



Christological Reasons

Small Group Work Sheet

January 30, 2011

Part 1 - Ice Breaker

- Were you part of the winter games? What activities did you participate in?
- If you have children in winter sports, how well did they do in their game over the weekend?
- If you could live in a place with no winters, would you?

Part 2 - Sermon Review

- What Bible stories do Christians either subconsciously or intentionally clip out of their Bibles?
- Pastor Kurt said that if we can trust Christ to be our savior, we can trust Christ to be our teacher about this book. Using the Bible to guide our interpretation of the Bible is considered by some to be circular reasoning. Is it? How would you respond to someone who says this argument for the reliability of the Old Testament is based on circular reasoning?
- Was the authority of the verb tenses in Scripture something new to you? How does that change the way you read your Bible? Does this whet your appetite to use a translation that maintains a high degree of precision to the original languages, like the ESV? What happens when you lose precision in a translation?
- What teachings and traditions have usurped the authority of Scripture in the lives of believers? What is the danger of attaching ourselves to teachings and traditions in place of Scripture?
- Do you believe the words of Scripture contain supernatural authority and power when we quote, ponder and memorize them? How do the Words of Scripture work during times of trials and temptation? What would the supernatural power of God's Words look like when it manifests itself in our lives?
- How was your faith in the Bible altered after today's study?

Part 3 - Digging Deeper... *Could the disciples have made up the stories of Christ?*

In the back of our minds we might be wondering: Could the disciples have made up the story of Christ? Is it possible Christ's followers were overcome with *messianic fever* and they embellished the stories of Jesus to turn an ordinary man into the Messiah?

In History and Christianity, Dr. John Montgomery gives three reasons why the disciples were incapable of making Jesus, the man, into a Messiah of their liking.

1) Jesus, as described in the New Testament, differs radically from the kind of Messiah anticipated by the Jews in the first century. For example, Jesus' declaration that it was

not his desire to convert Gentiles to Judaism but to break down the wall between Jews and Gentiles and make them one, in himself, was unheard of. The Jews expected the Messiah to compel the Gentiles to fulfill all the demands of the law.

The Jews of the day also expected the Messiah to appear with a sword to break the Roman occupation and to restore the ten lost tribes of Israel. Christ was a bitter disappointment on those accounts.

2) The disciples were psychologically incapable of taking a man and calling him God.

The central tenant of Judaism is "The Lord our God is one"... Deuteronomy 6:4. The greatest blasphemy of all was calling a man, or object, God. For the disciples to deify a mere man would be to contradict the most basic point of the law. The disciples needed to be convinced beyond a shadow of doubt that Christ was the Messiah, the son of God, for them to accept a mere man as God.

3) It was the resurrection that transformed these men into convinced followers of Christ.

These men knew the difference between fact and fiction. They saw false Messiahs come and go so they were naturally skeptical of Christ's claims, even after seeing numerous miracles. It was only after he rose from the dead they were convinced he was the Messiah. They were so convinced, all but one of them died for that claim.

Doubting Thomas, as the disciple is frequently called, reminds us Christ is accommodating to skeptics whose hearts are open to embrace the truth but who sincerely believe there is not enough evidence.

Eight days after appearing to the other disciples, Christ showed up again and gave Thomas a challenge. "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe." John 20:27

Christ is willing and eager for us to check the evidence ourselves, if we are the type of person that needs proof.

A Buddhist in Africa was converted to Christianity. When he was asked why he changed religions, this was his reply. "If you were walking along and came to a fork in the road and two men were there and one was dead and the other alive, which man's directions would you follow?"

If the Christ of the Bible had not existed, no one would ever have invented him.