

WONDER

Week 4 - Can We Trust Jesus? (Part 1)

"A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic--on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg--or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice." C.S. Lewis

THE MAIN POINT

Often people will say that Jesus was just a good guy, a really good teacher, a prophet, or just a made up story. This meeting will challenge students to ask themselves "Who do you say Jesus is?" Very few intelligent historians will argue that Jesus never lived. For the most part they even believe He said what is says He said in the New Testament. This leaves us with three options: either Jesus was crazy, He was a liar, or He was telling the truth that He actually is Lord. This meeting will set up a second week on Jesus' resurrection that will give students the opportunity to respond to the Gospel.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- half sheet of paper or 3x5 card for each student
- pen/pencil for each student

GETTING STARTED

Remind them of the rules of small group:

RULES FOR SMALL GROUP:

Commitment - Commit to being at every group meeting (make it a priority!)

Confidentiality - What is shared here stays here.

Be honest or be silent - don't make up an answer just to have one. Sometimes the most honest answer is no answer, so if you need to, just say pass.

Respect - for one another, their thoughts/ideas/opinions (no put downs).

We are so glad you're a part of this group. We've been working together to seek out answers to life's hardest questions. Last week we talked about whether or not we were created and before that if we can trust the Bible. As we discussed, the Bible is actually very reliable and can even change your life if you're willing to open up your heart to that. This week, let's turn our attention to the main character in the Bible. He is the most important figure in the whole book. Let's talk about Jesus. Remember that this group is not about arguing or proving who's smartest. It's about exploring together. Let's jump in.

When it comes to Jesus there's a lot of information out there, but not all of it is true!

- What are some things you have heard about Jesus? What's He like? What did He do? *Don't correct wrong answers here.*

Sometimes knowing what's true and what's not about someone can be kind of like this game.

ACTIVITY

2 Truths and a Lie

Play 2 truths and a lie with the students - have them write 2 true things and one false thing on their paper/card. Have them write their name on the top. Then have them pass their paper to the right one person, that person puts a check under whichever fact they think is a LIE about that person. Then pass the paper to the right again, the next person puts a check under the fact they think is a LIE. Keep passing the papers one person to the right, each time everyone puts a check under the fact they think is a LIE. In the end each person should end up with their own paper again.

Take a couple minutes to go around and see who was able to trick the most people into believing

their lie.

GOING DEEPER

Kind of like in that game, often the truth and the lies about someone can be difficult to tell apart. That's especially true when it comes to Jesus. There are a lot of people who say a lot of different things about Jesus, but let's take it right to the source--the Bible.

One day Jesus asked one of his followers named Peter a tough question: "Who do you say that I am?" Peter responded: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Just so you know, the word "Christ" isn't Jesus' last name. It's actually a title that means savior. That essentially means when someone calls Jesus the "Christ," they are saying He was the chosen one to save you and me and everyone else.

- Be honest. Who is Jesus to you in your life? Is He the Christ? Is He just some good teacher? Does He not really even matter in your daily life? Explain your answer. How did you reach your conclusion?

Read John 5:16-18 NLT

- What's the significance of Jesus calling God His father?

Read John 3:16-17

You've probably heard this quoted before. It's probably the most well-known Bible verse there is. People even get it tattooed on themselves!

- What do you think it means?

So Jesus is claiming to be the Son of God sent to save people who believe in Him. His followers believed He was the Son of God and so do billions of other people who came after them.

Jesus was not just some random "good guy" from history. Nobody who said the kind of things Jesus said and did the kind of things Jesus did could just be considered only a good teacher or good guy. Therefore, there are only 3 possibilities when it comes to Jesus: either He was a dirty lying trickster, He was crazy, or maybe He was telling the truth and is actually Lord and savior of all mankind.

Let's briefly take a look at each of those options:

Liar - This theory suggest that Jesus was just a con artist and lied about who he was for fame. There's a couple problems with the idea of Jesus being a liar. First, remember 2 truths and a lie?

- How far would you go to convince someone that the lie you put on your paper is actually true? (give them a minute to answer)
- Would you be willing to die to convince someone that your lie in the game was true?

So if Jesus was a liar, He was willing to die for what He was lying about. What would be the point of that? so He can be famous? So He can purposely mislead people? It simply doesn't add up.

The second issue with Jesus being a liar is that He actually performed legitimate miracles and they are well witnessed and documented both in and out of the New Testament. Even the enemies of Jesus acknowledge that He was performing miracles (see John 11:43-48 for example). So if Jesus was lying about being God, how did He do things like heal all kinds of people, and especially raise people from the dead? Also, why do nice things for people like heal them if His whole goal was to lie and mislead them?

- Do you think it seems like Jesus being a liar makes sense?

Crazy- This theory suggests that Jesus' claim to be God was a result of him being crazy. There are some problems with the theory that Jesus was just crazy.

Read John 7:10-15 NLT.

- Does that sound like a crazy person to you?
- If He was crazy and not actually God, how did He perform the miracles?
- Do you think Jesus being a lunatic makes sense?

So if Jesus wasn't a liar and wasn't crazy, then what answer is left? The only option left is that He was telling the truth. If he's not lying, and he's not crazy, that can only mean that He is Lord and that He did in fact come to save you and me.

There are no legitimate scholars who study history and believe that Jesus never lived. He is a real historical person who actually lived. So there lies the most important question we will ever answer: Who do you say that Jesus is?

- If Jesus is telling the truth, how might that change your life?
- What questions do you still have about Jesus?

TAKE AWAY

The amazing thing about Jesus and what He said and did is that He didn't leave room for Him to be a "good guy". He is one of 3 things: either He's a liar, He's crazy, or He's Lord and Savior. Who do

you say that He is?

If you're still not convinced that Jesus was actually God, I challenge you this week to really think through what we talked about today and come back next week with any questions you have that are holding you back from believing. Next week, we're going to dive into more of what that means for you and me.

If you believe now that Jesus was actually who He said that He was, then my challenge for you this week is to start reading the Bible to see what else Jesus said because if He is truly God and the savior of the world, then what He said is important! A good place to start is the book of John in the New Testament. If you don't have a Bible of your own, let me know and I will gladly get one for you in the next couple days so you can start to check out Jesus for yourself!

Come back next week as we take a look at the best evidence we have that Christianity is true.