

FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION:

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

Check-ins and ice-breaker conversation

1. Read the quote under “context matters” in the notes again. What do you think about the idea of Christ or God simply as a loose cosmic, “make it anything I want” god? Why would this concept be popular?
2. The scandal of particularity of Jesus. This bothers some people and certainly many non-Christians. Talk about why that might be.
3. Do you prefer general feelings of love or particular expressions of love in your life? Why?
4. Understanding Jesus’ Jewish context is important for our understanding Him and then bridging to OUR context. What happens if we listen in on a conversation WITHOUT knowing the context (back-story, events, etc.) at work or with a group we are new to?
5. Jesus was the transition point, the overlap, between old and new covenant. Explore this a little again. Read the passages in the notes above under “Two Ways Jesus is the End of Religion”. What are you hearing (think/feel)?
6. There are five “Ts” that Jesus confronts in John 4. What do those “Ts” look like today?
7. Having an ongoing life shaped by Jesus-awareness is our goal. Andy Stanley says, “if anyone can predict their own death and resurrection and pulls it off, follow that person!” What do you think of that claim?

PRAYER:

JANUARY 17, 2021

PEACE WITH GOD
2021

REVEALING REVERSALS

John 4:1-42

"It is no surprise, in view of his teachings and actions, that Jesus was crucified. What is surprising is that it did not happen sooner." -Ben Witherington III (111).

Jesus challenges our ideas of how God should be. Where we want a vague force - Jesus gets VERY personal and particular. Where we want particular favour, God zooms out and goes universal. Jesus stands above, through, and in all God-experiences of all times. And we keep trying to kill him, but he keeps coming back!

BIG IDEA: In order to have peace with God, we need to get around the obstacles to a direct encounter with God. God makes that possible in Jesus—part of Godself.

IMAGES AND ILLUSTRATIONS: Tearing down a wall, Mail Carrier, Temple

Jesus takes on religion in His context - and it's scandalous.

CONTEXT MATTERS

"When we pluck selective teachings of Jesus out of Jesus' human, historical, Jewish, Israel-based, first-century, narrative context, we tend to create a cosmic Christ who acts more like a projection screen that reflects back to us our own assumptions and inclinations. For some people, the reason Jesus always seems to agree with their views isn't because they have studied Jesus and conformed their views and values to align with his, but because the opinions of their detached, untethered, floating-in-the-clouds Christ have been made to align with theirs." (Cavey, EOR, 112).

THE SCANDAL OF PARTICULARITY

"God's universal love revealed in one person at one point in history in one place on the planet the scandal of particularity" (112). God's love is UNIVERSAL BUT the expression is always PARTICULAR

TEARING DOWN THE WALLS, JESUS VS. RELIGION

The End of Religion

Robert Farrar Capon, *"Christianity is not a religion. Christianity is the proclamation of the end of religion, not of a new religion, or even the best of all religions...If the cross is the sign of anything, it's the sign that God has gone out of the religion business and solved all the world's problems without requiring a single human being to do a single religious thing. What the cross is actually a sign of is the fact that religion can't do a thing about the world's problems--that it never did work and it never will."* (97).

- God's character, heart and love never changes. But the way God works with humans has always been changing. God is relational - adaptive.
 - *Isaiah 43:18-19*

- Two ways Jesus is the End of Religion
 - **The law.** *Ephesians 2:14-15; Hebrews 10:9, 8:13*

 - **Jesus IS the GOAL** (Telos) of all religion. He is the reality to which it points. He is the substance - it is the shadow. *Colossians 2:16-17; Hebrews 8:12,10:1,14-18; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:25-27; 2 Corinthians 5:17*

JOHN 4 AND BIG FIVE BOUNDARY MARKERS—THE FIVE “TS”

Boundary markers are about exclusivity—holiness. NT Wright uses the image of a letter carrier. *"Picture a letter carrier who is proud of her big bag of mail. In fact, she is so proud of it that she wears it everywhere she goes like a badge of honour for all to see. 'Look how popular I am,' she tells her friends. 'I have so much mail!' She has forgotten that her purpose is to deliver what she has been entrusted with"* (115).

- Torah

- Tradition

- Tribalism

- Territory

- Temple

BREAKING THE RULES—Terminating Torah

FINAL WORD

SENDING