

WHO DO YOU SAY THAT I AM?

A Study of the Person of Jesus

SESSION ONE

The Many Faces of Jesus

Session Summary

Who is Jesus, really? That was a question that people were debating in Jesus's day and it's a question that people continue to debate today. Is Jesus a gentle savior, a fierce revolutionary, a kind friend, an uncompromising prophet, a warrior king? Unfortunately, how we answer this question often has more to say about us than it does about Jesus himself. Which again raises the question: who is Jesus, really? And how can we be sure?

Appointed Scripture

Read and discuss **Mark 8:27-33**. Why would people identify Jesus with John the Baptist or Elijah? What do you think of Peter's response? How does the disagreement between Jesus and Peter in verses 31-33 shed light on Peter's mindset and on his misunderstanding of Jesus?

Group Discussion Questions

1. What was one point from this week's teaching that stood out to you?
2. When Jesus asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?", they told him that people were saying he was John the Baptist or one of the prophets. Imagine that Jesus asked you that question now: "Who do people say that I am?" How would you respond?
3. As the video demonstrated, people often think about Jesus in ways that reflect what they would *like* him to be. Where do you see examples of that in the broader culture? Where do you see examples of that among Christians?
4. If you were going to describe Jesus to someone, what would you say about him? What would you say that Jesus cares about? What bothers him? What does he want from us?
5. Think about these biblical titles for Jesus: Shepherd, Messiah, Master, Teacher, Lamb of God. Which of these do you think of most often when you think of Jesus? Why?

Group Prayer

Spend some time sharing prayer requests with one another and end in prayer.

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SESSION TWO Teacher

Session Summary

“Let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about Jesus being a great human teacher.” With these words, C.S. Lewis sought to deny the mistaken idea that Jesus was nothing more than a great moral teacher. But he did not mean to deny that Jesus was a teacher. For Jesus was certainly a teacher, and a great one at that! In this session, we consider what people thought of Jesus’s teaching, what kind of a teacher he is, and what it means to be his student.

Appointed Scripture

Read and discuss **Matthew 7:1-29**. What surprised the crowds about Jesus’s teaching? What stands out to you about his teaching in this chapter?

Group Discussion Questions

1. What was one point from this week’s teaching that stood out to you?
2. How often do you think of Jesus as a teacher? What is one thing that he teaches that has changed the way you live? What is one thing that he teaches that you struggle to believe or to follow?
3. Discuss the following quote from Dallas Willard. How does this compare to the way that most people think about Jesus?

Can we seriously imagine that Jesus could be Lord if he were not smart? If he were divine, would he be dumb? Or uninformed? Once you stop to think about it, how could he be what we take him to be in all other respects and not be the best-informed and most intelligent person of all, the smartest person that ever lived?

4. What does Jesus teach about the following things: What to do when you’re worried or anxious? How you should respond when people wrong you? What should you want out of life? What should you want for your children? How should you pray? How should you use your money?
5. Jesus says that anyone who hears his teaching and doesn’t follow it is a fool (Matthew 7:26). Why do we often hear Jesus’s words and not actually follow them? How can we be better students of Jesus?

Group Prayer

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SESSION THREE The Christ

Session Summary

The word “Christ” is such a common title for Jesus, used so repeatedly throughout the New Testament, that many today assume it is simply part of his name. But it isn’t just a name. It’s a title. Jesus is “the Christ.” In this session, we explore what that means and why it should matter to us today.

Appointed Scripture

Read and discuss **Mark 8:27-33**. What stands out to you about this interaction between Jesus and Peter? Why would Peter try to rebuke Jesus? How might this relate to Peter’s expectation of what “the Christ” will do?

Group Discussion Questions

1. What was one point from this week’s teaching that stood out to you?
2. Have you ever thought about what it means to refer to Jesus as “Christ”? If so, what do you usually associate with this word? How does this session impact the way you think about it?
3. Read Isaiah 9:19, Jeremiah 23:1-6, and Zechariah 9:9-10. How might these passages have shaped Jewish expectations of the messiah? How do you see Jesus reflected in these passages?
4. Jews knew that “the Christ” would bring God’s deliverance, but they didn’t know exactly how that would happen. Why would many of them have rejected or been disappointed by Jesus when he came? Why did they struggle to accept his crucifixion?
5. What kinds of “deliverance” do people want today? What kind of messiah might we want? How would you relate Jesus to those desires?

Group Prayer

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SESSION FOUR

Lamb of God

Session Summary

“Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” This statement by John the Baptist is the first time that anyone gave an answer to the question of who Jesus is. And if we want to understand who Jesus is and why he matters for us, it is vitally important for us to understand what John meant when he said those words. In this session, we aim to do exactly that.

Appointed Scripture

Read and discuss **Isaiah 52:13-53:12**. Why would early Christians interpret this passage as a reference to Jesus? What parts of this passage are the most meaningful to you? How can this passage help us to understand Jesus better?

Group Discussion Questions

1. What was one point from this week's teaching that stood out to you?
2. What do you think of when you hear John the Baptist's description of Jesus as the “Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world”? What thoughts or feelings come up for you when you think of this?
3. Read Psalm 32:1-5. This psalm describes the experience of someone whose sins have been forgiven. How relatable is this psalm today? Does our sin still weigh on us as it did the psalmist? How might this psalm help us to understand John's excitement that Jesus had come to “take away the sin of the world”?

4. Discuss this quote by Josef Blank:

Good, upstanding, proper people, who consider themselves remarkable human beings with no real weaknesses or guilt, cannot understand [John the Baptist's enthusiasm].

5. Look up a picture of Matthias Grünewald's Isenheim Altarpiece. Discuss the central painting of the crucified Jesus. What stands out to you in this painting? Why would it provide comfort to sick patients in the chapel of the hospital for which it was painted? How might it provide comfort to you?

Group Prayer

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SESSION FIVE

Lord and God

Session Summary

Although Thomas is often remembered as a doubter and a skeptic, he is also the disciple who first referred to Jesus as “God.” Of all the many things that we may see about Jesus, this is undoubtedly the greatest and most profound. It is also the claim that continues to draw the most criticism from modern skeptics. In this video, we address some of the arguments of those who deny the truth of Thomas’s words, as well as the remarkable implications of what we are saying when we confess that Jesus is indeed “Lord and God.”

Appointed Scripture

Read and discuss **John 20:24-30**. What do you make of Thomas in this passage? Where do you see yourself in him? What does John mean in verse 31 when he says that “by believing [we] may have life in his name”?

Group Discussion Questions

1. What was one point from this week’s teaching that stood out to you?
2. Why do you think people still doubt Jesus’s claims to be God? Why might someone find it easy to admire Jesus as a great moral teacher or spiritual authority or model of charity but then reject the call to worship and obey him?
3. Some modern skeptics (the video mentions Bart Ehrman) wish to deny that Jesus’s followers referred to him as “God,” saying that they simply meant he is “godlike” or an angel or one of many divine beings. What do you make of such claims? Why would a Jew like Thomas never refer to an angel being as “God”?
4. Early Christians were mocked for worshiping a crucified man. Their neighbors found their worship absurd. Have you ever encountered such mockery or incredulity when you’ve spoken about your faith? How would you respond if you did?
5. How should our worship of Jesus as God change the way we think of divinity, or of power, or of greatness, or of success?

Group Prayer

Spend some time sharing prayer requests with one another and end in prayer.