

Read: 1 Peter 2:7,8

Would You Rather?

1 Peter 2:7,8

Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, “The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone,” and, “A stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall.”

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Let’s play a game called “Would You Rather.” Teachers use it at the beginning of a school year. Or families play it on road trips. There are two ways to play this game.

In one version, someone asks, “Would you rather vacation at the beach or in the mountains?” It’s a fun way to get to know each other. And there are no wrong answers.

The other version involves giving two options, both of which would be unpleasant. For example: “Would you rather find a rat in your kitchen or a roach in your bed?” You find yourself thinking, “Yuck! I wouldn’t want either of those. They both make me miserable.”

Here’s another “would you rather” situation all people find themselves in by nature: Would you rather be punished for the bad things you do that displease God or spend all your time trying to do enough good things to make up for all the bad things? Everyone has the natural idea that they should do something to please God and be punished for the bad things they do. This is called a conscience. By nature, people are afraid because they can’t ever do enough to deserve heaven.

And today’s text tells us another sad truth: It bothers people to think that Jesus earned heaven for them and just handed it to them for free. That seems foolish, and they trip on it like it’s a problem in the way.

Yes, by nature we are all playing a terrifying game of “would you rather.” It comes down to: Would you rather be afraid because you can’t keep God’s commands perfectly or admit that Jesus did it for you? Sinful, natural hearts don’t want either of those.

But along comes the Holy Spirit. He uses the Word of God and baptism to make us know, trust, and love the fact that Jesus lived perfectly and died for us. For us, the question has a clear answer.

Let's try some:

- Would you rather eat _____ (your favorite food) whenever you want or have to eat _____ (your least favorite food) at every meal? Obvious, right?
- Would you rather know you are going to heaven because Jesus loves you so much that he saved you or be afraid of hell because you sin?

Thank God the Holy Spirit makes it crystal clear. Heaven is ours and we are sure of it!

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- Why don't we have to be afraid of hell?
- How did Jesus save us?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- What does God use to give us faith in Jesus?
- Describe how you feel knowing you are going to heaven because Jesus loves and saved you.

Questions for Middle School and Above

- Why do some people "stumble" in believing the idea that Jesus did everything needed for our salvation?
- What could you say to someone who thinks the idea of salvation through faith in Jesus is foolishness?

Closing Prayer:

Dear Holy Spirit, you were stronger than my unbelieving heart! You used your Word to show me Jesus as my Savior. Thank you! Thank you! Amen.