



*Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst? - 1 Corinthians 3:16*

*Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. – John 1:12-13*

Who are you? Who are you as a person? Who are you as a follower of Jesus? God says we who choose to follow Jesus are adopted into God's family, children of God. Jesus says those who follow will be even greater than He is. The New Testament letters say that together we are a temple where God dwells. What does all of this mean? Does how we answer the question of our identity change anything about how we live day to day? This month, let's each answer the question: Who am I as a follower of Jesus?

## WHO ARE YOU?

**JUNE 6**

**HOLD ON**

**REVELATION 22:6-7**

The pandemic continues to take lives and change lifestyles. Cancer and heart disease seems to always be ravaging the life of someone we know or someone we love. Prejudice, crime, and drug addiction are always in the headlines. Justice and lasting peace elude us. The world seems more divided than ever. Weeping and pain and death seem to never go away. Where is hope? How do we hold on?

**Followers of Jesus hold on to God's promise in the midst of trial and suffering.**

**JUNE 13**

**WHO ARE YOU?**

**2 CORINTHIANS 3:1-6**

Who are you? We find it easy to let others answer this question for us, and we jump to answers that reflect culture, location, human understanding. The Bible, however, reminds us that we are God's children, forgiven and freed by Christ Jesus with a role to play in God's kingdom. So how does your personal answer to this question impact your life and actions?

**Remember who you are, and let your life show it to the world.**

**JUNE 20**

**GIVERS AND TAKERS**

**RUTH 1:15-18**

According to Adam Grant, an organizational psychologist at Harvard, there are three kinds of people in the world – givers, observers (also called matchers), and takers. Givers and takers are what you would expect. Matchers give when they see they will get something of equal or greater value in return. So which are you? And more important, which does Jesus invite us to be?

**God's people are known by their giving.**

**JUNE 27**

**YOUR MINISTRY**

**ROMANS 12:4-6**

"So and so is more talented than I am," we say. "So and so is such a better Christian than I am." "So and so knows the Bible so much better than me." Yet the Biblical witness doesn't show God choosing the most talented, or least sinful, or most knowledgeable to make an impact in the world. God uses young and old, rich and poor, peasants and kings, those with shady pasts and those pledged from birth to serve. God works through those who say yes, anyone who is willing to be faithful, anyone willing to follow where God leads. So what will your ministry be?

**Followers of Jesus know they have a part to play in God's transformation of the world.**

# WHO ARE YOU?

## DAILY QUESTIONS

### JUNE 7-12

### HOLD ON

Monday	Read Revelation 1:1-20. What do you learn about John and John's audience in the first chapter of Revelation?
Tuesday	Read Revelation 2:1-11. What difference does hope make in your understanding of the Christian faith?
Wednesday	Read Revelation 4:1-11. How is John's vision similar or different than images you have of God and heaven?
Thursday	Read Revelation 6:1-17. What pains and struggles in the world today would we rather avoid or ignore?
Friday	Read Revelation 7:9-17. What pain or grief do you carry that could be wiped away after reading John's vision?
Saturday	Read Revelation 21:1-8. Does knowing how the Biblical story ends impact how you live today? Why or why not?

### JUNE 14-19

### WHO ARE YOU?

Monday	Read Genesis 12:1-3. Do you think of your life as blessed to be a blessing? Why or why not?
Tuesday	Read Romans 8:12-17. How does it feel to hear affirmation that you are a child of God?
Wednesday	Read 1 John 3:1-10. What does the life of a child of God look like?
Thursday	Read Galatians 3:26-29. What impact does it have on your life to belong to Christ, or to "clothe yourself with Christ"?
Friday	Read Matthew 5:13-16. How can your life add God's flavor and light to the world around you?
Saturday	Read 2 Corinthians 3:1-6. How is your life a letter from Christ to those you encounter?

## WHO ARE YOU?

### JUNE 21-26

### GIVERS AND TAKERS

Monday	Read Ruth 1:15-18. How would you define a life of generosity?
Tuesday	Read Ruth 2:1-16. How have you experienced blessing, like Ruth, when you have been generous with your time, talent, or resources?
Wednesday	Read Deuteronomy 15:7-8. What does a generous community look like?
Thursday	Read Luke 21:1-4. What most often holds people back from giving more?
Friday	Read Acts 20:32-35. How do our lives as followers of Jesus model the generosity of God to the world around us?
Saturday	Read Proverbs 11:24-25. Do you think giving, or living a generous life, is good for you? Why or why not?

### JUNE 28 – JULY 3

### YOUR MINISTRY

Monday	Read Isaiah 6:1-8. In what ways have you said “yes” or “here I am” to God in your life?
Tuesday	Read Exodus 3:1-14. What talents and gifts, what resources, and what experiences has God given you that make you who you are?
Wednesday	Read 1 Corinthians 12:4-11. Where have you experienced spiritual gifts at work in your own life or in the lives of others?
Thursday	Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-31. What types of gifts and roles in God’s church do we sometimes undervalue or take for granted?
Friday	Read Micah 6:6-8. What do you see as God’s purpose in your life right now?
Saturday	Read 1 Corinthians 13. How can your life be a ministry that reflects the “more excellent way” of love that Paul describes?

# WHO ARE YOU?

## HOLD ON

## SERMON ON JUNE 6, 2021

Choose a question to get started!

- What wrong on earth would you most like to see overturned by God?
- If you've recorded a game to watch later, would you rather know or not know the outcome, and why?

Read Revelation 1:1-20.

When the book of Revelation comes up in conversation, the first ideas that come to mind for many people, inside and outside of the church, are words like strange, confusing, scary, fearful, and weird. Revelation is apocalyptic literature, a kind of writing that speaks of end times *in order to bring hope* to the reader or hearer. To us, reading today, the images and symbols don't make much sense, but we must remember that Revelation wasn't first written to us. Revelation was written to a first century audience by a first century Christian in a first century context of persecution and suffering.

- What do you learn about John and John's audience in the first chapter of Revelation?
- How can one's mood or context of life – happy, sad, excited, suffering, etc. – effect how a story is heard or interpreted?
- Can you think of an example of how two people can read the same story or hear the same words or see the same movie and have different reactions?

Read Revelation 4:1-11 and 6:1-8.

Marty Solomon presents this great research on understanding Revelation in the first century context of the Roman continuation of the Olympic games. Emperor Domitian ruled the Roman Empire in 80's and 90's AD, and he was building the largest gymnasium in the world in Ephesus. The games would begin with a procession. There were 24 officially recognized religions in the Roman Empire (Christianity was not one of them). Each of these religious groups had a representative to the empire, and these 24 representatives, wearing robes and crowns, would join the procession into the games before Caesar and sing praises to him. The Olympic games would then begin with a largely ceremonial contest – the chariot race. According to ancient sources, there were four chariots, each pulled by a horse of the same color – one black, one white, one red, and one tan (or pale colored). If you read the first 8 chapters of Revelation, you'll see these parallels (among others), which John uses to set up a comparison between the

## WHO ARE YOU?

violent, unjust, and evil empire of Rome, and the just and good reign of God. The heavenly court of God, and the praises sung to Him, is even greater than that of the emperor. The four horses of Revelation, a nod to Caesar's show of power in the chariots, bring only death and destruction. John's message: You must choose which kingdom to give your allegiance. God is greater than Caesar. God's kingdom will stand in the end, so hold on. *Don't give up hope!*

- Who are we as the church today - people of the empire or people of God's kingdom – and why?
- Who are we as the church today – people who live by fear or people who live by hope – and why?
- When can it be hard to hold on to faith in God's kingdom to come?

Read 2 Samuel 7:1-11 and Revelation 21:1-27.

One cannot begin to understand the book of Revelation until reading the Old Testament. Revelation is filled with references to the prophets, the Exodus, Genesis, and the story of King David. Revelation 21 speaks of the temple. For King David, the desire was to build a temple. Later, Ezekiel would prophecy that God's temple would be all of Jerusalem. Now, John's vision in Revelation presents a temple that is so much bigger than even the city of Jerusalem, big enough for everyone. God will reward those who remain faithful, remain true and cast away those who are enemies of love and justice. John's vision carries again this message, "HOLD ON!"

*Followers of Jesus hold on to God's promise in the midst of trial and suffering.*

- What difference does hope make in your understanding of the Christian faith?
- How is John's vision similar or different than images you have of God and heaven?
- Does knowing how the Biblical story ends impact how you live today?  
Why or why not?

### **FaithFit Challenge!**

On your phone, set an alarm for three times each day – one in the morning, one in the afternoon, and one in the evening. When the alarm goes off (set it to vibrate if you're going to be at work or school), pray silently: "Come Lord Jesus". Then pay attention to how God answers your prayer throughout the week.

# WHO ARE YOU?

## WHO ARE YOU?

SERMON ON JUNE 13, 2021

Choose a question to get started!

- What is one of your best memories from childhood?
- How has your life been shaped by the example of a mentor or parent?

Read Romans 8:12-17 and 1 John 3:1-10.

Psalm 103:13 says, "As a father has compassion for his children, so the Lord has compassion for those who fear him." This image of God as a Father and parent is continued into the New Testament, both in John and the letters of John, and by Paul in his letters. As children of God, note that our faith is defined not by what we do but by who we are. When a child comes into the world, it doesn't have to do anything to earn a parent's love. We don't have to do anything to earn God's love. And when a child is loved by a parent, shown what that love looks like, they live into it, and their lives come to reflect that love. They receive an inheritance. If we know the love of God, we inherit eternal life, and our lives will begin to reflect God's love as we live with this promise.

- How does it feel to hear affirmation that you are a child of God?
- What impact does it have on your life to belong to Christ, or to be a child of God?

Read Matthew 5:13-16 and 2 Corinthians 3:1-6.

Beginning last October at Clay Church, we began a walk through the Bible asking two questions:

- 1) How does my life help others to see and know the love of Jesus?
- 2) What are we doing to contribute to a more Christ-like community?

This month, we conclude our walk through the Bible and reflect on what we've learned. What does it look like to be a follower of Jesus? What impact does our faith have on our daily living? Jesus says if we follow him, we can be a light to the world. Paul says if we live by our faith, our very lives will be a letter of Christ's love to those we encounter.

***Remember who you are, and let your life show it to the world.***

- As a Circle, complete the FaithFit Challenge for this week together.

## WHO ARE YOU?

### **FaithFit Challenge!**

Using the one sentence summaries of the sermons from our walk through the Bible, reflect on what you have learned about life as a follower of Jesus in the past year.

- Where have you been challenged?
- Where have you grown in your faith?
- Where would you like to continue growing as a follower of Jesus?



## Followers of Jesus... (A Year in Review)

- Followers of Jesus let God's word be the author of their lives.
- Followers of Jesus take time to play, rest, and give thanks for God's creation.
- Followers of Jesus are not controlled by desire, fear, and shame.
- Followers of Jesus respond to God's call with a promise.
- Followers of Jesus share God's story with others.
- Followers of Jesus let God's instruction shape their lives through every decision.
- Followers of Jesus regularly worship God.
- Followers of Jesus hold onto hope!
- Followers of Jesus live with a sense of expectation!
- Followers of Jesus find joy!
- Followers of Jesus live with the peace of assurance!
- Followers of Jesus share Good News!
- Followers of Jesus provide direction and purpose for others by living Christ-centered lives.
- Followers of Jesus listen and give audience to the voices of today warning of injustice, oppression, and the destruction of creation and community.
- Followers of Jesus know and accept the consequences of sin while seeking forgiveness.
- Followers of Jesus choose to serve in hope rather than hide in despair.
- Followers of Jesus show leaders respect but find their ultimate safety and security in God.
- In times of trial and suffering, followers of Jesus put their hope and trust in Jesus.
- Followers of Jesus follow the radical way of Jesus.
- Followers of Jesus aren't afraid to name, and face, the tensions of living a Christ-centered life.
- Followers of Jesus aren't afraid to make sacrifices to share the good news of God's saving grace in Jesus.
- Followers of Jesus embrace the least and last.
- Followers of Jesus live abundant lives by trusting Jesus!
- Followers of Jesus live and lead with assurance in God's promise.
- Followers of Jesus claim the power of the Holy Spirit to transform lives.
- Followers of Jesus witness to others from their own identity and experiences how God is transforming lives.
- Followers of Jesus live freed from the power of sin by the forgiving love of God in Jesus Christ.
- Followers of Jesus orient all of life and community around the love of God and neighbor.
- Followers of Jesus are freed by Christ not to do whatever one desires, but to serve one another in love.
- Followers of Jesus engage with the church and the teachings of Jesus, always seeking guidance and growth.
- Followers of Jesus experience God's extraordinary through faith in Christ.
- Followers of Jesus trust God enough to share all thoughts and feelings.
- Followers of Jesus answer the call to live holy lives that reflect God's love and grace.
- Followers of Jesus hold on to God's promise in the midst of trial and suffering.

## GIVERS AND TAKERS

SERMON ON JUNE 20, 2021

Choose a question to get started!

- If you had a million dollars to give away, where would you donate?
- What is the worst thing you ever spent money on?

Read Ruth 1:1-18.

The story of Ruth and Naomi begins with tragedy and trial. Naomi loses her husband and both sons in the midst of a famine. The life of a widow in Biblical times, with no family left to care for her, would be brutally difficult. This is why Ruth tells her daughters-in-law to return to their own families. There they could start over, perhaps marry again, a luxury Naomi didn't have. This reality makes all the more startling the decision of Ruth to stay with her mother-in-law. Ruth is giving up a chance to start over for a life that likely would hold only poverty and struggle.

- How do you define generosity?
- Would you be willing to give up all the comforts of life for a loved one?
- What is the difference between givers and takers?

Read Ruth 2:1-18.

In his book *Give and Take: Why Helping Others Drives Our Success*, organizational psychologist and Harvard Professor Adam Grant identifies three kinds of people when it comes to understanding decisions around giving and reciprocity – givers, takers, and matchers. Givers prefer to give more than they get. Takers desire to get more than they give. Matchers seek to balance giving and receiving, favoring fairness. In his studies, Grant assumed that givers would be at the bottom of the business success hierarchy, which would be expected as they give more than they receive. But Grant says something else is revealed in these studies that is more surprising. Givers also dominate the top of business success hierarchies. Why? Grant writes, "But there's something distinctive that happens when givers succeed: it spreads and cascades" (p. 10). When takers succeed, they succeed at the expense of someone else. When givers succeed, they tend to multiply blessings. Ruth and Boaz are givers. As Ruth's giving supports Naomi, it inspires Boaz, also a giver, and Ruth benefits from his generosity.

- How have you experienced blessing, like Ruth, when you have been generous with your time, talent, or resources?
- Do you see yourself as a giver, a taker, or a matcher, and why?

## WHO ARE YOU?

Read Luke 21:1-4.

"I look forward to giving more when I get a better paying job." "I look forward to giving more after I get the kids through college." "I look forward to giving more once I've saved enough for retirement." These are not statements of a giver. They are statements of a taker or matcher. Jesus teaches something different. He is excited to point out to his followers this woman at the Temple, who gives just two coins, but at a closer look has given all she has. We're culturally trained to think that if we don't take care of ourselves first, there may not be enough. But Adam Grant's research shows something else, something more like the teaching of Jesus: Successful leaders give first. He writes: "These givers reverse the popular plan of succeeding first and giving back later, raising the possibility that those who give first are often best positioned for success later" (p. 9).

- What most often holds people back from giving more?
- How do Jesus' teachings about giving challenge you?

Read Proverbs 11:24-25.

Adam Grant references a study by Arthur Brooks that surveyed almost 30,000 Americans and found that those who give more go on to earn more. Why? "Research shows that giving can boost happiness and meaning, motivating people to work harder and earn more money" (p.182). The proverbs of the Bible teach this same truth. The more you grasp and hoard, the more you need, but the more you give, the more you experience happiness, good health, and additional blessings.

*God's people are known by their giving.*

- Do you think that giving is good for you? Why or why not?
- How do our lives as followers of Jesus model the generosity of God to the world around us?

**FaithFit Challenge!**

Take a step forward in generosity!

If you've never given to your church or another nonprofit organization, make a first gift. If you're giving regularly but not tithing, increase your giving by 1% for the next three months and see what God does in those three months. If you already tithe, share with someone the blessings you have received from a generous life.

# WHO ARE YOU?

## YOUR MINISTRY

SERMON ON JUNE 27, 2021

Choose a question to get started!

- **What is the hobby or activity you enjoy the most?**
- **What is the most fulfilling thing you have done in your life?**

Read Isaiah 6:1-8.

This passage in Isaiah is known as the calling of Isaiah. Isaiah doesn't consider himself worthy of the Lord's presence, yet he is blessed and given a role to play in God's kingdom. He finds that God has a purpose for his life. We are invited to be a part of God's ministry to the world, and that begins when we say yes to God's invitation.

- **In what ways have you said "yes" or "here I am" to God in your life?**
- **In what ways have you said "no" to God or ignored the Holy Spirit in your life?**

Read Exodus 3:1-14.

Have you ever noticed that in the biblical account of Moses, what mattered wasn't what Moses couldn't do, but the gifts he did have? Moses had a brother who could speak well. He knew how to shepherd a community. He had contacts in Pharaoh's household. Moses wasn't sure he was the right guy for the job, but God was ready to use the talents, gifts, and experiences that Moses *did* have. And notice that the tools God had given Moses were not something he had mastered or perfected. Instead, they were a unique set of gifts Moses had been *given*, part of who he was. Moses was uniquely equipped with tools for the work and task God called him to do. One of the ways to figure out our purpose, how God is leading us in our lives, is to consider what tools – talents, gifts, resources, and experiences – God has given us. Note that these tools are not just what you're good at, but include what makes you, you.

- **What talents and gifts, what resources, and what experiences has God given you that make you who you are?**

Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-31.

Have you ever been to a construction site? Workers there have tools based on the job they are going to do. Some are engineers, some are plumbers, some are electricians, some are masons. What they contribute to the building depends on the tools in their

## WHO ARE YOU?

toolbox. The building won't be the same, won't serve its purpose, unless everyone uses the tools they have been given. Too many people dismiss their contributions or abilities as too small to make a difference. Paul writes to the church in Corinth and says: Every gift, every contribution, and every effort matters in the body of Christ.

- What types of gifts and roles in God's church do we sometimes undervalue or take for granted?
- What is something you can do or enjoy doing that you've never considered could be used to help build God's kingdom?

Read Micah 6:6-8.

Sometimes, when we seek meaning and purpose in life, we feel the need to look at something beyond ourselves to superhero kinds of achievement. Or we think that we have one purpose in life and wonder sometimes if we've missed it. God's word shows us something else. We can find our purpose simply in living every day in God's love, and our purpose may change as we have new experiences, develop new gifts, and find ourselves in new situations. A popular summary of the teachings of Methodist founder John Wesley puts it this way, "Do all the good you can, in all the ways you can, to all the souls you can, in every place you can, at all the times you can, with all the zeal you can, as long as ever you can." Most of us are not called by God to do something that is outside of our skills, abilities and interests. God created us with a design and a purpose to do, as Wesley said, all that we can in any given situation or moment.

***Followers of Jesus know they have a part to play in God's transformation of the world.***

- What do you see as God's purpose in your life right now?

### **FaithFit Challenge!**

Step into a ministry opportunity this summer.

Spend some time thinking about what you're good at, what gifts others have recognized in you, what you enjoy doing, and where you'd like to see change and growth. Then find an opportunity to get involved. Sign up for a Clay summer mission event, join a Clay ministry team (hospitality, music, children, youth, etc). or schedule a meeting with Ashley Evans, Clay's Director of Circles and Community, to talk about ways to serve in ministry.