

## Search Engine Theology: “Does Jesus...”

Romans 5:6-11

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Today we begin a 5 week sermon series called “Search Engine Theology.” Statistics show that 85% of people have a computer or way to access the internet. A search engine is exactly that...a way to access information to quickly find an answer. To be honest I’ve gotten lazy and sometimes rather than looking in the back of my Bible in what is called a “Concordance” where there are words alphabetically and where you can find those words in scripture...I often will think of words of scripture, but can’t remember where that is found in scripture...and instead of looking it up in the Concordance, I will use a Search Engine and type in the scripture verse as I remember it...and up on the computer or smart phone or tablet up pops the verse.

There are several search engines that people use. There is Bing, Yahoo Search, Ask, one even called Duck Duck Go and one I most often use and I think is the most popular is Google.

One of the things that prompted the sermon series is what questions and answers about Jesus and Christianity are people searching. What is that people are searching the answers for? So for the next few weeks we will explore what people are searching...and look at the Biblical answer.

Now something that is helpful in Search Engines is something called autocomplete. You begin typing in a phrase and before you finish typing the search engine suggests or even predicts what you are looking for. This has actually been around since 2008. So when you begin typing in a word popularity is used to autocomplete your search based on real searches that others have made on the same search. There is even a “freshness level” that changes the autocomplete based on what is happening in the world.

If I go to a computer and type in United Methodist...before I’m done typing the autocomplete under the search will say United Methodist CHURCH, and the second that appears is United Methodist Church Near You. I clicked on that and guess which church came up....yep, Palm Harbor United Methodist Church.

We preparation and planning we prayerfully plan sermon series in advance. There are always exceptions, and last week was certainly an exception as we threw out our sermon series planning. So it was in the spring when our worship planning team was praying about possible sermon series. We developed this series. Others have done series like this as well. So at that time I typed in my search engine... “Does Jesus...” And I watched to see what autocomplete filled in. Now I’ll get to this in a minute but the number one autocomplete search to “Does Jesus...” changed from when we did sermon planning to a search this week. I’ll show you why.

Not in order here are some of the autocomplete searches for “Does Jesus...”

**“Does Jesus...”**

**Does Jesus claim to be God**

**Does Jesus have siblings**

**Does Jesus talk about tithing**

**Does Jesus know me**

**Does Jesus have a wife**

**Does Jesus have a last name**

**Does Jesus have a tattoo**

Now as of last week the top autocomplete phrases that showed up, from #3 to #1 were:

**Does Jesus have a middle name**

**Does Jesus love me**

**Does Jesus care**

Now this sermon was based on the most popular phrase back in the spring which was...Does Jesus love me? Why do you think it has changed recently to Does Jesus Care? (Yes, hurricane storms, destruction). If Jesus cares they why did these things happen? Where is God? Does He care that people were without power? Does He care that people died in nursing home and weren't evacuated? Does he care that 100% of Puerto Rico was without power? Does Jesus care? There are people whose lives and home literally have to be rebuilt...does Jesus care?

Very short answer, and not trying to oversimplify, but yes He cares very much. God created the world with natural laws that are part of our life. We have rain. We have wind. We have storms. And we have Hurricanes when the natural conditions and atmosphere causes it. We believe in a Jesus that can calm the storm. A God that can move the storm...and yet there are times we still have to experience the storm. That does not negate the faith fact that Jesus does care. He is with us to calm us in the storm. When these events and tragedies occur we realize that we must respond. So someone may ask, "So how do we respond?"

St. Teresa in the 1500's wrote this:

*Christ Has No Body*

Christ has no body but yours,  
 No hands, no feet on earth but yours,  
 Yours are the eyes with which he looks  
 Compassion on this world,  
 Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good,  
 Yours are the hands, with which he blesses all the world.  
 Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,  
 Yours are the eyes, you are his body.  
 Christ has no body now but yours,  
 No hands, no feet on earth but yours,  
 Yours are the eyes with which he looks  
 compassion on this world.  
 Christ has no body now on earth but yours.

Jesus does care through His presence, Jesus cares through you being His hands and feet.  
 (Remember of FEAST food Pantry and the need there in part due to Hurricane Irma)

As they say on TV, now we get back to our originally scheduled program. Does Jesus...love me?

It is interesting that this at the time was the most asked, search for answer. It says a lot about our need to know the answer. Does Jesus love me?

Now before we completely answer that, let me ask another question. Who would you be willing to die for?

I am very appreciative of those who have made a commitment to put their life on their line for us. Law enforcement, military...and especially appreciative of the Secret Service who literally are ready and willing to take a bullet for the President. Wow.

So who would you be willing to die for? Okay...for me it is my family. Would I die for one of you...welllllll...maybe some of you! ☺ Would I be willing to die for a liar? Would I be willing to die for a robber? A murderer? Would I be willing to die for an abuser?

In Romans chapter 5 verses 6 and 7 the apostle Paul who wrote the book of Romans identifies that some might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good. Then notice verse 8. **<sup>8</sup> But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.**

Jesus just didn't die for the good, the religious, the pious. He died for the sinners. He died for all. One of the great mysteries of our faith is that before we knew Christ, in fact, before we were even born Christ died for us to set us free from the slavery of sin. The faith fact that Jesus died on the cross meant that once and forever sacrifice of His life He gave would be an everlasting atonement and forgiveness for our sins.

And not only that...<sup>9</sup> **And since we have been made right in God's sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God's condemnation.**

We have been made right in God's sight by His blood---His death. He took our sins for us...even before we committed them. He knew human nature to know that we would commit sin. Some translations use the word justified. This theological concept of Justification. Justification means being made right in God's sight.

Does Jesus love me? Why would He love me? Maybe you can relate...when I fail, when I sin...and we have all sinned...we beat ourselves up. We, and maybe rightly so heap on the guilt. But we go from condemnation to commendation. From condemnation to justification. From condemnation to salvation.

There is no one too bad and there is no one good enough. Christ showed us that He died on the cross to prove His love for us.

But we begin to debate with God. Now let me ask a question. Who is smarter...us or Jesus?

Yet we say....Jesus would never forgive me. I've done too much...there is no way.... Well, Jesus loved you so much that He died on the cross for all people, for all sin, for all time.

**<sup>10</sup> For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of his Son.**

We were His enemies in that he hates sins. And in a sense we hated Him, because we were disobeying Him and not doing what we needed to do and not being who we needed to be. Our holy righteous God cannot allow sin to enter into His heavenly presence. So what was He to do? He sent His only son, Jesus to die for us...to put to death the sins of this world, so that we might have life through Him.

Oh perhaps you have seen the rainbow wig guy with John 3:16 on his shirt. **(image)** Or perhaps you have seen the signs around that people hold up. **(image)** Or perhaps, sorry FSU fans, you remember a Gator by the name of Tim Tebow that wrote John 3: 16 under his eyes. **(image)**.

In December of 2016 Tim Tebow was on the talk show, "Harry"---Harry Connick Jr. to talk about his new book, his new baseball career and more....take a listen.

([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ILz\\_9KRwzB8#action=share](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ILz_9KRwzB8#action=share))

Over 90 million people wanted to know this: "For God so love the world that He sent his only that whoever believes in Him should not die but have everlasting life."

Does Jesus love you? YES!!!!

**<sup>11</sup> So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God.**

We can have a new relationship with because Jesus has taken the sins and made us friends with God.

He loves you...ask for His forgiveness. He has provided the way through His death on the cross. Coincidence...no...big God. Jesus loves you, died for you, provided for you...ask Him to forgive you of your sins....He has already died for them...and He WILL forgive you.

Rejoiced in that wonderful relationship.

I don't want anyone to leave here this morning---from the youngest to the eldest without realizing something very important. We can search for: Does Jesus love me? I can tell you, yes, the Bible says that. Yes, I have experienced the forgiveness of sins and know that He loves me. There is no one too bad and there is no one good enough....but Jesus love is BIG enough.

It is incomprehensible. It is just about unbelievable. It is miraculous. It is amazing, but true...Jesus loves you.