

JESUS IN THE 4 GOSPELS

DR. BRADLEY TRUMAN NOEL



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As perhaps you've never seen him before.



PICTURING JESUS

SESSION 1.1

INTRODUCTION

This session will deal with how we picture Jesus, and how that picture can affect the way we live as Christians as well as the way we pursue the mission of God. Dr. Noel will raise several questions which will help us to gain a better picture of who Jesus is, and what his mission was about.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1** WHEN YOU THINK OF JESUS, WHAT IMAGES COME TO MIND?
- 2** HOW DO YOU KNOW YOUR PICTURE OF JESUS IS THE RIGHT ONE?
- 3** HOW CAN WE GAIN AN ACCURATE PICTURE OF JESUS?

“

In the beginning God made man in his image. And man has been returning the favor ever since.

-Mark Twain

WHO IS JESUS?

- There is no question greater than “Who is Jesus?”
- Until Christians know the answer, they don’t know who they are sharing with their community.
- If Christians get the answer wrong then they’re not sharing him properly.

A JESUS LIKE ME

- The longer we go on in the faith, the more Jesus looks like us rather than us looking more like Jesus.
- Jesus looks at us and asks the same question he asked Peter: “Who do you say I am?”

PORTRAYING JESUS

- Jesus not only asks, “Who do you say I am?” But “who do you portray me as in the course of your day?”
- The term Christian literally means “little Christs,” suggesting we are suppose to imitate him in every area of our lives.
- In turn our communities say to us, “By seeing you, I’ve seen Jesus.”

SOBERING THOUGHT

BY AND LARGE OUR COMMUNITIES ARE
REJECTING JESUS BECAUSE THE JESUS WE’VE SHOWN THEM
WAS NEVER ACTUALLY JESUS.

T O T H E P O I N T →

After a while Jesus becomes who we imagine, rather than who the Bible tells us he is.

ADJUSTING OUR EYES

- As we get older in the faith, the Gospel stories seems to lose their power on us.
- This series will look at the Gospel through first-century eyes.
- Through this process, we will gain a greater understanding of who Jesus is, and what his mission is about.
- This will help us to portray a more authentic Jesus to our communities.

THE LEXICON

Χριστιανός

Christianos = “Little Christs”

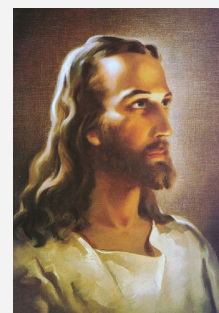
“So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.” - Acts 11:26 (NIV)

“

You can safely assume
you’ve created God in your
own image when it turns
out that God hates all the
same people you do.

- Ann Lamott

“THE HEAD OF CHRIST”



This portrait of Jesus entitled “The Head of Christ” was painted by Warner Sallman in 1940.

This portrait went on to become one of the most well-known depictions of Jesus in the 20th Century. Consequently it has led many people to believe that Jesus was caucasian with blonde hair and blue eyes, when in reality Jesus’ Jewish ethnicity meant he was probably olive-skinned with brown hair and brown eyes.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

HOW DID JESUS INTERACT WITH HIS CULTURE AND THOSE IN IT?

- Unless or until we fully understand how Jesus dealt with culture, we are going to miss our chance to deal with our own culture.
- Jesus was born into a highly-paganistic culture, yet his message changed the world (though they killed him for it).
- The time when we could cruise along in nominal Christianity is gone.
- The time has come to stand for what we believe.
- **CAUTION:** If we stand for the wrong thing, we're going to miss a God-given opportunity to reach our culture.

HOW DID JESUS APPROACH THE SIN SO PREVALENT IN HIS CULTURE - AS IT IS IN OURS?

- Did Jesus shake his fist at people?

HOW DID JESUS INTERACT WITH THE RELIGIOUS PEOPLE OF HIS DAY?

- Jesus had a lot to say to religious people, and a lot of it wasn't very nice.
- If you read the gospels and compare what he said to religious people vs. what he said to sinner, you might not want him to preach from your pulpit (He called them "liars," "sons of Hell," and a "brood of vipers").

HOW DID JESUS TREAT THOSE "IN THE CHURCH" VS "THOSE OUTSIDE?"

WHAT WAS JESUS' MISSION?

WHAT WOULD A TRUE FOLLOWER OF JESUS LOOK LIKE IN 2016?

- Christians need to do better in with answering this question.
- We often go to Church, and do our thing, but rarely are we challenged in this area of our lives.

HOW MUCH OF A PROPER FOLLOWING OF JESUS DEPENDS ON FIRST CLEARLY UNDERSTANDING WHO HE IS AND HIS MISSION?

WHAT IF NEWFOUNDLAND PENTECOSTALS HAVE SOMETIMES MIS-UNDERSTOOD JESUS AND HIS MISSION?

- If we have, is it still possible to be a healthy follower of Jesus?
- Not as healthy as we could be because we're not representing the real Jesus.

THE GOSPELS

For this study, we will explore Jesus as presented in the biblical books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

“

Matthew also issued a written Gospel among the Hebrews in their own dialect, while Peter and Paul were preaching at Rome, and laying the foundations of the Church. After their departure, Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, did also hand down to us in writing what had been preached by Peter. Luke also, the companion of Paul, recorded in a book the Gospel preached by him. Afterwards, John, the disciple of the Lord, who also had leaned upon His breast, did himself publish a Gospel during his residence at Ephesus in Asia.

- Iraenaeus, Against Heresies (c.175-185 A.D.)

WORTH NOTING

**THE FOUR GOSPELS WERE WRITTEN BY FOUR
DIFFERENT PEOPLE FROM FOUR DIFFERENT WALKS OF LIFE
FOR FOUR DIFFERENT AUDIENCES.**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO

MATTHEW

A FEW FACTS

- **Authorship:** Although Matthew is not listed as the author, early Christian tradition unanimously agreed that Matthew (Levi) was the author.
- Matthew was called by Jesus from his position as a tax collector to be a disciple (**Matthew 9:9**).
- There are indications within the book that the author was very familiar with finances. There are more references to money in this account than in the other three Gospel records.
- **Date:** 60-85 A.D.

PURPOSE

- **Apologetic:** A defense of the position that Jesus is the promised Messiah of Old Testament prophecies.
- It was penned especially to convince the Jews of this fact.
- **Proclamation of the Kingdom:** To teach the Jews that the Messiah was about to initiate his reign.
- Matthew called attention to the kingdom in more than 35 passages.
- He identifies Jesus as the promised “son of David” 9 times.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO

MARK

A FEW FACTS

- **Authorship:** Mark is mentioned eight times in the New Testament.
- A cousin of Barnabas (**Col. 4:10**), and an associate of Paul (**Phm. 2:4**).
- **Peter’s Link:** Peter refers to Mark as “my son,” and it is very likely Peter led him to conversion.
- **Audience:** Gentiles, generally; the Church in Rome specifically.
- **Date:** 65 to 75 AD.

PURPOSE

- **The Servant Jesus:** Mark characterizes Jesus as a servant who came to do the Father’s will—and, servant-like, he did so with great urgency.
- Mark uses the servant’s word, *euthus* (“immediately”), 14 times in describing the activities of the Saviour.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

A FEW FACTS

- **Authorship:** Luke is the solitary Gentile writer of the Bible, yet his dual books of the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts constitute about 25% of the New Testament.
- By training Luke was a physician (**Col. 4:14**).
- He joined Paul on the apostle's second missionary campaign (**Acts 16: 9-10**).
- **Audience:** As with the Gospel of Mark, it is clear that Luke is writing for non-Hebrew recipients.
- He explains, for example, that Capernaum is "a city of Galilee" (**4:31**), that the country of the Gerasenes is "over against Galilee" (**8:26**), and that the town of Emmaus is seven miles from Jerusalem (**24:13**)—circumstances quite familiar already to Palestinians.

PURPOSE

- **Apologetic:** Though the book is addressed to "most excellent Theophilus," with the purpose of confirming his faith, it is apparent that the intended audience was much wider. This is a treatise designed to reach the Greeks with the message of Jesus Christ.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 HOW DO CHRISTIANS UPHOLD A STANDARD OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, WHILE SHOWING LOVE & GRACE TO SINNERS?**
- 2 IN WHAT WAYS DO CHRISTIANS MISREPRESENT JESUS TO THE COMMUNITY, AND HOW CAN WE START DOING IT RIGHT?**
- 3 WHY IS KNOWING THE BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT IN WHICH THE GOSPELS WERE WRITTEN IMPORTANT?**

SELF-EVALUATE

HOW WERE YOU CHALLENGED?

WHAT IS YOUR PRAYER?

PICTURING JESUS PT. 2

SESSION 1.2

INTRODUCTION

This session will continue our discussion of how we picture Jesus, and how that picture can affect the way we live as Christians and the way we pursue the mission of God. Dr. Noel will continue to explore the background as well as the context of the four Gospel accounts discuss what should be central to our understanding of Jesus and his mission.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN

A FEW FACTS

- **Authorship:** John, son of Zebedee, and brother of James (**Mk. 1:19**).
- John was part of Jesus' inner circle.
- He was the closest to the Lord (**John 21:20**).
- **Date:** Approximately 90 A.D.

PURPOSE

- **Apologetic:** John's basic purpose is to offer the evidence of certain signs which prove that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.
- Argues strongly for Christ's deity.
- John's record is characterized by word signs and work signs of Jesus.
- **Word signs:** "I am...the 'bread of life' (**6:35**), the 'light of the world' (**8:12**), and the 'true vine' (**15:1**).
- **Work signs:** Power over time (**2:1-11**), space (**4:46-54**), and sickness (**5:1-18**).

4 GOSPEL REVIEW

- **Matthew:** Jesus is the Messianic Davidic King who fulfills Old Covenant promises.
- **Mark:** Jesus is the authoritative Son of God who suffers and dies to claim victory over sin and death.
- **Luke:** Jesus is the perfect Son of God, the Messiah prophesied in the OT, who ministers in the power of the Holy Spirit.
- **John:** Jesus is the fully divine Son of God, who existed before creation. He is the true Lamb of Sacrifice through whom we receive eternal life.

FOUR WITNESSES: ONE THEME

FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD THAT HE GAVE HIS ONE
AND ONLY SON, THAT WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM SHALL
NOT PERISH BUT HAVE ETERNAL LIFE...

FOR GOD DID NOT SEND HIS SON INTO THE WORLD
TO CONDEMN THE WORLD, BUT TO SAVE THE WORLD
THROUGH HIM.

JOHN 3:16-17

THE TRUE JESUS

“

The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, “Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.”

- Jesus (Mt. 11:19)

T O T H E P O I N T

Ever wonder what God is truly like? Look no further than Jesus (James 14:8; Colossians 1:15).

WHO IS JESUS?

SESSION 2.1

INTRODUCTION

This session will bring us to a better understanding of who Jesus is, and more importantly, what his mission was about. In light of Jesus' mission, Dr. Noel will explore questions relating to how authentic Christians have been in carrying out Jesus' mission.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1** HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE JESUS?
- 2** DID JESUS SHOW ANGER TOWARDS A PAGAN CULTURE?
- 3** DO YOU THINK CHRISTIANS HAVE MISUNDERSTOOD JESUS?

“

In the beginning God made man in his image. And man has been returning the favor ever since.
-Mark Twain

DESCRIBE JESUS

- If someone was to ask us to describe Jesus, how would we describe him? What would be the first thing to come to mind?
- After awhile God begins to look how I think he should look. Not how he is.
- Some of our descriptions are based on denominational subculture (our own ways of thinking and lingo).
- Many of us assume if we see sin or a sinful person, and they make us stomach sick, they make God stomach sick as well.
- The difference in our sin and the sin that makes us feel uncomfortable is that we are used to our sin.
- My sin makes God just as nauseous.
- He graciously forgives us, shows his mercy every morning.

WORTH NOTING

AFTER A WHILE, JESUS BECOMES WHO WE IMAGINE,
RATHER THAN WHO THE BIBLE TELLS US HE IS.

TWO QUESTIONS



HOW DID JESUS INTERACT WITH HIS CULTURE AND THOSE IN IT?



**HOW DID JESUS APPROACH THE SIN SO PREVALANT IN HIS
CULTURE - AS IT IS IN OURS?**

- Things are not getting better culturally.
- We are in the middle of a significant shift in how the Church is viewed and the rights of the Church. You have no control over that; only your reaction.
- We got used to being a Christian culture; the government enacting laws and supporting the church and the Christian mission.
- Jesus came to create his kingdom not countries.
- The church's prized place in culture has been taken away from us.
- Because we were in charge for so long, we're going to be treated worst than normal.
- The gospel has always done better when its persecuted.
- We don't have to be afraid or angry, but look for opportunities to engage.



WHAT WAS JESUS'

MISSION?

WHAT WAS JESUS' MISSION?

- To seek and save the lost.
- We are all Christians, that makes our mission to seek and save the lost.
- To what lengths are we willing to go?
- How much am I willing to adapt to reach a culture that doesn't know better.
- They do not know who Jesus is, but they know who the church is.
- We have not always been a great representative of Jesus.
- In some cases people thought they turn down the gospel when they actually turned down the church. People looked at all the churches infighting and un-Christlike attitudes and rejected it.
- Many are angry because we portrayed Jesus unscripturally.
- If we could actually present Jesus to people, they would love him.
- What he brought to the world was so attractive people hounded him for it.



WHAT IF WE HAVE MISUNDERSTOOD JESUS'

MESSAGE & MISSION?

SCRIPTURE

The primary means of understanding Jesus' message and mission is by reading from and studying the Bible.



For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

- 2 Peter 1:21

INSPIRATION

- How do we view the inspiration of scripture?
- **In other words:** How does the message get from God to the writer?
- Some of us have a very weak view of inspiration.
- Some of us have a very strong view of inspiration.
- There are parts of the Gospel where the author's personality comes through.
- Inspiration is a joint process.



All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness...

- 2 Timothy 3:16

THE BIG QUESTION

HOW DOES THE MESSAGE GET FROM THE HEART OF GOD TO PAPER VIA HUMAN HAND?



= WRITTEN IN HEBREW



= WRITTEN IN GREEK



In the midst of the authors writing,
God made sure his message got through clearly as he wanted it.

4 GOSPEL REVIEW

- **Matthew:** Jesus is the Messianic Davidic King who fulfills Old Covenant promises.
- **Mark:** Jesus is the authoritative Son of God who suffers and dies to claim victory over sin and death.
- **Luke:** Jesus is the perfect Son of God, the Messiah prophesied in the OT, who ministers in the power of the Holy Spirit.
- **John:** Jesus is the fully divine Son of God, who existed before creation. He is the true Lamb of Sacrifice through whom we receive eternal life.

GOSPELS LOSING THEIR EFFECT

- As the stories were told in the 1st Century, they were shocking, but to contemporary Christians, they've lost a bit of their power.
- **WHY?**
- Because we're used to them.
- We miss the cultural significance of the stories now.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1** DO YOU BELIEVE THAT GOD WROTE JOINTLY WITH HUMAN AUTHORS? WHY OR WHY NOT?
- 2** DO YOU WRESTLE WITH THE IDEA THAT GOD COULD'VE WRITTEN JOINTLY? WHY OR WHY NOT?
- 3** DO YOU BELIEVE CHRISTIANS HAVE LARGELY LOST THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE GOSPELS? WHY / WHY NOT?

SELF-EVALUATE

HOW WERE YOU CHALLENGED?

WHAT IS YOUR PRAYER?

WHO IS JESUS? PT. 2

SESSION 2.2

INTRODUCTION

This session will continue our look at the real Jesus by examining the first two of twelve realities about who Jesus is. In particular, Dr. Noel will examine the “Jesus who was despised,” and the “Jesus who prefers healthy relationships over worship.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 HAVE YOU CONSIDERED THAT JESUS WAS DESPISED? WHY/WHY NOT?
- 2 WHAT IS WORSHIP IN THE LOCAL CHURCH?
- 3 HOW CAN WE DEVELOP HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS IN THE CHURCH?

THE JESUS WHO WAS

DESPISED

Sometimes we worship Jesus so readily we forget that he was despised.

FROM GALILEE

- When we hear that Jesus was from Nazareth, in Galilee, that means very little to us today.
- But in fact, Jesus was despised by the ruling elite, simply because of where he came from.
- **Racially:** The area of the former Northern Kingdom of Israel had a more mixed population, within which more conservative Jewish areas (like Nazareth and Capernaum) stood in close proximity to largely pagan cities.
- **Geographically:** Galilee was separated from Judea by the non-Jewish territory of Samaria, and from Perea in the south-east by the Greek settlements of Decapolis (Ten Cities). Jews hated Samaritans so much they would avoid Samaria.
- **Politically:** Galilee had been under separate administration from Judea during almost all its history since the tenth century BC, and in the time of Jesus it was under a (supposedly) native Herodian prince. Judea and Samaria had since AD 6 been under the direct rule of a Roman prefect.
- **Economically:** Galilee offered better agricultural and fishing resources than the more mountainous territory of Judea, making the wealth of some Galileans the envy of their southern neighbours.
- **Culturally:** Judeans despised their northern neighbors as country cousins, their lack of Jewish sophistication being compounded by their greater openness to Greek influence.
- **Linguistically:** Galileans spoke a distinctive form of Aramaic whose slovenly consonants (they dropped their H's!) were the butt of Judean humor.
- **Religiously:** "The Judean opinion was that Galileans were lax in their observance of proper ritual, and the problem was exacerbated by the distance of Galilee from the temple and the theological leadership which was focused in Jerusalem." –RT France
- Jesus knew what it was like to be looked down upon just because of where he came from.

MARY'S SON

“

And when Jesus had finished these parables, he went away from there, and coming to his hometown he taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished, and said, "Where did this man get this wisdom and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's son? **Is he not Mary's son?** And are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? And are not all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?" **And they took offence at him.** - Matthew 13:53-57

- The people were asking, “Who do you think you are?”
- “Aren’t you a carpenter, aren’t you Mary’s son?”
- It is very likely that he grew up being viewed as, and possibly mocked as, “the bastard child of Mary.”

“

The Marcan text as it stands is derogatory. “Is not this the carpenter?” means, is he not a common worker with his hands even as the rest of us are? The additional phrase “the son of Mary” is probably disparaging. It was contrary to Jewish usage to describe a man as the son of his mother, even when she was a widow, except in insulting terms. Rumors to the effect that Jesus was illegitimate appear to have circulated in his own lifetime and may lie behind this reference as well.

-William L. Lane (New International Commentary).



Perhaps you can relate?



The good people of Nazareth could not get beyond Jesus’ past to see his present. They were unable to see beyond what they knew about his history, to actually see his story.



Some of us are **unable to get beyond our own past**; we are trapped by that which God freely forgives. **We let what other people think of us to hold us back.**

OPENLY INSULTED

“

For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon.' The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, '**Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.**' - Matthew 11:18-19

- It is as though Jesus is saying "I can't win."
- This often happens in the Church.
- **Our problem:** is not so much with culture but the way members of the church "beat up" on each other.
- How does Jesus get labelled a "glutton" or "alcoholic?" **He was a friend of tax collector and sinners**
- Jesus got his hands dirty all the time.
- Jesus hung out in places many of us would avoid because we deem ourselves "followers of Jesus."
- Jesus is the answer to a real sin-sick culture.
- **The Good News:** If Christians showed a sinful culture the real Jesus, they would absolutely love him.
- Luke 15:1; Matthew 9:9-13.
- "If we are going to be like Jesus, our efforts to befriend the lost and broken, will always be met with resistance from religious people..."
- Jesus came for those who are absolutely desperate and broke beyond all repair.

THE JESUS WHO PREFERS HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS OVER WORSHIP

“

Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. **First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.**

- Matthew 5:23-24



Jesus wants **us to be healthy** and he wants **the body to be healthy.**

How easy is it to sit in services and act the right part?



“

I hate, I despise your religious festivals; your assemblies are a stench to me. Even though you bring me burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them. Though you bring choice fellowship offerings, I will have no regard for them. Away with the noise of your songs! I will not listen to the music of your harps. But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream! - **God, Amos 5:21-24**



CONSIDER

AS FOLLOWERS OF JESUS, HOW WOULD OUR CHRISTIAN LIVES CHANGE IF WE MENDED ALL BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS BEFORE ATTEMPTING TO WORSHIP JESUS?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1** DO YOU THINK JESUS FELT HURT WHEN PEOPLE MENTIONED HIS PAST?
- 2** WHY IS IT DIFFICULT TO MEND BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS?
- 3** WHAT ARE SOME EFFECTIVE WAYS TO MEND BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS?

SELF-EVALUATE

HOW WERE YOU CHALLENGED?

WHAT IS YOUR PRAYER?

COSTLY DISCIPLESHIP

SESSION 3.1

INTRODUCTION

This session will discuss how Jesus handled the culture by turning cultural norms upside down. We will examine how Jesus was gracious and loving to sinners, yet called the religious and those who followed him to realign their understanding of following God.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE DISCIPLESHIP?
- 2 DID JESUS COME IN JUDGEMENT OR IN LOVE?
- 3 DOES JESUS EXPECT ANYTHING FROM BELIEVERS?

THE JESUS WHO MAKES OUTRAGEOUS

DEMANDS

Sometimes we forget that there is a cost to following Jesus.

LOVE & CORRECTION

- One of the images the Church perpetuating today is a Jesus who doesn't ask too much.
- **The Issue:** Churches are trying to show the love of God on the one hand, while upholding righteousness on the other.
- **Response 1:** Some churches teach that Jesus is love, and that's it.
- **Response 2:** Some churches teach a Jesus that is very angry and very harsh.
- **The Truth:** Is somewhere in the middle. Jesus was loving and gracious towards sinners, but frequently corrected the religious.

JESUS TURNS CULTURAL NORMS UPSIDE DOWN



Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it.

–Jesus, Matt. 16:24-25

THE COST

**JESUS OPENS THE DOOR WIDELY FOR US TO FOLLOW, BUT
WHEN WE DECIDE TO FOLLOW JESUS THERE IS A COST.**

- This is not strictly a financial cost (tithing), but this is a life of sacrifice.
- **Sacrifice 1:** Journeying alongside others.
- **Sacrifice 2:** Our time in volunteering for service to the Kingdom of God.
- Jesus said to take up our cross; what does your cross look like?
- If you can't identify your cross, maybe you're not sacrificing enough for the Kingdom.

THE CONCERN

WE ARE PEDDLING A VERY EASY CHRISTIANITY WHERE
THERE ARE NO CROSSES AND NOT MUCH DENIAL.

TO THE POINT



Jesus takes the norm of our culture and turns it upside down (i.e. lose your life to save it, last shall be first).

“

You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave— just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

—Jesus, Matt. 20:25-26



This type of teaching really grates against our culture, since our culture tells us to put ourselves above all others. **Jesus always runs counter-cultural.**

CULTURAL INVASION

How much thinking from the culture around us has invaded the church?



THE PROBLEM

WE SPEND SO MUCH TIME IMMERSED IN THE CULTURE OF
THE WORLD AND SO LITTLE TIME IN OUR DEVOTIONAL LIFE.

- When Christians start talking about their “rights” then we know the thinking of the world has crept into the church.
- **Christ-thinking:** Last shall be first, die to live, die to self.
- If we really want our “rights” from God, the only right we have is hell.
- This cultural desire for “rights” is often expressed in areas of the church such as worship style.
- Jesus would say you have the right to serve.
- God has given you the privilege as older Christians to come around those who are helping younger Christians to grow.

JESUS REALIGNS PRIORITIES

“

You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart...

–Jesus, Matt.5:27

- Jesus upholds the law, and then raises the standard.
- Holiness by grace, is higher standard than holiness by law.
- In our history we focused too much on externals.
- Jesus essentially taught that it is pointless to be externally holy, yet internally sinful.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 WHAT ARE SOME CROSSES JESUS ASKS US TO CARRY?**
- 2 DO WE HAVE “RIGHTS” AS BELIEVERS IN JESUS?**
- 3 HOW HAS THE OUTSIDE CULTURE INFECTED THE CHURCH?**

SELF-EVALUATE

HOW WERE YOU CHALLENGED?

WHAT IS YOUR PRAYER?

PUTTING UP BARRIERS

SESSION 3.2

INTRODUCTION

This session will discuss the various ways Jesus interacted with the culture around him. Dr. Noel will particularly examine the ways in which Jesus addresses the religious vs. the sinners and outcasts of the day. We will see that Jesus specifically addresses the way the religious place barriers between sinners and God.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1 HOW WOULD YOU
DESCRIBE A PHARISEE?

2 HOW DO CHRISTIANS
BECOME PHARISAICAL?

3 DO YOU THINK
CHRISTIANS HAVE ACTED
PHARISAICAL?

THE PHARISEES

- “Pharisee” is derived from the Ancient Greek *pharisaios* meaning “one who is separated.”
- They believed that all Jews had to observe the purity laws (which applied to the temple service) outside the Temple.
- The Pharisees received the backing and good-will of the common people, apparently in contrast to the more elite Sadducees associated with the ruling classes.
- Pharisees were not usually priests, held to both the Torah and a large body oral tradition which interpreted the Law.
- Pharisees were very concerned to follow the Law carefully. Their goal was to “put a fence around the Law” to keep people very far away from breaking the Law.
- For example, the Pharisees had turned the 10 Commandments into 613 separate laws.

MODERN PHARISEES

- In our own church history, we were somewhat the same.
- We were very concerned not to break God's law, and in so doing, we placed fences around the law to keep people far away from sin.
- **Example 1:** The Bible condemns drunkenness, we condemned alcohol.
- **Example 2:** The Bible condemns gambling, we condemned playing cards.

THE PROBLEM

A VERY DETAILED AND COMPLEX SYSTEM OF RULES
NOBODY CAN KEEP.

- This problem creates a culture where there is no transparency, and so we have to say that we've done well even though we've broken these rules.
- The younger generations are reacting poorly to church because they'd rather come in and confess their sins, but not feel judged for it.
- The Pharisees hearts were original good – they wished to keep the Law, and separate themselves for God.
- Yet, Jesus saves his strongest condemnation for them.
- Why?
- Their lack of grace, and their self-righteousness.

PHARISEES ON TRIAL

- To be a Pharisee is to act holy and righteous, paying attention only to the outward sins while ignoring the inward sins.
- **Jesus' response:** Rebuke (Matthew 23).
- We have to ask: To what extent am I like the Pharisees?
- Jesus is upset at the Pharisees because they are actually getting in the way of people coming to the Kingdom of God.
- Would Jesus say the same to us?
- Are we enjoying church, having a great time, but forgetting there are souls lost in darkness outside the doors of the church?
- These are people who think they are serving God, but all their systems are keeping people out. Contrast this with how He talks to sinners.

JESUS TO SINNERS

- Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more” – To the woman caught in adultery.
- “I am willing! Be clean” – To the man with leprosy.
- “Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering.” – To the woman with the issue of blood
- “I must stay at your house today” – To Zacchaeus, chief tax collector.
- “Will you give me a drink? If you ask, I’ll give you living water” – To the Samaritan woman.
- Notice Jesus’ tone towards religious people vs. pagans.
- Come to me all who are heavy burden and I will give you rest for my yoke is easy...

THE JESUS WHO GETS ANGRY

VERY ANGRY

THE TEMPLE: MARK

- Mark is very fond of placing a story in between two halves of another story.
- The story that is split into beginning and ending, helps the reader understand the middle story.
- One helps interpret the other.
- Mark 11: Jesus enters the temple and leaves -> the cursing of the Fig tree -> Jesus re-enters the temple and overturns the tables.

THE TEMPLE: JOHN

- John offers a different order of events.
- Jesus enters the temple and drives out the moneychangers -> exits the temple -> the cursing of the fig tree.

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

- Why is Jesus angry?
- We have always focused on the money-changers. Perhaps, though this was a necessity for worship.
- However, the focus in Mark is on the location – the Court of the Gentiles - the only space available for those normally excluded by the Jews, to worship God.
- Jesus was upset because a barrier had been placed in the way of the seekers who were viewed as outcasts.
- Jesus was passionate because the Kingdom of God was going to extend beyond the Jews to include the Gentiles. This is why he says, “this is a house of prayer for all nations.”



What things do we put in the way of those from the outside who are seeking entrance?

What's in our *Court of the Gentiles*?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 HOW DO WE NOT BECOME LIKE THE PHARISEES?
- 2 WHY KINDS OF BARRIERS DO WE PLACE IN THE WAY OF SINNERS?
- 3 HOW CAN WE BREAK DOWN SOME OF THE BARRIERS WE'VE PUT UP?

SELF-EVALUATE

HOW WERE YOU CHALLENGED?

WHAT IS YOUR PRAYER?

HEALING THE “UNCLEAN”

SESSION 4.1

INTRODUCTION

This session will discuss how Jesus challenged culture by turning cultural norms upside down by redefining what it meant to be “unclean.” Dr. Noel will look at three specific episodes where Jesus upset the religious culture by touching and healing those who were unclean.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 WHAT TYPES OF PEOPLE DO CHRISTIANS DEFINE AS UNCLEAR?
- 2 ARE SOME SINS WORSE THAN OTHERS?
- 3 HOW DOES JESUS RESPOND TO THE SIN IN OUR OWN LIVES?

THE JESUS WHO REINTERPRETS

UNCLEAN

Sometimes we forget that that Jesus associated with and touched those who were “unclean.”

UNCLEAN IN CONTEXT

- Levitical law had very clear ideas of what it meant to be “unclean” (i.e. Lepers, the woman with the issue of blood).
- In contemporary New Testament church we don't have those rules officially, but we do have an understanding of who is unclean in our community.
- Not because of what Leviticus tells us, but because we have a very particular idea of what a good, decent person should look like and then judging by a particular level of sin.

T O T H E P O I N T

Not only did Jesus reinterpret what was clean and unclean, when he saw someone who was unclean he went to them.

EP. 1 “LEGION”

- **Mark 5:1-20**
- From a Jewish perspective, this story is full of uncleanness:
- The setting is on the eastern side of the lake, in Gentile territory.
- The man was possessed, and lived among the tombs. Numbers 19:11-14 dictated that anyone who failed to cleanse himself from contact with the dead “must be cut off from Israel.”
- In addition, those present were raising pigs – most likely to feed the Roman occupiers.

MONEY & THE LOST

- When it comes down to money or the well being of somebody else, money always wins in our culture.
- Jesus had destroyed their livelihood by sending the demons into the pigs. So they begged Jesus to leave.
- So many lost and broken people trampled by people worried about money and possessions. We are the body of Christ the broken in our towns will not see Jesus until they see us behave like Jesus.

“

This is a place where no one would want to go for any reason. Contrary to all reason and expectation, however, Jesus goes there. He penetrates both the ritual wall of uncleanness and the formidable reputation of the demoniac. For once, however, the explosive terror of the demoniac does not prevail...When demoniac meets divine, it is a no-contest event.

- James Edwards, Pillar Commentary

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 HOW SHOULD WE RESPOND TO PEOPLE WHO ARE “UNCLEAN?”
- 2 WHAT WAYS DOES YOUR CHURCH HELP THOSE WHO ARE OPRESSED?
- 3 HOW CAN CHALLENGE OURSELVES TO TOUCH AND HEAL THE UNCLEAN?

SELF-EVALUATE

HOW WERE YOU CHALLENGED?

WHAT IS YOUR PRAYER?

THE UNCLEAN & SUFFERING

SESSION 4.2

INTRODUCTION

This session will continue our discussion on how Jesus challenged culture by turning cultural norms upside down by redefining what it meant to be “unclean.” We will also discuss how Jesus dealt with suffering.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1** IS CHRONIC ILLNESS CAUSED BY SIN?
- 2** CAN A TINY AMOUNT OF DOUBT PREVENT HEALING?
- 3** WHY DOES GOD HEAL SOME AND NOT OTHERS?

UNCLEAN EPISODES

- Jesus sails into a region populated by Gentiles, healing a naked madman and commissioning him as a missionary to his hometown (Mark 5).
- Next we see Jesus touched by a woman with a twelve-year hemorrhage, a “female problem” that has disqualified her from worship and no doubt caused her much shame.
- The Pharisees taught that such illnesses came about because of a person’s sin; Jesus directly contradicted them.
- Some Christians have been guilty of perpetuating the same belief in healing.
- There are some views on healing that suggest if you aren’t healed, there is some doubt or sin in your life.
- Biblically, this is untrue (Lk. 7:11-18; Dan. 3:18; Acts 2:5-17).
- Jesus then heals Jairus’ daughter (another unclean situation).

EP 2.1 “JAIRUS’ DAUGHTER”

- Mark 5:21-24
- Sandwich Technique: Mark is very fond of placing a story in between two halves of another story; the story that is split into beginning and ending, helps the reader understand the middle story.
- Here, we have Jesus on his way to heal Jairus’ daughter, interrupted by the woman with the issue of blood.

EP 3 “WOMAN W/ ISSUE OF BLOOD”

- Mark 5:25-34
- There is a pattern of persistence in Scripture.
- Some of us have to crawl through the crowd to get to Jesus.

EP 2.2 “JAIRUS’ DAUGHTER”

- Mark 5:35-43

HOW DO WE DEFINE UNCLEAN?

- When Jesus came into contact with sick people, he didn’t get their sickness, they caught his health.
- This is not only about Jesus, we are the hands and feet of Jesus.
- Jesus says, “Greater things than this will you do.”
- Do we have a version of Levitical laws that keep us from reaching the lost?
- Do we have our own version of unclean people?

EP. 4 CONFRONTING THE PHARISEES

- Mark 7:1-23
- We have traditions in our churches; some are good, and some are not.
- The challenge is to figure out which is which.
- If we throw it all out we do a great disservice.
- Some of our traditions get in the way of us reaching the lost (i.e. Sunday PM service times).
- Some of our traditions we hold equal to Scripture, and we've blamed others for doing that.

THE JESUS WHO WHO TEACHES US HOW TO

SUFFER

- Christians used to understand suffering, when we were poor and ridiculed.
- Now that we've "crossed the tracks" financially, and denominationally have gained legitimacy, we've lost our understanding of suffering.
- The ideal life culturally is to avoid suffering completely.
- Suffering is a part of Christian life.
- God uses suffering in our life to make us stronger.
- We run away from things God sends to make us stronger in the faith.

NOTE

JESUS ENDURES SUFFERING AND ABANDONMENT: MARK
14:27-42; MARK 15:22-27; PSALM 22

GOOD RESULTS FROM SUFFERING

PERFECTION

In bringing many sons and daughters to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through what he suffered. **HEBREWS 2:10**

OBEDIENCE

During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him... **HEBREWS 5:7-9**

PERSEVERANCE

Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. **JAMES 1:2-4**

CHRISTLIKENESS

I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings...
PHILIPPIANS 3:10

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1** WHY DO CHRISTIANS WRESTLE WITH SUFFERING?
- 2** ARE THERE WAYS IN WHICH WE CONSIDER SUFFERING PURE JOY?
- 3** HOW DOES SUFFERING HELP US TO UNDERSTAND JESUS?

SELF-EVALUATE

HOW WERE YOU CHALLENGED?

WHAT IS YOUR PRAYER?

REACHING THE DESPISED

SESSION 5.1

INTRODUCTION

This session will look at Paul's definition of unclean, and discuss how Jesus sought those who were despised. Dr. Noel will help us understand that our role as followers of Jesus is to seek out those who have been rejected by their culture.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1 DO CHRISTIANS OFTEN
TAKE SCRIPTURE OUT OF
CONTEXT TO FIT DESIRES?

2 HOW CAN WE KNOW IF
WE HAVE ACCURATELY
UNDERSTOOD SCRIPTURE?

3 ARE THERE LEVELS OF
SIN? WHY OR WHY NOT?

PAUL'S "UNCLEAN"

- **Now, a conundrum:** Jesus went out of his way to touch the unclean person. So what did Paul mean when he said, "*Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you?*" (2 Cor. 6:17)
- **The problem:** Jesus goes out of his way to find and touch the unclean.
- Either Paul is contradicting Jesus, or we've misunderstood this passage.

2 COR 6.17 CONTEXT

- 2 Cor 6.14-17 is warning against idolatry.
- Paul is not banning interaction with unbelievers.
- We use erroneously as a way to withdraw from the world.

- This withdrawal, or separation from the world was a big part of some Christian denominations so it is difficult for us to overcome this misuse of Scripture.
- Put into context, however, Paul does not ban interaction with unbelievers:

“

I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people— not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world.

–1 Cor. 5:9

“

If an unbeliever invites you to a meal and you want to go, eat whatever is put before you without raising questions of conscience.

– 1 Cor. 10:27

“

So if the whole church comes together and everyone speaks in tongues, and inquirers or unbelievers come in, will they not say that you are out of your mind?

–1 Cor. 14:23

- Paul is talking about idolatry.
- “Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common?” 2 Cor. 6:14
- Paul here is talking about being joined together in worship with those who belong to cults.
- Paul is in Corinth, where idol worship is the thing to do. Paul is saying, come out from those temples and be separate.
- “What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God.” 2 Cor. 6:15
- “Come out from among them” = cultic worship.
- “Touch not the unclean thing” = the instruments of worship in the cultic temples .
- Paul is not contradicting Jesus but addressing a specific issue of temple worship / idolatry in the Corinthian church.

THE JESUS WHO WHO SEEKS THE

DESPISED

TAX COLLECTOR PT 1

- **Luke 5:27-32:** Levi the Tax Collector
- Tax collectors were employed by the occupying force – Rome – to collect taxes from Jews and thus were considered the worst kind of traitor.
- Collectors took far more than Rome's requirement and thus lined their own pockets.
- They were able to stop any Jew, assess the goods he/she was carrying, and assign a tax on the spot.
- Rabbis taught that one tax collector in a family defiled the whole family.
- Tax Collectors were absolutely despised.
- Tax Collectors could not testify in Jewish court.
- One was allowed to break a promise to a tax collector.
- The Synagogue would not accept their tithe.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1** WHO ARE THE MODERN DAY TAX COLLECTORS?
- 2** WHAT GROUPS OF PEOPLE DO WE TELL FELLOW CHRISTIANS TO AVOID?
- 3** HOW DOES JESUS RESPOND TO TAX COLLECTORS?

SELF-EVALUATE

HOW WERE YOU CHALLENGED?

WHAT IS YOUR PRAYER?

RUNNING TO SINNERS

SESSION 5.2

INTRODUCTION

This session will continue to examine how Jesus sought those who were despised, particularly tax collectors. Dr. Noel will also examine how Jesus demonstrated that God runs towards sinners.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 HAVE YOU EVER PUSHED THROUGH SOMETHING TO SEE JESUS?
- 2 HAVE YOU EVER WRESTLED WITH RELATING TO A DESPISED PERSON?
- 3 DO SINNERS FIND GOD, OR DOES GOD FIND SINNERS?

TAX COLLECTOR PT 2

- **Luke 19:1-27:** Zacchaeus.
- **Jesus' mission statement:** I've come to seek and save the lost. If the Church is about anything else, it is off mission.
- The chief tax collector (Zachaeus) would have had a circle of other Jews working for him, taking a cut of their profits too.
- Zachaeus was even more despised than Levi (Matthew).
- Zachaeus worked hard to see Jesus, he pushed through.

EATING W/ SINNERS

- In that culture, to eat with someone was to identify with them.
- Why would Jesus risk scandal, as a good man, by identifying with the equivalent of today's pimps or homosexuals?
- Note: This not putting oneself into needlessly compromising situations.
- This is however, reaching out our hands to those in need of Jesus despite our reputation. Jesus didn't care about the scandal. He cared about the scandalous.
- He was willing to have people say very harsh things about him in order to reach out to the one who needed it.
- If we want to be proper followers of Jesus we have to willing to do the same thing.

THE JESUS WHO WHO

RUNS

“

Now the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around to hear Jesus. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.”

-Luke 15:1-2



Jesus uses three stories to to demonstrate how excited God is when a sinner comes home: **The Lost Sheep, The Lost Coin, and the Lost Son.**

THE LOST SHEEP

- The lost sheep got into trouble on its own. It was at fault. But heaven rejoices when it's found.
- Some Christians have gotten into the mentality that if someone is to blame for their own troubles we don't need to help them.
- Jesus consistently leaves out the part where the person is in trouble because it's their own fault.

THE LOST COIN

- The lost coin did nothing to help. But heaven rejoices when it's found.

THE LOST SON

- The prodigal son squandered gifts given to him. When he returns, his father throws a party.
- "Prodigal" literally means "wasteful"
- The son's request is for his share – 1/3 of his father's possessions – before his father dies
- This was unbelievably insulting
- The father graciously grants his request nevertheless
- The son moves to a far land – to dwell with pagans – and spends his fortune on wild living (prostitutes)
- Broke and hungry he then submits to the ultimate humiliations: working for Gentiles, feeding the most obviously unclean of all animals – pigs.
- Coming back to his father, he apologizes and wants to offer himself as a servant – but his father reinstates him
- In this case, the father runs. Middle Eastern fathers never ran – it was undignified.
- A wealthy landowner running down the street of his village is extraordinary.
- Jesus' listeners would have been thinking: "What kind of crazy love is this, that the father ran towards such an embarrassment of a son!?"

How does God feel about people who squander their opportunities, their gifts, their talents, and live in ways that are absolutely dreadful to us?



He runs to them.

- God is in the business of redeeming broken people.
- If this is not the message our communities have been hearing from the church, then we haven't been faithful to gospel.
- God isn't just willing to forgive sinners – He's passionate about it.
- Jesus didn't come to call those who think they're righteous, but those who know they are sinners.
- The fear: we as a church go after those who think they're righteous and we're afraid to touch those who know they're sinners.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1** WHY IS IT EASIER TO GO AFTER THOSE WHO THINK THEY'RE RIGHTEOUS
- 2** HOW CAN THE CHURCH GO AFTER THOSE WHO ARE SINNERS?
- 3** OUR YOUR CURRENT METHODS OF REACHING SINNERS WORKING?

SELF-EVALUATE

HOW WERE YOU CHALLENGED?

WHAT IS YOUR PRAYER?

AUTHORITY & OUTCASTS

SESSION 6.1

INTRODUCTION

This session will examine how Jesus spoke as one who had authority. Dr. Noel will also explore how Jesus embraces all outcasts.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1** DO YOU MAKE DECISIONS BASED ON PEOPLE PLEASING?
- 2** DID JESUS PLEASE PEOPLE DURING HIS MINISTRY?
- 3** DO WE SOMETIMES GET ANGRY WHEN THE GOSPEL IS PREACHED?

THE JESUS WHO SPOKE WITH

AUTHORITY

The crowds were amazed because Jesus taught with authority not as the teachers of the law.



“

When Jesus had 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

“

They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law.

-Mark 1:21

“

Then he went down to Capernaum, a town in Galilee, and on the Sabbath he taught the people. They were amazed at his teaching, because his words had authority.

-Luke 4:31



Conversely, the religious leaders were afraid because Jesus taught with authority.



“

When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard Jesus' parables, they knew he was talking about them. They looked for a way to arrest him, but they were afraid of the crowd because the people held that he was a prophet.

-Matthew 31:45

“

When the leading priests and teachers of religious law heard what Jesus had done, they began planning how to kill him. But they were afraid of him because the people were so amazed at his teaching.

-Mark 11:18

THE PROBLEM

MINISTRY WITHIN THE CHURCH, AT ALL LEVELS, IS BEING STRONGLY HAMPERED BY THE FEAR OF PEOPLE

- **Leaders:** We are called to be pot stirrers. The Gospel is suppose to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable.
- **Parishioners:** If the gospel is being preached properly it will sometimes make you angry; this is your flesh reacting.
- We have to stop having a fear of others, and have a fear of the Lord.



“

For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.

-Galatians 1:10

“

For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.

-2 Timothy 1:17

“

The fear of man lays a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is safe.

-Proverbs 29:25

- **Leaders:** It is an impossible task to be people-pleasers.
- In most churches, pleasing one group of people means making another group upset.
- We are not called to be people pleasers, we are called to please God.

THE JESUS WHO EMBRACES THE **OUTCAST**

- When Jesus was confronted by unbelievers in his day, they expected Him to be like the Pharisees; for the most part, He wasn't.
- When we, as Christians, meet unbelievers today, they may expect us to be like pharisaical Christians of the past; for the most part, we aren't.
- What can we learn from Jesus' approach?

WOMAN AT THE WELL

BACKGROUND: JEWS AND SAMARITANS

- Samaritans were Jews left behind during the exile of the Jews in 538BC.
- They intermarried with Gentiles sent to populate the land.
- Their religion was a mix of Judaism and paganism.
- Jews despised Samaritans and called them "dogs."
- No Jew would even walk through Samaritan territory.
- As the rift deepened, the Jews rebuilt the Temple in Jerusalem under Haggai and Zechariah (520–515 B.C.).
- The Samaritans built a Temple on Mt. Gerizim, where Abraham prepared to sacrifice Isaac.
- By the time of Christ, each group considered the other pagan, and contact between the two was forbidden.
- Jews held the Samaritans with such disdain they would not speak to them, look at them, or touch them.
- If they travelled through Samaria they would brush the dust off of their feet when leaving their territory.

JESUS' RESPONSE TO SAMARITANS

- The woman at the well: John 4:1-42
- Jesus is pagan territory, talking with a sinful woman (extremely taboo to 1st Century Jews).
- This would have seemed shocking to the first century reader.

WHAT IS OUR RESPONSE?

- It's not the healthy who need doctors.
- Christians often respond more with fear and anger, and not compassion.
- We have no control over culture, only our response.
- Shaking our fist at the darkness never has and never will work.
- You get rid of darkness by bringing light into a place.
- As we bring light, we don't lead with condemnation.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 HOW DO WE SHOULD WE RESPOND TO SINNERS IN OUR TOWNS?
- 2 HOW DO WE MOVE FROM FEAR AND ANGER TO COMPASSION?
- 3 WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BRING THE LIGHT WITHOUT CONDEMNATION?

SELF-EVALUATE

HOW WERE YOU CHALLENGED?

WHAT IS YOUR PRAYER?

JESUS IS FULL OF GRACE

SESSION 6.2

INTRODUCTION

This session will continue to examine how Jesus embraces the outcast. Dr. Noel will also discuss how Jesus is universal in his grace, and approaches sinners without condemnation.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1** DO YOU MAKE DECISIONS BASED ON PEOPLE PLEASING?
- 2** DID JESUS PLEASE PEOPLE DURING HIS MINISTRY?
- 3** DO WE SOMETIMES GET ANGRY WHEN THE GOSPEL IS PREACHED?

THE GOOD SAMARITAN

- **Luke 10:30-37**
- This story would have upset the religious leaders: the priest and Levite pass by, yet it is the Samaritan takes the wounded man out of the ditch.
- From Jerusalem to Jericho was about 27 kms, and the road descended 3300 ft.
- It was well known as an inhabitation of thieves and robbers.

FACT

NO ONE TRAVELLED FROM JERUSALEM TO JERICHO ALONE;
THE ATTACK WAS THE MAN'S OWN FAULT



- It doesn't matter what kind of mess you get yourself in, Jesus wants to pull you out.
- It doesn't matter if people in our community have caused their own circumstances, Jesus wouldn't even mention it.
- Grace pulls you out messes you've brought upon yourself.

THE BEATEN MAN

- Stripped of his clothes, and perhaps beaten unconscious, this man would have had no identifying markers.
- So close to Jerusalem, and the Temple, most would have assumed this man to be Jewish. Jesus gives no hint.

THE PRIEST

- Served at the nearby Temple.
- Required to maintain strict standards of purity at all times.
- Were in the upper classes of Jewish society, and were born into the priestly class.
- They were used to being judged by their social position – not their actions. People assumed if the priest did it, it must therefore be righteous.

THE PRIEST

- "Levites were descendants of Levi but not of Aaron, and they assisted the priests (Aaron's descendants) in the temple."
- The Levite, who is of a lower social class, may have been walking. He may have seen the priest ahead of him and thought to himself, "If the priest may pass then so should I."

In the story of the Good Samaritan, Jesus is asking, ***who shows mercy? Who is the hero?***

The answer: ***The despised Samaritan.***

THE JESUS WHO SHOWS GRACE & MERCY ACROSS

ALL BOUNDARIES

- **Luke 7:36-50**
- Jesus invited the outcast, was judged for it, and we often miss the key points because of our lack of understanding the Gospel message.
- We have people in town addicted to lottery tickets and we know they can't feed their own children. Instead of compassion, seeing their enslavement, we respond harshly, saying, "I can't believe they're wasting their money."
- Jesus' heart would be broken that someone would be so ensnared by the Devil.
- It's really time for our hearts to be broken by things that break the heart of God.

THE JESUS WHO WHO DOES NOT

CONDEMN

- **John 8:1-11**
- Jesus managed to uphold grace and a righteous standard at the same time. The woman caught in adultery feels liberated.
- "GO AND SIN NO MORE" It is possible it is not a warning, but a truth of liberation.
- Imagine if we we didn't condemn people and said, "Come to Jesus! He can set you free from your addiction"?
- We have people in our communities absolutely enchained and dying inside, looking for one word of hope or love.
- Rather the church has too often been ready to cast stones.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1** HOW DO SHOULD WE RESPOND TO SINNERS IN OUR TOWNS?
- 2** HOW DO WE MOVE FROM FEAR AND ANGER TO COMPASSION?
- 3** WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BRING THE LIGHT WITHOUT CONDEMNATION?

SELF-EVALUATE

HOW WERE YOU CHALLENGED?

WHAT IS YOUR PRAYER?

JESUS AS GOD & MAN

SESSION 7.1

INTRODUCTION

This session will go through a summary of the “Jesus I Never Knew,” highlighting key points throughout our journey together. Dr. Noel will also examine how Jesus was at once fully God and fully human.

JESUS IN THE 4 GOSPELS

SUMMARY

THE JESUS WHO WAS DESPISED

- “He is an alcoholic, a glutton, and a friend of sinners”
- “Isn’t this a carpenter? Isn’t this Mary’s Son?”

THE JESUS WHO PREFERS HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP OVER WORSHIP

- “Leave your gift at the altar. First, go and reconciled to your brother.”
- “I prefer mercy over sacrifice. I have not come to call the righteous, but

THE JESUS WHO MAKES OUTRAGEOUS DEMANDS

- “The first will be last”
- “Love your enemies.”

THE JESUS WHO GETS ANGRY, VERY ANGRY

- “My house will be called a House of Prayer for all nations”

THE JESUS WHO REINTERPRETS “UNCLEAN”

- “Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down.”

THE JESUS WHO TEACHES US HOW TO SUFFER...AND WHY?

- “Divine Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered.”

THE JESUS WHO SEEKS THE DESPISED

- “Follow me,” Jesus said to him, and Levi got up, left everything and followed him.”
- “Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.”

THE JESUS WHO RUNS

- “But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.”

THE JESUS WHO SPOKE WITH AUTHORITY

- “They were amazed at his authority – not like their teachers of the Law...”

THE JESUS WHO EMBRACES ALL OUTCASTS

- “Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony.”

THE JESUS WHO SHOWS GRACE & MERCY ACROSS ALL BOUNDARIES

- “Whoever is forgiven little, loves little. Whoever is forgiven much, loves much”

THE JESUS WHO DOES NOT CONDEMN

- • “Then neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more!”

To be a Christ-follower means to ***follow Christ as the New Testament portrays him...***

- We cannot wait for our churches, or denominations, to act.
- We, as individuals, must be the light to the outcasts surrounding us.
- We hampered by two things: **1) a lack of confidence**, and **2) a fear of people**.
- James 1:5 addresses our lack of confidence.
- Galatians 1:10 and Proverbs 25:29 address our fear of people.

THE JESUS WHO IS
FULLY HUMAN
AND
FULLY GOD

- The Bible teaches that Jesus both fully God and fully human simultaneously.
- Pentecostals are largely comfortable with Jesus as God, but we are increasingly uncomfortable with Jesus as human.

“

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

–John 1:1-5



A power affirmation of ***Jesus' divinity.***



“

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

–John 1:14



A power affirmation of ***Jesus' humanity.***

THE ISSUE

- The nature of Christ has been debated since the 2nd century, and continues to be today.
- The belief that Jesus of Nazareth existed as man is relatively unchallenged: that Jesus was fully God is again under attack.
- We need to be people of the word, not from just our pastor, but our own study.
- The Church has historically believed that Jesus was fully God and fully man.
- Though difficult to understand, we believe the Bible teaches this remarkable aspect of Christ's nature.

WHY SO IMPORTANT?

- If Jesus was only a man, he could be a great teacher, moral leader, or example for us, but nothing more.
- If Jesus was only God, he could not identify with us, and serve as our Great High Priest.

JESUS' CLAIMS

- Further, Jesus made incredible claims upon our lives:
- He called us to die to ourselves and serve him.
- He called us to love and forgive our enemies.
- If he spoke as God, the consequences are considerable. If however he was mere man, his claims may be ignored.

JESUS: FULLY GOD

- "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." - Jesus in John 1:1
- "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!" - Jesus in John 8:58
- "The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word." - Hebrews 1:3

“

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness...

–Philippians 2:5-7

- Jesus also forgave sins, thereby proving his divinity (Mark 2:3-8).

JESUS: FULLY MAN

THE WORD BECAME FLESH

- “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.” **JOHN 1:14**
- “Jesus called out with a loud voice, ‘Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.’ When he had said this, he breathed his last.” **LUKE 23:46**
- The Greek word used is *pneuma*, the same word used for human spirit in the New Testament.

JESUS HAD EMOTIONS

- “Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them...” “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.” **MATT. 26:36-38**
- ***Psyche (soul)*** is used for Jesus’ emotions, as it is for human emotions.

WHY IT NEEDED TO OCCUR

- “Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death... For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham’s descendants. For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.” **HEBREWS 2:14-18**

JESUS BECAME TIRED

- “Now he had to go through Samaria. So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob’s well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well.” **JOHN 4:4**
- Jesus became tired, just as we do.

JESUS BECAME HUNGRY

- “Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.” **MATTHEW 4:1**
- Do you ever get hungry?

KNOWLEDGE LIMITATION

- “At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, “Who touched my clothes?” **MARK 5:30**
- “No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father” **MARK 12:32**

Christ *had to be God to save us*; He *had to be man to identify with us* and replace us for sin's punishment....

“

Therefore, following the Holy Fathers, we all with one accord teach men to acknowledge one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, at once complete in Godhead and complete in manhood, truly God and truly man, consisting also of a reasonable soul and body; of one substance with the Father as regards his Godhead, and at the same time...of one substance with us as regards his manhood; like us in all respects, (apart from sin); as regards his Godhead- begotten of the Father before the ages, but yet as regards his manhood - begotten, for us men and our salvation, of Mary the Virgin, the God-bearer; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, recognized IN TWO NATURES, WITHOUT CONFUSION, WITHOUT CHANGE, WITHOUT DIVISION, WITHOUT SEPARATION...not as parted or separated into two persons, but one and the same Son and only-begotten God the Word, Lord Jesus Christ...

–Statement of Chalcedon, 451 A.D.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 WHAT WAS THE MOST CHALLENGING POINT ABOUT JESUS' I NEVER KNEW?
- 2 WHY DO CHRISTIANS WRESTLE WITH JESUS BEING HUMAN?
- 3 HOW HAS UNDERSTANDING JESUS' HUMANITY AFFECT YOU?

SELF-EVALUATE

HOW WERE YOU CHALLENGED?

WHAT IS YOUR PRAYER?

CLOSING THE SERIES

SESSION 7.2

INTRODUCTION

This final session will conclude our discussion of Jesus as fully God and fully human with some follow-up questions. Dr. Noel will then conclude the series with some final application points.

FOLLOW-UP Q & A

1. What does Philippians 2:7 mean?

- "...but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness..." NIV
- "...but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men..." NASB

2. Did Jesus have limited knowledge?

- How could Jesus, who was fully God, have limited knowledge about some things?
- Self-limitation; He walked this earth as a man.

3. Could Jesus have sinned?

- Yes, for there is no real temptation without possibility of sin. One cannot be truly tempted to do something one cannot do.
- Jesus cannot know what it's truly like to be in your shoes without knowing what real temptation feels like (Heb 2:14-17).

4. How could Jesus remain sinless?

- Jesus was not born in sin, as we are. Jews believed that sin was passed through the father, not the mother.
- This is why his father was not Joseph, but the Holy Spirit. It broke the chain of original sin in him.
- The Holy Spirit also grasped him firmly from birth, overshadowing Him for God's purposes.

5. If sinless, how could Jesus identify with our sin and guilt?

- **1 Peter 2:24:** He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.
- **2 Cor 5: 21:** God made him who had no sin to be sin for us...
- **Isaiah 53:6:** We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the LORD has laid on him the sins of us all.

6. Did Jesus perform miracles as God or man?

- **John 5:19:** I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does.
- **Luke 5:17:** One day Jesus was teaching, and Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there. They had come from every village of Galilee and from Judea and Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was with Jesus to heal the sick.
- **Luke 4:1:** Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness...Where he was tempted by the Devil...
- **Luke 4:14:** Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit.

The amazing thing is not that God came to earth as God in a human body. The amazing thing is that God veiled aspects of his divinity, and truly lived on this earth as a human, ***just so that*** he would truly know what it is like to live life on earth as humanity must do.

APPLICATION POINTS

1. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. ***Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence,*** so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. **HEBREWS 4:15-16**
2. I tell you the truth, ***anyone who has faith in me*** will do what I have been doing. He ***will do even greater things than these***, because I am going to the Father. **JOHN 14:12**

JESUS IN THE 4 GOSPELS

CONCLUSION

We must recognize to what lengths the Bible goes to demonstrate that Jesus ate, drank, had relationship with, and ministered to the very worst, the most offensive, of his culture.



We must understand how these stories of Jesus play out in modern times.

1. Jesus Calls the Porn Star (Luke 5:27-32)

- After this, Jesus went out in the red light district and saw a porn star by the name of Patricia just getting off work. "Follow me," Jesus said to her, and Patricia got up, left everything and followed him.
- Then Patricia held a great banquet for Jesus at the studio where she worked, and a large crowd of porn stars and directors were eating with them. But the Christians and their Pastors complained to his disciples, "Why do you eat and drink with porn stars and sinners?"
- Jesus answered them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

2. Jesus Calls a Pimp (Luke 19:1-6)

- Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. A man was there by the name of Vincent; he was a Pimp in charge of many women, and was wealthy. He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see over the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way.
- When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Vincent, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly.

3. Jesus and the Woman caught in Homosexuality (John 8:1-11)

- At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. The Christians and their leadership brought in a woman caught in the act of homosexuality. They made her stand before the group and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of homosexuality. In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?"
- "Neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and sin no more."

4. Jesus Receives the Addicted (Luke 7:36-38)

- When one of the Christians invited Jesus to have dinner with him, he went to the Christian's home and reclined at the table. A sinful woman in that town who was heavily addicted to hard drugs and lotto tickets, whose children had been removed from her home, learned that Jesus was eating at the Christian's house, so she came there with an alabaster jar of perfume. As she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them.

5. The Good Homosexual (Luke 10:25-37)

- Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A Pastor happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Board Member, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Homosexual, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine..."

6. Jesus Embraces the Transgendered (John 4:3-9)

- So Jesus left Judea and went back once more to Galilee.
- Now he had to go through an area widely known for their gay, lesbian, and transgendered community. So he came to a town and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, went into the local bar just outside of town. It was about noon.
- A transgendered woman named Caitlyn (she was born a man, and had been called Bruce), came for a drink, and Jesus said to him/her, "Will you buy me a drink?" (His disciples had gone into town to buy food.)
- Caitlyn said to him, "You are a Christian and I am transgendered. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Christians do not associate with transgendered persons.)

7. Jesus Cleanses the Local Church (Mark 11:15-17)

- And they came to a rural town. And he entered the Christian Church and began to drive out those who were more concerned about the Church finances than lost people, and he drove out those in expensive clothes who only attended to see what others were wearing. And he would not allow anyone to make rules that kept those in town from feeling comfortable to attend. And he was teaching them and saying to them, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for everyone in town'? But you have made it an exclusive club."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1

IN WHAT WAYS HAS THIS SERIES
CHALLENGED YOU?

2

WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO IMITATE
JESUS DAILY?

3

HOW MIGHT THE CHURCH BETTER
REFLECT JESUS?