

“In Search for Jesus”

John 7:10-20, 40-46 7/18/21

Discussion Guide

Have someone read the passage while others listen with their eyes closed. Imagine you are there. What is going through your mind? Of the people in the story, who do you relate to the most? Of the four solutions as to the problem of Jesus, which one do you believe? Anything stand out in the story to you and why?

However, after his brothers had left for the festival, he went also, not publicly, but in secret. ¹¹ Now at the festival the Jewish leaders were watching for Jesus and asking, "Where is he?" ¹² Among the crowds there was widespread whispering about him. Some said, "He is a good man." Others replied, "No, he deceives the people." ¹³ But no one would say anything publicly about him for fear of the leaders.

¹⁴ Not until halfway through the festival did Jesus go up to the temple courts and begin to teach. ¹⁵ The Jews there were amazed and asked, "How did this man get such learning without having been taught?"

¹⁶ Jesus answered, "My teaching is not my own. It comes from the one who sent me. ¹⁷ Anyone who chooses to do the will of God will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own. ¹⁸ Whoever speaks on their own does so to gain personal glory, but he who seeks the glory of the one who sent him is a man of truth; there is nothing false about him. ¹⁹ Has not Moses given you the law? Yet not one of you keeps the law. Why are you trying to kill me?"

²⁰ "You are demon-possessed," the crowd answered. "Who is trying to kill you?"

⁴⁰ On hearing his words, some of the people said, "Surely this man is the Prophet."

⁴¹ Others said, "He is the Messiah."

Still others asked, "How can the Messiah come from Galilee? ⁴² Does not Scripture say that the Messiah will come from David's descendants and from Bethlehem, the town where David lived?" ⁴³ Thus the people were divided because of Jesus. ⁴⁴ Some wanted to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him.

⁴⁵ Finally the temple guards went back to the chief priests and the Pharisees, who asked them, "Why didn't you bring him in?"

⁴⁶ "No one ever spoke the way this man does," the guards replied.

1. Jesus caused a problem back in his day and the problem persists today. People are trying to decide for themselves who Jesus is. Share your journey to faith in Jesus. What struggles did you have? What hurdles did you have to have to get over? Was there a time

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you thought Jesus was a lunatic, or just a nice person, or a great moral teacher like Ghandi, or a prophet?

2. *"Jesus never claimed to be God! We don't even know that he existed let alone what he actually said."* Have you heard this statement about Jesus before? What's a good response to it?
3. Why consider the claims Jesus made about himself? From a human perspective they sound pretty outlandish!
4. Discuss each of the four solutions to the problem of Jesus and share how you would respond to the first three: Jesus was a nice person; Jesus was a deceiver; and Jesus was a lunatic. We will discuss the implications of the last one later.

Take them one at a time. Create an answer that you could use in a conversation with someone who believes one of these views of Jesus' identity.

5. Play the song by Billy Joel, *"The River of Dreams."* What parts do you relate to? If you can't play it, have someone go online and read the lyrics to the song and discuss its message.
6. Respond to the statement: *"Poor proof can destroy faith but strong proof cannot create faith."* Give examples of this truth. So how is faith formed in a person?
7. Discuss the three implications of believing that Jesus is truly God come in human flesh to give his life to pay for our sins resulting in our salvation.

If you were unable to write them down fast enough, here they are:

- We have to give Jesus our total allegiance.
- We must embrace grace as the only path to God.
- We must let go of our opinions and let him teach us and allow his teaching to inform our lives.

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8. Any further questions, insights or comments?