

## **“Why Is Talk Radio So Popular?”**

**Matthew 26:57-68**

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It all began at radio station WMCA in New York City in 1945. A disc jockey by the name of Barry Gray became bored with playing music. Gray decided to converse on the air with one of the callers to his show, the big band leader, Woody Herman. Gray's listeners loved the dialogue and asked for more of it. As a result, Gray invited celebrity guests to the studio to take calls from his listeners. This new format earned Gray the distinction of being regarded the “father of talk radio.”

Approximately fifteen years later, radio stations in St. Louis, Colorado Springs and Los Angeles made the transition to all talk and no music. Now, every major city in America has stations devoted entirely to talk radio.

Why is talk radio so popular? Could it be because Americans are opinionated and have a need to publicly express their opinions? I suppose. I know one sure way to get a conversation going is to ask someone, “What do you think about...?” It makes no difference how you finish that sentence. It seems everyone has an opinion about everything. Ask Rush Limbaugh or Neil Boortz.

Expressing opinions did not begin with Americans on talk radio, though. After Jesus was arrested, he was taken to the High Priest, Caiaphas. Matthew said that the chief priests and the Sanhedran were looking for false evidence so they could put Jesus to death. They brought in two men who declared they heard Jesus say that he would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days.

When Jesus refused to answer his critics, the high priest asked him if he was the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus replied, “Yes, it is as you say. But I say to all of you, in the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.”

The high priest became angry, tore his clothes and said, “Why do we need more witnesses? Look, now you have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?” The Sanhedran responded, “He is worthy of death.”

The question asked by the high priest reverberates to this day. “What do you think about Jesus?” It is a question that demands our attention this morning. As with most questions, it raises other questions that need to be asked. Let's do that now.

**Why should I answer this question? Why is it important?** No one can do for you what Jesus can. There are many people in your life that can help you and make your journey more enjoyable, but none can do for you what Jesus can. He can meet your deepest needs, meaning, purpose, guidance, direction, peace, security, courage, confidence, companionship, forgiveness and eternal life. What you think about him will directly impact your life.

**How should I answer this question?** I think you need help. It is too important to answer this one on your own. Begin by studying scripture. What does the Bible say about who Jesus is? Listen to the testimonies and stories of your friends. What differences has Jesus made in their lives? Make this question a matter of prayer. Let God know of your

desire to know the truth about Jesus and ask Him to give you wisdom and understanding. Proverbs encourages us to seek the counsel of others. Follow that sound advice.

**How have I answered that question?** I believe that is a legitimate question for you to ask of me. I am happy and even eager to share my answer.

*I think Jesus was the fullest and finest revelation of God.* At his birth, Jesus was also given the name, Emmanuel, which means “God with us.” I think that Jesus revealed the nature, character and mind of God more fully than any other before or since. If you want to know who God is and how God thinks, look to Jesus. When you have seen Jesus, you have seen the Father.

*I think Jesus was a master teacher.* He came to teach people how to arrange values and priorities, handle problems, difficulties and challenges and relate to others. He came to teach God’s children how to live an abundant life in this world and prepare for the next one. Listen to the testimony of Matthew after Jesus concluded the Sermon on the Mount, “When Jesus finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority and not as their teachers of the law” (Matthew 7:28-9).

Furthermore, like all good teachers, he was an excellent role model, fleshing out the Gospel for all to see. Who can forget the words of Jesus on the cross, “Father, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing” (Luke 23:34)?

*I think Jesus was the great physician.* He cared deeply about all people and reached out to them when they were hurting. He possessed the miraculous ability to heal wounds, physically, emotionally and spiritually. It seemed that he was at his best when people were at their worst. Ask the woman caught in adultery that was described in John 8: 1-11.

*I think Jesus was the blessed redeemer.* I believe he came to save people from their sins and he did by dying on the old rugged cross. It was through his death that forgiveness was offered to all people and through his resurrection that new life could be found. Is there a better example of Jesus’ transforming power than Zacchaeus, the tax collector?

Do I believe that Jesus was the Son of God who came to do for us what no one else could do? Yes. I believe this with all my heart.

This leaves one more question that needs to be asked today. **When should I answer this question, “What do I think about Jesus?”** While you need to study the scriptures and seek the counsel of others, there is a sense of urgency. The sooner you accept him as Lord and begin developing a relationship with him, the sooner you will tap into the abundant and eternal life that he offers. Since I want you to have this new life and have full confidence in Jesus to provide it, I encourage you to affirm him as Lord and follow him as he leads you. Doing so may not put you in front of a microphone on talk radio, but it will give you something worthwhile to talk about.