

Small Group Study Guide

How Jesus Reads His Bible

Series: **God's Stump Speech**

Matthew 5:17-20

From Sunday February 7, 2021

Take a moment to pray for the Lord to still your mind, as well as direct your thoughts, conversation and response to the study.

Appetizer:

Take a moment to read out loud Matthew 5:17-20

Have you ever made a meal or baked something where you forgot a key ingredient... and everyone knew it? Tell the group about it.

Main Course:

In the sermon this past Sunday we talked about how Jesus read his Bible. Jesus uses language that would have shocked his listeners: he said that he **FULFILLS** the Scriptures. In other words, he is the **INTENT**, or the **END GAME** of what all the Scriptures are about.

Jesus is making a truth claim that Christians need to consider: In God's Country (the kingdom of God, the vision that Jesus has for humanity), you can't read your Bible without Jesus.

Question: How is this a profound comment for us today? Is it possible for us to read the Bible without Jesus? Can you think of examples of how popular readings of the Bible today don't consider Jesus? Take some time to ponder this.

The passage points to four ways that Jesus showed us how to read the Bible with Him.

1. We start by seeing Jesus as the central story.

Every story in the Bible points towards Jesus. This is not saying that every story in the Old Testament didn't have their own purpose and meaning. Rather, we read the stories with what we know about God through Jesus as their ultimate purpose in the Bible. In this light, how is Jesus the central story that:

- a. The story of Abraham points to?
- b. The story of Jonah points to?

c. The story of Noah points to?

2. We read the Bible by following God's laws through Jesus.

This has been a challenging thought for many Christians in North America. We struggle to hold the laws that we find in the Old Testament (don't have tattoos, don't wear clothing with tassels, etc) in tension with the way that Jesus interprets the Law (The Sabbath is for us; we're not for the Sabbath).

Question: What are some Scriptural laws that you grew up following that Jesus seems to have less concerns about?

3. We read the Bible in order to obey it.

Although Jesus describes a Law that is based on Him as a person, it doesn't mean that His teachings should be followed in a lazy manner. In fact, one of the challenges today is whether we actually believe that the things Jesus taught are things we should practice.

Question: What are some key teachings of Jesus that we often dismiss? Is it because we don't understand or we don't agree with what he is saying, or is it because the teaching is hard or offensive?

4. We read in order to be "better" than non-followers.

Jesus is not saying that "our righteousness needs to be better than the Pharisees" out of some kind of competition with one another. He is saying that if we find life in the person of Jesus, if we find right living in the person of Jesus, then we should know righteousness and life better than anyone!

Question: Do Christians do a good job in displaying the life found in following Jesus? In what ways? How do they not?

Dessert:

Jeff quoted a politician that attended his church back in Medicine Hat who once said, "I have enough struggles figuring out how to love the Lord with all my heart, soul and mind, and love my neighbour as myself to worry about too much other theology." It was in response to all the ways Christians wrestle over how to read their Bible. How can we commit to the basic teachings of Jesus (Love God, Love Others)

this week, as a way of demonstrating Jesus as the Central story to the Scriptures?

Pray for one another as a group in closing.