

Unfiltered Jesus

“Servant King”

Week 5 – October 15, 2023

Scripture: Luke 22:24-30; John 13:1-17

Grab your Bible and a few people to connect with. Read the Scripture, reflect on the questions below, and share your thoughts. It's that easy!

Share: Can you think of a time you struggled to be “great”? Describe the pressure you felt in that moment or season.

Read the scripture noted above together: Take turns reading if you prefer. Enjoy the different Bible translations we each read.

Discuss the following context:

As Americans, we don't generally like kings, and when we hear the word king, we typically picture either a distant tyrant across the ocean who mistreats people and taxes our tea (cue *Hamilton* King George musical number) or someone that is a figurehead that holds office, powerful or not. But either view of a king does suggest a certain lifestyle. Living like a king implies a life of lavish luxury; one where every need and desire is satisfied. It's the ultimate aspiration for many, to achieve greatness, status, wealth, and power. Yet as Christ followers we are implored to live a different way when we look at who Jesus is and the different type of kingship that He modeled. Jesus is not just any king, but He is *the* King of Kings. The gospel of Luke reveals a servant king that focused His life outward rather than inward, one who broke boundaries to be with those in the margins, one who did not conform to the expectations of a king but rather defied them.

Share your thoughts about the following questions:

1. **Luke 22:24-30** records Jesus' disciples arguing about who would be the greatest among themselves. We do this in our own lives. Think about someone you know who fell into disputing, comparing and contrasting, or positioning to prove their greatness. How did this person use their authority to take advantage of others? What was the outcome of their efforts?
2. Jesus says, “*But you are not to be like that*” (**Luke 22:26**). Describe the ways of Jesus' Kingdom. How do the kingdoms of the world contrast the ways of His Kingdom? What does it mean to be great in the Kingdom of God?
3. The surprising thing about Jesus is not *what* He came to do, but *how* He came to do it. Most people believed the messiah was coming to seek and save people. Discuss how Jesus served with humility and power in **John 13:1-17**.
 - a. How can we choose to make His Kingdom first in our own lives?
 - b. What do we gain by serving others?
 - c. Who has God prompted you to reach out and serve this week? How could serving this person bring them hope and healing?

Pray together: Ask each other to share what is on your heart today. Thank God that Jesus came to serve us with love, healing, comforting, guidance, and compassion. Thank God that Jesus has great things to do in and through us. Thank Him we are invited to partner with Jesus in bringing hope and healing to the world around us. Ask Him to help you see who you can serve with humility and power just like Jesus modeled for us when He washed His Disciples' feet.

Unfiltered Jesus

“Loving Lord”

Week 4 – October 8, 2023

Scripture: Luke 15:11-32

Grab your Bible and a few people to connect with. Read the Scripture, reflect on the questions below, and share your thoughts. It's that easy!

Share: What is something in your life that you have a firm grip on? It could be a habit, person, situation, etc.

Read the scripture noted above together: Take turns reading if you prefer. Enjoy the different Bible translations we each read.

Discuss the following context:

A lord was someone of supreme power, a ruler, and authoritarian. They had control over people, things, and estates. Multiple times Jesus referred to Himself as Lord (**Luke 19:31, John 13:13**). But what kind of Lord is He? Is He a domineering, rigid, ruler? The Lordship of Jesus is beautifully displayed through the story Jesus told of two brothers and their father. We'll lean into the account of the prodigal son (**Luke 15:11-32**) as it displays the character of Jesus as Lord – a *loving* Lord. His Lordship was at the very heart of His redemptive work on the cross and the invitation for us is surrender.

Share your thoughts about the following questions:

1. Think about the various evil characters from books and movies and how they use power and control to rule others in evil ways. Contrast that to our personal rights for freedom and the struggle when any sense of that freedom is taken away.
 - a. What do we often do when someone is lording over us, controlling us, telling us what to do, and how to live our lives?
 - b. Jesus is referred to as Lord throughout scripture. That He is Lord over everything and has all authority. So, when it comes to being a Christ follower, does that mean all our freedoms are taken from us?
2. In **Luke 15:11-32** we see the kind, caring, forgiving, and loving character of this father. He's the lord of his estate and family, but he was not ruling with an iron fist. He didn't try to control his sons. He allowed them to make their own decisions, and even when they were poor decisions, the father only showed grace and love. He ran towards his wayward son, and he invited his prideful, self-righteous son into a celebration.
 - a. Where do we see the heart of Jesus in the story?
 - b. How are we similar or different to the sons in the story?
 - c. Both sons wanted things from the father but not the father himself. We often do this in our own lives. Discuss what happens when we surrender our desire for control.
3. Surrender is letting go of relying on our strength, dismantling old habits and ways of protecting ourselves, and it's giving God full control of our lives. What could it look like for you to step towards surrender today, this week, or this season?

Pray together: Ask each other to share what is on your heart today. Thank God that His invitation to surrender and make Jesus Lord is a continual journey for all of us. Ask Him to help you find a way to let go of the places in your life that you hold tightly to. Praise Him that His Lordship is loving, and when we surrender, we experience His grace, compassion, peace, and love.

Unfiltered Jesus

“Sacrificial Savior”

Week 3 – October 1, 2023

Scripture: Luke 23:39-43

Grab your Bible and a few people to connect with. Read the Scripture, reflect on the questions below, and share your thoughts. It's that easy!

Share: If you were to write a fictional story in which you were the hero, what would your story be about?

Read the scripture noted above together: Take turns reading if you prefer. Enjoy the different Bible translations we each read.

Discuss the following context:

As the claim that Jesus was a savior spread, people flocked to Him for help and healing. He often provided more than the person came asking for or realized they needed. Jesus would heal the physical, and also the soul. In these situations, Jesus repeatedly made claims of His ability to not only heal the body but His power to forgive sin. To know Jesus is to experience Him as Savior, which is to also understand that we have something we need saving from; our sinful and rebellious hearts that have separated us from God. But Jesus is not the savior that simply threw us a lifeline, He *WAS* the lifeline. Embodied in His power to save us is His sacrificial nature that gave Himself up for the saving work to be accomplished. Knowing Jesus means knowing His sacrificial nature and His saving power.

Share your thoughts about the following questions:

1. Looking at the type of Savior Jesus claimed to be is important because we often have an opinion of Him shaped by other things – a church experience, teachings from another person, friends, “Christians” we know, what we see in media, etc. What influences have shaped your own view of Jesus as Savior?
2. Through the eyes of Luke (**Luke 2:11**) we first see who Jesus claims to be. His purpose for coming to earth was identified right from the start. Read the following Scriptures and discuss what else is revealed about Jesus. How does this inform the type of Savior He is to you?
 - a. **Luke 23:39-43**
 - b. **Romans 3:23-24**
 - c. **Isaiah 53:4-6**
 - d. **Luke 5:17-24**
3. To know Jesus is to experience Him as Savior, which is to also understand that we have something we need saving from; our sinful and rebellious hearts, and because of the position of our hearts all of humanity is separated from God.
 - a. *God did not throw us a lifeline; He IS the lifeline.* What types of things do we often grab for as a lifeline? What is the downside to living like God throws us lifelines in people and provisions?
 - b. *Salvation is not earned or based on works.* If we take our eyes off our Savior, we risk focusing on ourselves, often leading to independence and self-sufficiency. What practical ways help us to keep our eyes on Jesus as Savior?

Pray together: Ask each other to share what is on your heart today. Thank God that He is a sacrificial savior, who suffered dearly so we would not be separated from Him. Thank Him that He is a God who did not simply throw us a lifeline, but became the lifeline, by becoming the sacrifice so that we would know Him. Thank Jesus for His sacrificial nature and His saving power.

Unfiltered Jesus

“Entirely Divine”

Week 2 – September 24, 2023

Scripture: Luke 9:27-36

Grab your Bible and a few people to connect with. Read the Scripture, reflect on the questions below, and share your thoughts. It's that easy!

Share: Transformation happens all around us: in God's creation, on the movie screen or pages of a book, as children grow, etc. What is your favorite “transformation” story?

Read the scripture noted above together: Take turns reading if you prefer. Enjoy the different Bible translations we each read.

Discuss the following context:

Some who deny that Jesus is God make the claim that Jesus never said He is God. It's correct that the Bible never records Jesus saying the words, “I am God.” This does not mean, however, that Jesus never claimed to be God. Several times throughout the Gospel accounts Jesus makes it's clear that He and the father are one. The reason for His execution was because of His claim of full deity. If Jesus was merely a good man, a religious man, or even more than a man, but less than God then we have little reason to follow Him over any other good man or empowered human being. If He was only a man then His claims of salvation were lies, and He is incapable of saving humanity. It is important to recognize that *His humanness enabled Him to take our place and His Godness enabled Him to conquer what we could not.*

Share your thoughts about the following questions:

1. There are people who have a “title” for their position, and they make sure to let you know about it, and then there are people who *function* in a position and never have to tell you their “title”. Who do you know that represents the latter? What is it about this person's conduct that allows their position to be unspoken yet understood?
2. There are many times in the Gospels where Jesus wears His divinity clearly. For example: He commands bodies to be healed, and they are; He tells storms to stop, and nature obeys Him; He answers His critics with divine wisdom. Can you think of other ways Jesus displays His “Godness”?
3. **Luke 9:27-36** sounds like science fiction. Jesus is *transfigured* – His appearance changes for that moment; His human form gives way to His divine glory. This moment exalts Him above the most sacred personalities of that time, Moses (who represents the law) and Elijah (who represents the prophets). Also in this moment, a voice proclaims His deity (**Luke 9:35**).
 - a. The transfiguration happened to reinforce the faith of Jesus' disciples Peter, James, and John. Does it reinforce our faith today? How?
 - b. Faith is about leaning into Jesus rather than relying on our knowledge and understanding. Discuss how faith can grow with cumulative experiences with God. How can our daily exposure to Jesus transform our lives?
4. The divinity of Jesus is more than something to know about, it is something to encounter. Share an example of where you see God's love at work in your life or in the life of someone you know.

Pray together: Ask each other to share what is on your heart today. Thank God that He IS God. Thank Him that if Jesus was transfigured, we can be changed too. We have hope that His power is working in us to make us who we were always meant to be. Thank Him for the assurance that He holds the power over death and that through Him we have eternal life.

Unfiltered Jesus

“Completely Human”

Week 1 – September 17, 2023

Scripture: [noted below]

Grab your Bible and a few people to connect with. Read the Scripture, reflect on the questions below, and share your thoughts. It's that easy!

Share: Sometimes we don't have a clear picture of what we are looking for and we can miss it even when we're looking right at it. Can you think of an example of this in your own life? It might be funny or serious.

Read the scripture noted above together: Take turns reading if you prefer. Enjoy the different Bible translations we each read.

Discuss the following context:

The humanity of Christ refers to Jesus assuming a complete human nature with all its limitations (but without in any way surrendering His divinity), so that He might serve as humanity's representative and example. To emphasize the deity of Christ in no way diminishes His humanity, and to highlight His humanity in no way detracts from His deity.

Jesus' birth was human (**Luke 2:7**), He grew and developed (**Luke 2:40, 2:52**), He was hungry (**Matthew 4:2**), thirsty (**John 4:7**), and experienced a full range of emotions (**Matthew 26:37; John 11:35**). If we lean into His humanity, we'll discover who He is, and how that impacts our lives as the mediator between God and humanity.

Share your thoughts about the following questions:

1. God didn't just tell us how to be human, He *showed* us. St. Athanasius, the bishop of Alexandria in the 4th century said it this way, *“Jesus, became what we are that He might make us what He is.”* Do you find awe and wonder in this? Why or why not?
2. Jesus had a human heart, mind, body, and will. His desire is that we don't feel unknown or alone and approach Him confidently knowing He knows exactly what it is like to be us. Read **Hebrews 4:14-16** and discuss. What barriers create difficulty in relating to Jesus' humanity? How does our response to His deity impact how we view His humanity?
3. Jesus' humanity is also evident when we consider His temptations (**Matthew 4:1-11; Hebrews 2:18**). How can a clearer understanding of Jesus' humanity help you face temptations?
4. It's hard to have genuine, tender affection towards a God who is just all God. How does the humanity of Jesus help change your concept of God's love for you? Does the love He demonstrated fuel love and affection for Him?

Pray together: Ask each other to share what is on your heart today. Thank God that the humanity of Jesus helps to guide and inform us how to know Him. Ask Him to better understand the miracle that is Jesus Christ; deity wrapped in humanity. Ask Him to create a deeper connection with us by the power of His love and reconciliation. Thank Him that this truth holds incredible encouragement and power for us.