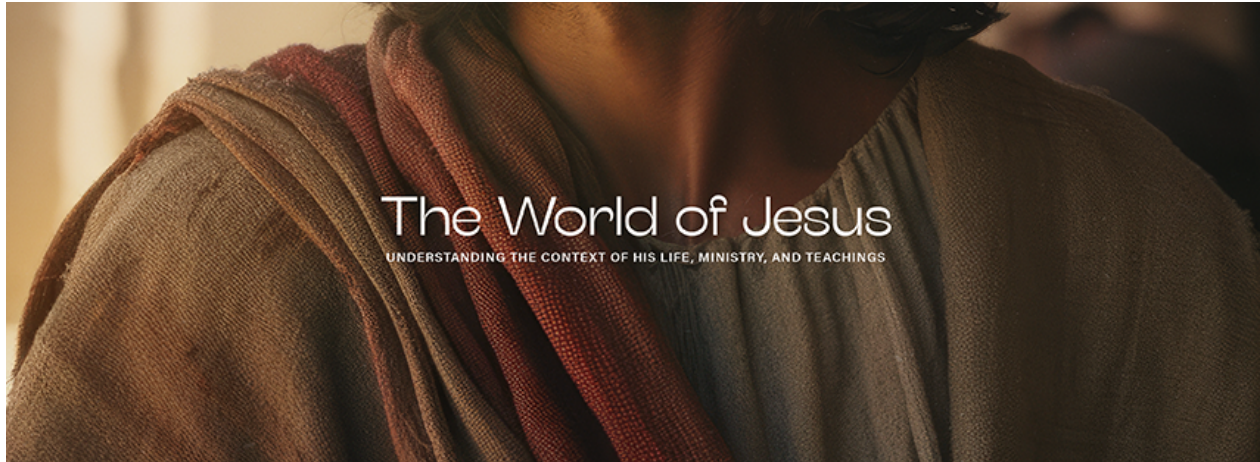




The World of Jesus

UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT OF HIS LIFE, MINISTRY, AND TEACHINGS

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS



Week 1

Text: Matthew 5:1–20

Supplemental Texts: Matthew 5–7

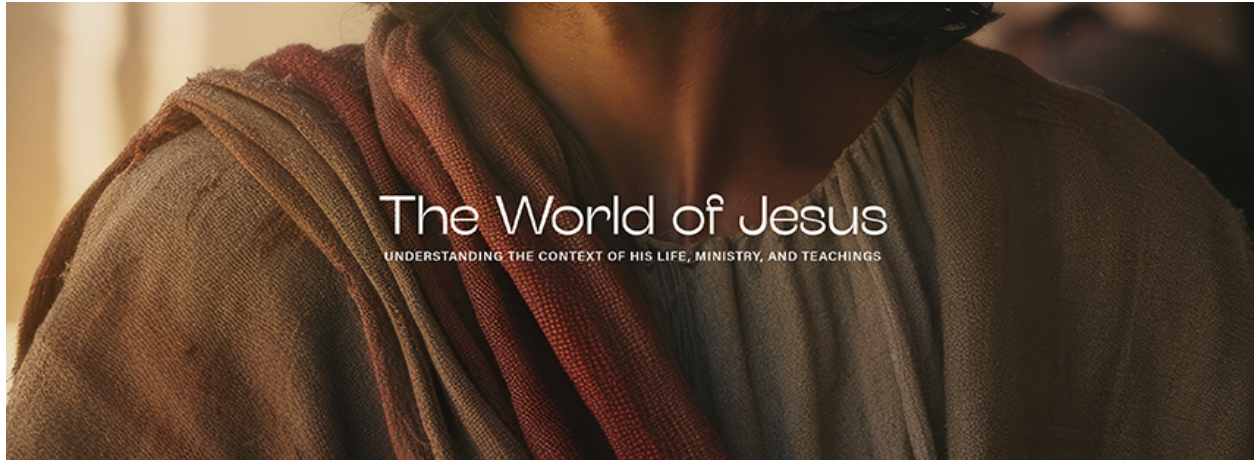
Topics: Law of Moses, Sermon on the Mount, Jesus

Big Idea of the Message: Jesus has come to fulfill the law, not do away with it. By fulfilling it, however, Jesus's way, not Moses's, becomes the focus.

Application Point: We cannot forget that Jesus's message of good news is rooted in him as the bearer of a new covenant with new expectations. Jesus's actions were intended to bring about the realization of a hope that only he could provide.

Discussion Questions:

1. What stood out to you from this week's message?
2. Read Matthew 5:1–12. How do these verses describe the person of Jesus? The follower of Christ? What blessings do you sense we receive now? How about later?
3. Read Matthew 5:13–16. What does it mean to be salt and light? In what ways have you experienced people being salt and light?
4. Read Matthew 5:17–20. How does Jesus describe his relationship to the Law of Moses? Why would that have been important for the group of people he was speaking with?
5. How do we help people understand, from Matthew 5:1–20, what the ministry of Jesus was about? What do you understand better about Jesus from this discussion and message?
6. How can we pray for you this week?



Week 2

Text: Matthew 16:13–20

Supplemental Texts: Mark 8:27–30

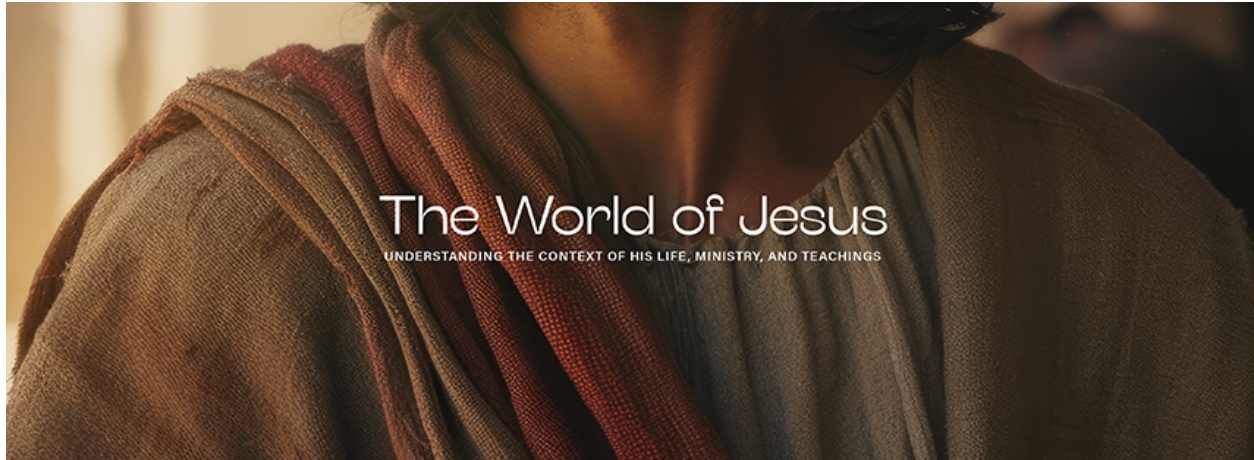
Topics: Pluralism, Worship of God, Pagan

Big Idea of the Message: Jesus's words about how people identify him are critical to understanding both the purpose he came for and what followers are to do with it.

Application Point: Jesus must be something more than one of the greats. He must be the only source of life we have. We must see in Jesus the only answer to the key questions of life.

Discussion Questions:

1. What stood out to you from this week's message?
2. Read Matthew 16:1–20. What is going on the background that helps us better understand the teaching?
3. Why was Jesus's question so challenging? How do the disciples' answers help you better understand what was going on?
4. What are some ways people describe Jesus today? In what ways are they like people in the first century? How are they different?
5. How do you answer Jesus's question today? Why?
6. How can we pray for you this week?



Week 3

Text: Mark 11:27–12:12

Supplemental Texts: Mark 3:1–6; 11:1–26

Topics: Religious Leaders, Elders, Lawyers, Scribes

Big Idea of the Message: Jesus knew he was more than just another teacher. Many religious leaders were threatened by Jesus's following, so they tried challenge his authority while others watched.

Application Point: Jesus's message will challenge everyone, but especially the religious. It is the religious—even his own followers—who will struggle to accept the truth of the person of Jesus. The call to trust is the same today as it was two thousand years ago.

Discussion Questions:

1. What stood out to you from this week's message?
2. Read Mark 11:1–26. What is going on in the passage? How does this set the tone for what Jesus will deal with in the next verses? What is one thing that stands out to you in these verses?
3. Read Mark 11:27–33. What is Jesus doing that requires authority? Why do you think these leaders were questioning Jesus's authority in this way? What might it say to others about the leaders? And about Jesus?
4. Jesus's response is critical to understanding the heart of the problem the religious leaders had. Mark gives us the reasoning for their answer, but what do you think is really at the heart of their answer? Why?
5. Read Mark 12:1–12. How does this parable explain Jesus's behavior from 11:1–26? Why were the leaders so offended? What does this parable say to you about your responsibility with the vineyard God has farmed out to you?
6. How can we pray for you this week?



Week 4

Text: Mark 12:13–27

Topics: Herodians, Pharisees, Sadducees, Jesus, Disciples

Big Idea of the Message: Jesus's message will bring even the most hardened enemies together as they try to keep the kingdom from moving forward.

Application Point: Jesus's words and actions will push us to make difficult decisions. When we seek him out, we may find that he calls us to abandon some ways of thinking that we hold as sacred. Jesus will reward our obedience, even if it looks to others like our sacrifice was foolish.

Discussion Questions:

1. What stood out to you from this week's message?
2. Watch this video for some background information on the Pharisees and Sadducees: https://youtu.be/IFDa0cv_xM.
3. Read Mark 11:27–12:27. What groups come to Jesus in these passages? What questions do they bring to him? What is at the heart of their questions?
4. How many times have you had conversations with people in which their questions seemed to have ulterior motives? How did you get to the heart of the questions?
5. Jesus's responses to each of the groups point back to issues related to the power of God, faulty or incorrect reading of the Scriptures, and the diminishing of human dignity. Each is connected to the attack on Jesus. How does Jesus counter these attacks? How can you use his responses in your own life?
6. In what way have you seen religious leaders use the Scriptures to judge others without regard for God's opinion on the matter? Have you ever found yourself doing the same thing? How might Jesus respond today to the same questions leveled from those leaders?
7. How can we pray for you this week?



Week 5

Text: John 18:33–19:16

Supplemental Texts: John 18:1–32

Topics: Kingdoms, Jesus as King, Politics, Truth

Big Idea of the Message: No matter the season, Jesus challenges the rule of the day. When we are called to consider the person of Jesus, our decision affects all that we hold to be important in life.

Application Point: Like people in the first century, we are called to give an answer to the questions of who Jesus is and what he means to us. The question “Are you King of the Jews?” is as critical today as it was then.

Discussion Questions:

1. What stood out to you from this week’s message?
2. How do you describe the kingdom of heaven? Is it typically a “kingdom to come” or “kingdom that is here?” Or is it both?
3. Read John 18:1–32. In what ways does the “Hebrew kingdom” show up here? What seems to be its primary concern? According to what is happening, why is Jesus at odds with this kingdom?
4. Read John 18:33–19:16. In what ways does the “Roman kingdom” show up here? What seems to be its primary concern? According to what is happening, why is Jesus at odds with this kingdom?
5. John 18:33–19:16 contrasts three kingdoms. How do the kingdoms of this world fight one another? How does Jesus’s kingdom respond? Why is this so important?
6. What can we learn from Jesus’s words in this passage that will help us to see him for who he is? See ourselves as his people?
7. How can we pray for you this week?