

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

Who is Jesus Really? Part 6 - Jesus is Truth May 7-8, 2005

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Leadership Development: Sunday, May 29, 1 – 3 PM in the Sanctuary. New Small Group Training information as well as *Biblical Guidance* and *How to Grow Your Group* breakout sessions. Lunch will be served at 1 PM. R.S.V.P. by May 23 by email to: melissak@therocksandiego.org

Be Jesus' Hands and Feet: June 4-5 & 11-12 The Rock will be collecting gently used clothing, non-perishable food, and cold medicines to be distributed to the SHARE Ministry and the San Diego Rescue Mission.

Married Couples of the Rock: Our 3rd Annual Married Couples Retreat is coming **July 15 – 17**. What unsaved couple will you invite to join us at La Quinta Resort and Spa? Stop by the Small Group table for more information.

Women of the Rock: What's Your Identity in Christ? Join us for a weekend with Nancy Stafford **August 12-14** at the Calvary Chapel Conference Center in Temecula. Registration forms available online at <http://www.therocksandiego.org/ministries/womens/>.

Review

1. **Why did Jesus HAVE to die?**
2. **Why did Jesus HAVE to rise from the dead?**

Purpose: To discuss how best to respond to the critics around us by analyzing what Jesus did in response to his critics.

Definition: A critical person is someone who is inclined to judge severely and find fault in someone else.

Connect

1. Using the definition of a critical person Pastor Miles gave during the services this weekend, discuss a time in your life when you were criticized. (Was it the clothes you wore, the company you kept, the things you could never do right?)
2. Are there specific circumstances when you find yourself more critical? Discuss a time when you were the one delivering the criticism. Looking back, how do you feel about your delivery? (Galatians 5:22-23, Galatians 6:7, Matthew 7:20)

Grow

Read Matthew 26:57 – 66; 27: 38 – 44

1. Why did the chief priests and Sanhedrin want to put Jesus to death?
2. The chief priests, teachers of the law and the elders mocked Jesus while he suffered (Matthew 27:38-44). There are several reasons that Jesus was mocked, list as many as you can.
3. Even those who were crucified with Christ heaped insults on Him. What was Jesus' response to them? (Luke 23:39-43)

Live it

4. What are you like at your weakest, darkest moments? (Are you grouchy? Do you hide from the world or are you angry and want to make sure everyone knows it?) Now that we've looked at how Jesus responded in his most difficult time, what will you do differently?
5. Should we be critical? When? Of what? How should we deliver criticism?
6. How will you respond to non-believers that attack your faith?

For Further Study and Discussion:

What do you find ironic about the following statements that were made by the enemies of Jesus while he hung on the cross?

“He saved others but He cannot save Himself”

“Let His blood be on us and our children”

What other verses come to mind about the above statements?

Take the time to read the following:

Revelation 1:5-6

Hebrews 9:14

I John 1:7

John 18:14

They spit on him

What is it about the act of expelling a small ball of phlegm that gives it such a power to insult? Punching may hurt more, name-calling cause more personal upset, kicking cause longer-lasting damage - and yet spitting retains an offensiveness beyond them all, rivaling perhaps only the racist insult in its capacity to outrage.

"Spitting your bodily fluids at someone is seen as more offensive than hitting them," says Ross Coomber, a principal lecturer in sociology at the University of Plymouth, who admits to an unlikely professional interest in the sociology of spitting. "Spitting in someone's face is probably considered one of the worst things you can do. It's obviously a form of violence, very confrontational; perhaps the most violent you can be against someone without actually hitting them. You do actually make some form of contact with them, in a way that you know they would really not like, but you haven't actually struck them. And they feel insulted by it, so you have achieved what you wanted."

SPITTING

In the face, as an indignity, Num. 12:14; Deut. 25:9; Job 30:10; Matt. 26:67; 27:30.

Can you imagine anything as degrading as this?

They called him Beelzebub - ‘Lord of the Flies’

NOUN: **1.** The Devil; Satan. **2.** One of the fallen angels in Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Beelzebub was next to Satan in power. **3.** An evil spirit; a demon.

Had command over disease (flies congregate around the corpses of the dead) and spread disease from the dead to the living and his role was to tempt men with pride.

Imagine the Son of God being called an evil spirit of a demon

The Game the Romans played

The soldiers put kingly garb on Jesus because they were playing a game. If you were to visit the grounds of Fort Antonius in Jerusalem, you would find that the gabbatha--the pavement--is still there. On it you can see markings of games the Roman soldiers played. The soldiers picked on prisoners or mentally retarded children as a way to pass the time. They would dress them in certain ways, and then mock them. That's what they did to Jesus. Matthew added that they spit on Him and smashed His head with a reed (Matt. 27:30).

Everybody's a Critic

Every leader has a critic. The more influence a leader has, the more criticism he will receive. Therefore, it is no mystery that Jesus had many critics. In fact, we can be thankful for the critics because from them we gain some powerful insights. Jesus' critics actually help to demonstrate his deity! On top of that they help us see how *not* to be a critic, and by Jesus' example we can learn how we should deal with our critics.

The Deity of Christ

The Pharisees, Sadducees, and Scribes were the "elites" in Jewish Law. They were comprised of the religious scholars of the day, and charged with Temple duties. One of these included the administering of the Law. In Jesus' day, and still today, the Jews used another book along with their Law (*their Bible—our Old Testament*) called the Talmud. The Talmud was a type of commentary on the Law. It included ritual instructions, as well as interpretations of the Law, traditions, etc. When Jesus came on the scene he didn't fit everything that the Jewish scholars were expecting based on their traditions and interpretations, and so they became very critical of him.

These parties are found approaching Jesus all throughout the Gospels and we see them questioning Jesus on many important topics such as: his authority, the commandments, the Sabbath, forgiveness, etc. Fortunately Jesus is always ready with an answer that, had they not asked, we may not have been privy to.

Read John 8:31-59. Notice that as Jesus teaches, the critics continue to object. Then towards the very end he makes his teaching clear to them.

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| Q: What valuable piece of doctrine do we learn because of the critics' questions in this passage? |
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| Q: At the very end, what is the value of the critics' response to stone Him for what He said? |
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Whenever we're in danger of missing something important, watch and see how the critics respond!

Another group of critics were Jesus' own family. Mark 3:20 & 21 records: "*Then [Jesus] went home, and the crowd gathered again, so that they could not even eat. And when his family heard it, they went out to seize him, for they were saying, 'He is out of his mind.'*" And again in John 7:5, after a discussion between Jesus and his brothers, the author writes: "*For not even his brothers believed in him.*"

Since Jesus was going against the grain and preaching things no one had heard before, his family appears to be embarrassed. After the resurrection, though, we see Jesus' own brother, James, leading the Jerusalem Council in the Book of Acts. He then eventually writes the Book of James. Jesus' brother Jude also wrote a book of the New Testament bearing his name. What happened?!

Another conversion we see is that of Saul of Tarsus. Similar to Jesus' brothers, Saul started out as a critic; only he demonstrated it by slaughtering members of the new faith. As we read in the Book of Acts, however, Jesus appeared and spoke to Saul, and the deep impact this had resulted not only in his name being changed to Paul, but also it resulted in the man responsible for the rapid spread of the Gospel all over Europe and the Middle East.

Q: What do you think is the significance of these critics turned Christians?

Q: Why was it good that they were critics first?

The Critic Mindset

Next we take a look at the critics themselves.

1. A critic looks for false evidence.
 - a. “The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for false evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death.”—Matthew 26:59.
 - b. “Then they secretly instigated men who said, ‘We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God.’”—Acts 6:11 [In regards to Stephen.]
2. A critic spreads gossip amongst others to gain support.
 - a. “And behold, some of the scribes said to themselves, ‘This man is blaspheming.’”—Matthew 9:3.
 - b. “And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, ‘This man receives sinners and eats with them.’”—Matthew 15:2.
3. A critic tests Jesus’ ability.
 - a. “And the Pharisees and Saducees came, and to test him they asked him to show them a sign from heaven.”—Matthew 16:1.

Discuss the mindset of a critic and go over the following questions in your groups.

1. Do you ever find yourself conspiring against someone? Or do you ever find yourself looking for dirt on a person?
2. Do you spread gossip in order to bring someone down? How do you deal with critical gossip that you may overhear? How do you deal with gossip you might hear about yourself?
3. Do you test Jesus? Do you ask him to show you signs, or evidence on anything?