



For the Week of May 6, 2012

Good Questions, Straight Answers:
who is Jesus?

Life Notes for Families

Introductions

We hope you're having a great time learning about Jesus together as a family. Whether you have lots of family members or just a few spending time together, we pray you're having fun and noticing the difference that living with Jesus - *together* - can make. We all have our own relationships with God, but we also share a relationship with those we love. Thanks for helping grow this important relationship!

John 7:32-52

The Pharisees heard the crowd whispering such things about him. Then the chief priests and the Pharisees sent temple guards to arrest him.

Jesus: *"I am with you for only a short time, and then I go to the one who sent me. You will look for me, but you will not find me; and where I am, you cannot come."*

Jews (to each other): *"Where does this man intend to go that we cannot find him? Will he go where our people live scattered among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks? What did he mean when he said, 'You will look for me, but you will not find me,' and 'Where I am, you cannot come'?"*

On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and spoke in a loud voice.

Jesus: *"If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him."*

By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.

On hearing his words, some of the people spoke.

Some people: *"Surely this man is the Prophet."*

Other people: *"He is the Christ."*

Still others: *"How can the Christ come from Galilee? Does not the Scripture say that the Christ will come from David's family and from Bethlehem, the town where David lived?"*

Thus the people were divided because of Jesus. Some wanted to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him.

Finally the temple guards went back to the chief priests and Pharisees

Chief Priests and Pharisees: *"Why didn't you bring him in?"*

Guards: *"No one ever spoke the way this man does."*

Chief Priests and Pharisees: *"You mean he has deceived you also? Has any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed in him? No! But this mob that knows nothing of the law—there is a curse on them."*

Nicodemus had gone to Jesus earlier and was one of their own number.

Nicodemus: *"Does our law condemn anyone without first hearing him to find out what he is doing?"*

Chief Priests and Pharisees: *"Are you from Galilee, too? Look into it, and you will find that a prophet does not come out of Galilee."*

the religion of man.

Pastor Mark talked to us this week about two different kinds of religion or beliefs: the religion of man and the religion that Jesus offers. The religion of man is when one person or group tries to control another person or group. Sometimes the religion of man has lots of rules and sometimes there are punishments for not keeping those rules.

Jesus, on the other hand, offers something very different. Instead of punishing us for not keeping rules, he forgave for our sins and he set us free. When we believe and live the way Jesus taught us to live, we are a blessing to other people and we help them experience the same freedom. When we live the way the religion of man lives, then we often exclude other people or make them feel bad about themselves.

Let's play a game.

Make a list of all the movies, videos or games you can think of that have, as a plot, some mean person or group of people who want to control other people in the movie, video or game. Got it? Try to remember the specific characters and the plot of the story. Go!

As a family, choose one or two of these stories and act out some of the scenes that illustrate one person or system trying to control another.

What do you learn?

Now make a list of how the controlling people treat those who aren't members of their group.

Hmmm...now what do you learn?

In the Bible, when Jesus was physically on earth, there were several groups of people who were very religious and who wanted everyone else to do things their way. When Jesus came along healing people and offering people new life, they were very upset. Before Jesus came along, they were in control of lots of people. When Jesus was here, people began to follow him instead of the Pharisees and Chief Priests.

As a family, read the verses in John for today (John 7:32-52). Act out the passage (it's already like a screenplay for you) and be as tough and controlling as you can if you're playing the part of the Jews, the Pharisees or the Chief Priests. Make sure everyone gets a chance to play the part of someone who wants to be in control!

Take a look at the following chart, and write down the different ways each person/group treats others.

Jews, Chief Priests, Pharisees

Jesus

Pastor Mark taught us five ways from John 7 that we try to control others and make them do what we want them to do. See if these match any of the observations you made:

- we don't listen to the other person's opinion (7:46-47) - "If you disagree with me, you're a threat and I won't listen."
- we use our position or importance (7:48) - "I am a leader at the top. Don't question me."
- we act like we're better than the other person (7:49) - "I am smart, you aren't. So do what I say."
- we threaten (7:49) - "Do what I say or I will punish you."
- we put people down if they try to ask questions (7:52) - "Don't question me or I'll make fun of you in front of everyone."

Have you ever acted in any of these ways? Can you share a time?

Jesus offers us life, and he doesn't try to control or manipulate us. He doesn't try to take things from us or get others on his side against us. He just tries to love us.

What does Jesus want for our lives? How do we know?

How does Jesus treat us, even when we're wrong?

How does Jesus want us to treat other people, even when they disagree with us? Can you make a list of how you think he wants us to act?

How does Jesus get our attention when he wants us to learn something?

How does Jesus show us that he loves us?

It's important to follow Jesus, not the villains in the movie or the people who want to control others. It's important at school or at play or at home for us to be the kind of people who others can trust and turn to rather than the kind of people others are afraid of. It's important for us to be people of forgiveness, not blame. Talk about how you, as a family, can be more supportive of each other. And talk about how your family can be the kind of family others feel good being around.