

Life of Jesus

Session 13: Double Vision

Here in the West, Jesus is a familiar figure to Christians, but He remains somewhat mysterious. Why did He come? What did He teach? What was He really like? We will be exploring the Life of Jesus in 21 sessions; the first 14 will focus on Jesus' life and ministry in the 1st Century and will end around Easter. The last 7 will focus on Jesus' life and ministry in our own century and will take us through the month of May. Let's experience the Life of Jesus together!

Deep Hope: May we, together, (re-) fall in Love with the Messiah as we understand, imitate, and experience the Life of Jesus.

PART I: Review

1. 1st Century Jews lived under Roman Rule, awaiting a Messianic Kingdom.
2. Jesus announced (and proved with miracles!) that the Kingdom was at hand—not an after-death reality, but rather God's rule breaking into our reality.
3. Jesus' miracles show what God's kingdom looks like, and the Sermon on the Mount and Jesus' parables tell what it is like!
4. Jesus loved those at the margins of His society—spending time with the sick and the sinners—his disciples were sent out to do the same!
5. On the Mount of Transfiguration, Jesus was revealed as the climax of God's story—but only Mary recognized Jesus' Power of Love that conquers all other powers.
6. Jesus gave Himself to His followers, creating a new union between God and man.
7. Jesus destroyed the barriers that kept people from God—and prophesied a day when the building would be destroyed and He and His followers would become the new Temple.

PART II: Double Vision

1. Jesus enters Jerusalem on a donkey, amid palm branches, echoing the victory of Simon Maccabeaus AND the _____ from Zechariah.
2. Crowds are jubilant, yelling Hosannah, which means _____ and calling Jesus the "Son of David," quoting Psalms that paint Jesus as a victorious _____.
3. There are many examples of God _____ earthly enemies in the Old Testament AND the Jews had, 160 years before Jesus, defeated the _____.
4. Instead of being crowned king, Jesus upsets the status quo in Jerusalem and provokes the _____ rulers.
5. Jesus' followers are confused by His actions—especially when He submits to arrest and trial. The crucifixion is an "enthronement," but a cruel parody of _____.

6. The disciples were confused because their _____ of Jesus differed from reality.
7. Jesus' cross shows us that God identifies with the _____, maximum suffering becomes maximum _____, and evil is ultimately defeated through _____.

Part III: Small Group Discussion Questions:

1. Why were the Jewish people expecting the Messiah would conquer their enemies through military might?
2. What sorts of phrases were the Jews yelling as Jesus entered Jerusalem?
3. What did Jesus actually do in Jerusalem?
4. Jesus had told His disciples he was going to be arrested and die multiple times—in plain language! Why were they still surprised?
5. Jesus dying on the cross is God's ultimate act of self-revelation: it shows us who God truly is and what He's willing to endure with/for us. Take a moment as a group to share your thoughts as you consider Jesus dying for His enemies, forgiving His persecutors, bearing our sins, and joining us in our suffering.
6. Do we still deal with false expectations of Jesus? What trips us up?
7. How do you deal with situations where God disappoints you, OR calls you to do/be something outside your box?

Part IV: Gospel Reading: Matthew 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; John 20-21

Jesus has been laid to rest in a tomb; his disciples' hopes are crushed; the combined force of the corrupt religious system and the might of Rome seems to have won. But three days later, some women come running with a tale to tell that no one can believe. What has happened early on a Sunday morning?

Prayer: *"Father, we don't see Jesus aright. Our vision of Him is blurry. We have false expectations and a misguided view of who He is, who You are. Clarify our vision as we gaze at the cross. Soften and open our hard hearts by revealing how great Your Love truly is. Let our view of suffering be transformed, our view of our enemies be transformed, our view of ourselves, our view of you—let us be completely transformed—by the power of the cross. Amen."*