



LIFE GROUP SERMON NOTES

“Who is Jesus?”

Ps. Tim Johnson - Mar. 29, 2015

WARM-UP (10-15 minutes)

Choose a question below to answer, or ask another. *No right or wrong answers.*

- When you were a child what did you want to do when you grew up?
- If you were required to change your current profession, what would you want the new one to be?
- What is an occupation that you admire but probably won't ever do because of realistic limitations?

WORD (10-15 minutes)

Sermons can be heard online at <http://www.bethelworld.org>

How is it that some could shout praises for Jesus as he entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, and then shout for his crucifixion a short five days later? Perhaps the primary reason is a lack of understanding as to who Jesus is and what he was doing and why.

Matthew 16:13-14 ESV *Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”*

People today still discuss who he is and what he did, and hence have many different reactions to him. We have our own varied opinions of Jesus. A brief survey of our culture reveals a myriad of opinions and nuances about who he is: a good man, a prophet, a misguided fool, a rebel, a moral instructor, a hater of certain sinners, a kind grandfatherly figure who understands all our sins and never disciplines, and more.

What did Jesus say about himself?

John 6:61-62 ESV *But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples were grumbling about this, said to them, “Do you take offense at this? Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before?”*

Jesus made clear that he pre-existed in heaven with the Father before he came to earth as a human.

John 14:6-11 ESV *Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.” Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.” Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves.*

Jesus equated himself with God the Father, which is extraordinary given the strong, radical ancient world Jewish belief of monotheism.

If Jesus is only a man and not God, then he is a liar because he claimed both to be equal to God the Father and to be sinless.

If Jesus is only a man and not God, then we are still lost in our sins. He could not and did not provide atonement for our sins, because all normal humans have sinned and are unqualified to take the place of others in punishment. Each deserves punishment for his or her own sins.

But because Jesus is a man *and* God, we see God and learn about him by looking at the life and teachings of Jesus.

- We learn about God's power through both his incarnation and his resurrection.
- We learn about God's holiness and justice when we consider Jesus' crucifixion for our sins.
- We learn about God's mercy when we think about Jesus saying, "Father, forgive them...", as he hung on the cross.

The blood of Jesus that was spilled at the cross is not merely the blood of a righteous man, but God's blood. It represents his sinless, holy, perfect life which is able to serve as a just substitute to compensate for all of our sins. No one is so sinful that they cannot be forgiven. He or she must simply turn to God in repentance for his or her sins.

Whoever you are, you will need to deal with the question, "Who is Jesus?" Your answer will directly affect your relationship with God in this life and in the next. Who do you say Jesus is? What do you believe about him?

PERSONAL APPLICATION (10-15 minutes)

Choose an item below to discuss, or introduce another related topic for discussion.

- Who do you believe Jesus is? Why do you believe what you believe?
- Do you believe differently today about Jesus compared to what you formerly believed about him? If so, what caused you to change your beliefs?
- What kind of different beliefs about Jesus do you encounter when you talk to other people about Jesus? How do you respond to beliefs about Jesus that are different than your own?

PRAYER (10-15 minutes)

Pray for any of the following, as well as any other requests you may have.

- Pray that God will open our understanding to see and know Jesus for who he really is.
- Pray that God will help us live worthy lives that demonstrate to others our beliefs about Jesus.
- Pray that God will give us wisdom, boldness, and clarity to talk to other people about who we believe Jesus is and why he is so important for every person.