



Sermon Discussion Questions

Sunday, September 4, 2011

Introducing: Jesus and Nicodemus

John 3:1-21

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Note to Group Leaders:

Leaders, we have put more questions here than you may be able to use. The purpose of this is that certain questions will work for certain groups and so some of these questions will not be good ones for your group. So, pick and choose what works best for your group

Introduce it:

Today's sermon focused on "who is Jesus" by seeing Him through the eyes of a well educated leader named Nicodemus. Last week we looked at a woman that "felt" her need of Jesus. This week we look at a man that "examines" his need for Jesus.

Share as a group teachings of the Bible or teachings of Jesus from the Bible of which you wish you had an answer. In other words, what are teachings in the Bible that you still don't understand? Or, what are the top 3 questions you want to ask Jesus when you get to heaven.

As you share these questions, make sure you don't try to answer them for everyone. Just hear the questions.

Revisit it: learn the passage preached on.

Read the passage again as a group: John 3:1-21

The passage is clear that Nicodemus comes at night to see Jesus. Why do you think he comes then? What does Nicodemus acknowledge on behalf of the ruling council about Jesus?

In stating what they believed about Jesus, he was also stating what he had yet believed about Jesus. As you hear the rest of their conversation, what are things about Jesus' teaching that Nicodemus is still unclear?

The conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus begins with a teaching on 'being born again'. But it ends with an explanation of how those that live in darkness love evil and those that live in truth come into the light. Reading verses' 19-21 again, what all is Jesus saying to Nicodemus and the fact that he came to Jesus in the dark.

As Nicodemus stood before Jesus, coming in the dark, he gazed at a man that could see all his deeds and from whom he could not hide. What do you imagine were deeds that Nicodemus was trying to hide? In what ways do you tend to hide from Jesus or are tempted to hide when there are deeds done you know he would not be pleased?

Many times we have friends that don't care much for Jesus and that makes our own response to Jesus harder. In the same way, those Nicodemus hangs out with don't care much for Jesus. How have you watched your relationship with others affect what you do and don't believe about Jesus?

Relook at it: see other places in the Bible that speak to sermon.

In our sermon today, we saw a man that came in the dark, thinking the things he has done could stay hidden.

Read Psalm 32:1-7

What do we learn in the Psalm happens when we keep our sins hidden from God? What verses in John 3 echo this? What do we learn in the Psalm about God's response to our sin? What verses in the John 3 passages echo this?

Use it: don't just learn the passage but use it.

In the sermon, this statement was made: *"If you trust someone and you believe that they only want the best for you, then you will be open to what they are telling you even when you don't fully understand."*

Jesus' mission is healing lives--not writing you off. **If you believe this**, then you are a part of healing lives as well. Think of a person that you have "written off". Find a way this month to bring healing into his/her life. It could mean that you simply reengage them; apologize to them for writing them off; let them know you are praying for them; do something out of the ordinary and in secret to bless them.

Jesus' mission is healing lives-not writing you off. **If you don't believe this**, in the next 2 weeks, read Matthew 6:24-34 and get with a Christian friend after reading it to discuss it.

Remember it: memorize a verse that helps you to remember and use it.

This week, try to memorize this verse: John 3:17

"For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him."

Write it on a note card and put on your bathroom mirror or on the dashboard of your car. If you have children, talk about this passage with them and tell them you need their help to memorize this verse. Ask them to memorize it with you. Let them quiz you during the week.