
The Gospel of John: That You May Believe

"Who Do You Make Jesus Out to Be?"

John 8: 48-59

Thoughts to Shape and Spark Discussion:

"I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept his claim to be God. That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic — on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg — or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to." - CS Lewis, Mere Christianity

"When we rest we acknowledge that all our striving will, of itself, do nothing. Rest means letting the world pass us by for a time. Genuine rest requires acknowledging that God and our brothers and sisters can survive without us. It requires recognizing our own insufficiency and handing over responsibility. It is truly surrendering to the ways of God. It is a moment of celebration, when we acknowledge that blessing comes only from the hand of God. That is why rest requires faith. It is also why salvation can be pictured as rest. When we rest we accept God's grace: we do not seek to earn; we receive. We do not justify; we are justified." - Paul Marshall

"Then Moses said to God, 'If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?' God said to Moses, 'I AM WHO I AM.' And he said, 'Say this to the people of Israel: 'I AM has sent me to you.'" God also said to Moses, "Say this to the people of Israel: 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations." - Exodus 3:13-15

Themes and Questions to Guide Reflection and Response:

What from the Scripture passage or the sermon made an impression upon you? Are there lingering questions to be answered? What is God showing you about Himself and yourself in this passage?

Why do you think (or have heard) that folks reject Jesus? What is lacking, unfulfilling, or offensive about him? How do the religious leaders in this passage articulate similar reasons?

How does Jesus portray himself in this passage? What is attractive and instructive about his resolve and courage?

What is the logic of CS Lewis' warning about Jesus? Does it hold up in our day?

What do you make of Jesus personally? How is his grace and determined love on display in this passage?