jesus

Matthew 27:44

44 In the same way the rebels who were crucified with him also heaped insults on him.

But something changed inside of him... Maybe it was when heard Jesus ask his father in heaven to forgive the very ones who were responsible for him hanging on the cross when he said "Father forgive them for they do not know what they are doing." (Luke 23:34) A few verses later in Luke 23 we read...

Luke 23:39-43

39 One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: "Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!"

40 But the other criminal rebuked him. "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence? 41 We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong."

42 Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

43 Jesus answered him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."

Do you recognize that Jesus is the sacrifice for your sins?

I Want More To Recognize That Jesus Is The Suffering Servant

Even though Isaiah's prophecy was written more than 700 years before Christ's death, his words are echoed in the events of Jesus life and through the people who bore witness to those events.

Isaiah 53

53 Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?

2 He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no

beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. 3 He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.

John 1:9-11

9 The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. 10 He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. 11 He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.

4 Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. 5 But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.

Just ask Jairus

Just ask the woman with the issue of blood

Just ask the man born blind

Or the paralytic by the pool of Bethesda

Or the hundreds of others that Jesus healed while here on this earth and the millions upon millions he has healed since then

*Testimony of boy with the two front teeth

6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

7 He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.

8 By oppression and judgment he was taken away. Yet who of his generation protested? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was punished. 9 He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.

He was crucified between two thieves

He was buried in the tomb of a rich man

10 Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes his life an offering for sin, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand. 11 After he has suffered, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and

he will bear their iniquities. 12 Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

I Want More To Recognize That Jesus Is The Risen Savior

Luke 24 testifies again and again of the truth of Jesus resurrection...

First the women found an empty tomb

Luke 24:1-8

24 On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. 2 They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, 3 but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. 4 While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. 5 In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? 6 He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: 7 'The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.' " 8 Then they remembered his words.

Then Peter ran to the tomb and found Jesus grave clothes laying by themselves

Then Jesus appeared to the two disciples on the Road to Emmaus

Luke 24:30-34

30 When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. 31 Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. 32 They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?"

33 They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together 34 and saying, "It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon."

Then all the disciples saw him in the upper room in Jerusalem

Luke 24:37-48

37 They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. 38 He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? 39 Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have."

40 When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. 41 And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" 42 They gave him a piece of broiled fish, 43 and he took it and ate it in their presence.

44 He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms."

45 Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. 46 He told them, "This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, 47 and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48 You are witnesses of these things.

QUOTES OF THE RESURRECTION

"The bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is the crowning proof of Christianity. If the resurrection did not take place, then Christianity is a false religion. If it did take place, then Christ is God and the Christian faith is absolute truth." ~ Henry M. Morris

"The simple fact that the Christian fellowship, founded on belief in Jesus' resurrection, came into existence and flourished in the very city where he was executed and buried is powerful evidence for the historicity of the empty tomb." ~ William Lane Craig

"The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is one of the best attested facts on record. There were so many witnesses to behold it, that if we do in the least degree receive the credibility of men's testimonies, we cannot and we dare not doubt that Jesus rose from the dead." ~ Charles Spurgeon

"I know the resurrection is a fact, and Watergate proved it to me. How? Because 12 men testified they had seen Jesus raised from the dead, then they proclaimed that truth for 40 years, never once denying it. Every one was beaten, tortured, stoned and put in prison. They would not have endured that if it weren't true. Watergate embroiled 12 of the most powerful men in the world-and they couldn't keep a lie for three weeks. You're telling me 12 apostles could keep a lie for 40 years? Absolutely impossible." ~ Chuck Colson

I Want More To Recognize That Jesus Is The Soon Coming King

Again the voices cry out for our recognition of this fact

Acts 1:9-11

9 After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

10 They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. 11 "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

Revelation 1:4-8

4 John,

To the seven churches in the province of Asia:

Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne, 5 and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.

To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, 6 and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.

7 "Look, he is coming with the clouds," and "every eye will see him, even those who pierced him"; and all peoples on earth "will mourn because of him." So shall it be! Amen.

8 “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.”

Hebrews 9:28

28 so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

Are you waiting for Him?

Conclusion

So great was the testimony of the eyewitness of Jesus life, death and resurrection that a Jewish historian, born 4 years after Jesus death would write of the reality and influence of this man...

At this time there was a wise man called Jesus, and his conduct was good, and he was known to be virtuous. Many people among the Jews and the other nations became his disciples. Pilate condemned him to be crucified and to die. But those who had become his disciples did not abandon his discipleship. They reported that he had appeared to them three days after his crucifixion and that he was alive. Accordingly, he was perhaps the Messiah, concerning whom the prophets have reported wonders. And the tribe of the Christians, so named after him, has not disappeared to this day. - Josephus

While there is nothing to indicate that Josephus became a Christian, his voice testifies to the evidence of Jesus' life and influence in the world of his day. But the better question today is not what Josephus believed, but what to you believe?

In the words of the the Apostle John...

John 20:31

31 But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.