

# A Lunch Break Conversation With Jesus

Shalom.

Hey there. I mean, Shalom. I guess I'm a little flustered.

How so?

It's not everyday someone gets to actually see you. Or hear you, I guess. Sorry, I'm flustered again.

So why now?

What do you mean?

Why now? Why did you want to get together with me today?

I guess because Easter is coming. It makes me think more about questions.

Questions are a good start.

Are they? I wasn't sure.

Seems like there is a lot that you're not sure of.

How do you know that?

Hello?

Oh, that's right. Ha. You would know, I guess. I don't know how this all works, hearing prayers, answering prayers and such. Maybe this isn't a good time to take you away from all that. You're probably busy hearing from people.

Honestly, I'd like to be busier.

Is that directed at me?

Should it be?

I don't know. Do you think I don't pray enough?

What do you think?

OK. I have to say already that it bothers me a little how we're talking.

Why?

That! Right there! I ask a question and you answer me with another question.

And this bothers you?

Yes, this bothers me. I asked if you feel like I don't pray enough and I was looking for an answer and you didn't answer that. Because I do pray. I'm not praying, like, 24 hours a day. Things are crazy busy. Seems like endless things tugging at me. I pray. I pray right there in church with everybody else when I go. Nobody can say I'm not praying at church. Nobody can get to church every Sunday.

Seems you've answered your own question.

OK. Well, I'm not here to talk about that, anyway.

That's fine. The coffee is pretty good here either way.

So you sitting here with me tells me that you are real, but the whole story is just hard.

How so?

It's just hard. Hard to believe. I guess you, of all, would know I haven't read much in the Bible, but I have a tough time with some of it. Like the people who were your closest followers. Some of them wrote about what you all did but the stories don't seem to all match up. Makes it hard to believe this stuff if the stories are different.

So detail is important?

I think it is.

I know that last week you took groceries to the food pantry.

I did, yes. I'm proud of my family for doing that. We do that every month for our community.

And you should be proud, for sure, that is wonderful. So when you got to the food pantry, what was the name of the person who helped you there?

I think it was Steve. No. Stephen. Started with an S, I think. I don't remember, exactly.

Would your wife remember the name?

Maybe.

And they weigh all of the food that comes in. How much did your food weigh?

They weighed the food? I don't remember that, I guess. No. Wait, wait. They did weigh it. I remember now because we had big boxes of laundry soap this time and it was heavier. 32 pounds? 30 something I think.

Would your wife say 32? Or 30?

I have no idea.

But you said details matter, yes?

I don't think it matters that much what the guy's name was or how much my food weighed.

So what did matter?

Obviously it matters that it happened! That we gave the food. What a silly question to ask me.

It seems we can move on.

OK. So what about the crazy Bible story of the guy who gets swallowed by a fish.

You mean Abraham?

Yeah, Abraham.

It was Jonah.

Are you tricking me now?

No. It was Jonah. But go on.

Nobody can live inside of a fish. You can't expect people to believe a story like that.

When did you first hear about that story?

I guess when I was a kid in school, from another kid in class.

Did you to go find a Bible and read more about it later?

Yeah, I did.

Seems like the fish hooked you. I like that.

Ok. I'll give you that one. So here is a more serious question. I think anybody sitting here would ask you this. Why do you, or God, or however you both are connected, allow the things to happen that are happening in the world now? There are some terrible things happening and they happen to really good people.

Hmm. The best I can do for you right now is a story.

I guess I'll take what I can get.

Do you know what a bear trap looks like? The kind that a bear puts its foot into and it slams shut on it?

Yeah. They look pretty awful.

Imagine you come upon a bear with its foot trapped in there. And it's been stuck like that for a long time. Pretty painful. You see that bear in pain and you know you need to free it and you know the process of opening that trap to free it is going to probably be even more painful for the bear. You know the plan and what has to happen next, but the bear doesn't understand it all. The bear just knows he's suffering.

I need to think about that one.

How about this. You have a beautiful four year old son, yes?

Yes.

If he broke his arm and was in a lot of pain and asking you to help him, would you explain to him how the pain receptors in his brain are working with his nerves to transmit pain signals back and forth and that is why he hurts?

That's nuts, no, I wouldn't tell him that.

Why not?

He's not going to understand that.

So what would you tell him?

That I'm going to help him. That it'll be ok. Try to make him feel better until it gets treated. Ok. I've got some more thinking to do about this, I guess.

Yep. You'll probably need more coffee and at least another lunch break for that.

So, you died on a cross. I can't even begin to imagine that.

No. You can't.

It's hard to believe that you would do that for other people.

Not just other people. For you.

That's a lot of responsibility to put on me.

No. That was a lot to put on me.

So, do you have any regrets?

Do you think I do?

I don't know. Maybe. I just have so many more questions.

That's a good sign. I worry when people don't ask questions.

I really should get back to work. This was really pretty crazy, talking to you like this. I wonder if anybody else knows you're here.

Ask them.

Ahh. Nice try. I get it.

Good talk today. Shalom, my friend.

Yeah. Shalom.