

International Conversation Café

Is Faith Relevant to My Life?

Human Need: Certainty

All of us need to know that some things are certain in our lives. For example, we need to know that we will be provided for financially, with enough to provide a decent place to live, clothing, food, transportation, and health care. We need to know we can count on our family and close friends. When we become uncertain about these things or our future, our stress levels go way up. Therefore, we experience anxiety about passing certain tests or interviews. Our future is at stake.

What do people do when stressed, worried, and unsure about an outcome? Name some helpful and harmful behaviors people engage in.

Jesus was very aware of the anxiety we feel. Consider what he taught.

I tell you, do not worry. Don't worry about your life and what you will eat or drink. And don't worry about your body and what you will wear. Isn't there more to life than eating? Aren't there more important things for the body than clothes? Look at the birds of the air. They don't plant or gather crops. They don't put away crops in storerooms. But your Father who is in heaven feeds them. Aren't you worth much more than they are? Can you add even one hour to your life by worrying?

Summarize the reasons Jesus tells us not to worry.

And why do you worry about clothes? See how the wild flowers grow. They don't work or make clothing. But here is what I tell you. Not even Solomon in all his royal robes was dressed like one of these flowers. If that is how God dresses the wild grass, won't he dress you even better? Your faith is so small! After all, the grass is here only today. Tomorrow it is thrown into the fire. So don't worry. Don't say, 'What will we eat?' Or, 'What will we drink?' Or, 'What will we wear?' People who are ungodly run after all those things. Your Father who is in heaven knows that you need them.

Summarize Jesus' main thoughts.

How do you think his perspective could bring you calm in the midst of worry and uncertainty?

It is said there are only two things certain in life. One is taxes and the other is death. We are forced each paycheck and year to think about taxes, but most of us put the thought of death far from our mind. And yet, it is certain all of us will one day die.

Why do you think people worry about death?

What would bring calm to people's minds about death?

The Bible teaches that having faith in Jesus Christ gives us peace of mind in this life and prepares us for life after death.

There once was a man, named Nicodemus, who came to Jesus to ask him some questions. Nicodemus was a very good person with a respected reputation in his community. And yet, Jesus told Nicodemus that if he wanted to enter God's kingdom/family, he needed to be born again. Born again has the idea of a new beginning with a relationship with God. These thoughts are summarized by one of the most famous sentences in the Bible, found in John, chapter 3, verse 16.

God loved the world so much, that he gave his one and only Son. Anyone who believes in him will not perish (come to ruin) but will have eternal life (life with God forever).

Summarize John 3:16 statement in your own words.

How is faith, confidence in Jesus different than confidence in ourselves?

How do you think the promise of eternal life could bring a sense of certainty to one's life now?

You might wonder how faith in Jesus brings eternal life? The answer has to do with a legal transaction motivated by amazing love. Let's say you owe money to a credit card company along with some late fees. Then your very good friend assumed responsibility for your debts and paid the credit card company all that you owed. You would be forgiven of the debt, penalties, and hence, free from worry. This is a picture of what Jesus did for humanity. We broke God's law to love him first and to love others. We deserve to be punished. So, Jesus assumed responsibility for us and took our punishment when he died on the cross. He could do this because he had no sin of his own. We receive forgiveness when we accept his payment, given on the cross, on our behalf.

There are many Scriptures that tell the story of Jesus' sinless life and of his suffering on the cross. There are other Scriptures that describe the purpose or meaning of his death. Here is one of them.

But the servant (Jesus) was pierced because we had sinned.

He was crushed because we had done what was evil.

He was punished to make us whole again.

His wounds have healed us.

All of us are like sheep. We have wandered away from God.

All of us have turned to our own way.

And the Lord has placed on his servant

the sins of all of us. Isaiah 53:5,6

What seems to be the message of this Scripture?

What questions does it bring up?

Describe how the death of Jesus could make us certain of life with God in this life and after death.