

Life of Jesus

Session 16: Moving to the Margins

Here in the West, Jesus is a familiar figure to Christians, dominating Sunday School lessons and sermons since our earliest memories. Yet, removed as we are by 2,000 years since he walked the earth, He remains somewhat mysterious. Why did He come? What did He teach? What was He really like?

Let's take an adventure to know more of this person about whom we assume so much familiarity. We will be exploring the Life of Jesus in 21 sessions. 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 taught and demonstrated that the Kingdom was at hand—not an after-death reality, but rather God's rule breaking into our reality.
3. 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!
4. 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.
5. Jesus gave Himself to His followers, destroying old barriers and creating a new union between God and man.
6. Jesus entered suffering and death instead of inflicting them in others and then rose from the dead to show us what God's New Creation looks like—and invite our participation.
7. Jesus gave His spirit to continue His work of empowering people to live in, showcase, and bring the Kingdom of God.

PART II: Moving to the Margins

1. Big Idea: Jesus consistently identified with and move toward the _____ of His society; being a _____ of Jesus means we must do the same.
2. Jesus taught an intentional outreach to those that others might overlook.
3. It is natural to hang with people that are _____ us. We receive from them.
4. We fear giving more than we have; we treat love like a _____ resource.
5. Walking by the Spirit means we tap into God's limitless power to _____ others.
6. By the spirit we can move toward those others (or we!) typically _____.
7. In the company of the poor, we will be with _____!

Part III: Small Group Discussion Questions:

1. How did Jesus treat the marginalized people of his day?
2. What sort of folks are you most comfortable hanging with? You are not “wrong” to have preferences! But being honest here can help you see who you might overlook...
3. Do you fear running out of energy/love/patience etc.? How do you respond when you are at your limits?
4. Who does our society (or you personally) tend to overlook—maybe even innocently?
5. No one wants to be someone’s “project.” Have you ever felt this way? What helps you feel like you are genuinely loved and included and not just a project?
6. Why do you think that Jesus says that loving the poor can be loving Him in disguise?
7. Who is God the Father calling you to remember, and what can you *do* about it, even this week?! (Hint: begin with prayer! Please close this time in your group by praying that the Spirit would reveal one person He wants you to remember this week.)

Part IV: Gospel Reading: Read Luke 16, 18:18-30, and Luke 19:1-10

In a world where most folks were already dirt poor, Jesus owned even less. When He speaks about money or possessions, His words can seem quite extreme on some occasions. What’s His deal? We’ve already explored the genius of Jesus’ parables, but now we need to see that many of his stories target our love for the things of this world. Have we allowed our familiarity with Jesus’ words to blind us to their radical nature? Let’s take a deep breath and see what’s hidden in plain sight.

Prayer: *“Father, for love’s sake you gave us your greatest treasure—Your Son. You have never been blind to our need, our poverty, our wretchedness. Thank you for noticing us, for moving toward us, for becoming one of us! We are not some project you are undertaking for ulterior motivations; you truly cannot help but love us from the fullness of your glorious grace and mercy. May we step into Your abundance, reach out toward those we naturally find it hard to love, and find the supernatural experience you’ve been waiting to help us discover all along—the experience of knowing You in and through those you’ve put in our lives. Please show us who you’d like us to remember this week. Amen.*