



January 7 2024
Scorched Earth

Reframing the Image of Jesus

1. How does the conventional image of Jesus as meek and mild contrast with Luke 12:49, where Jesus expresses his intention to "set the world on fire"? How might this reframe our understanding of Jesus' character and actions?

Sacred Symbols and Traditions:

2. Why do you think people are protective of their sacred symbols and traditions? How does challenging these symbols, as Jesus did in John 2:15 by overturning tables in the temple, often incite controversy and opposition?
3. Can you think of modern-day sacred symbols or traditions that provoke strong reactions when challenged or criticized?

The Significance of Holy Land:

4. How does the concept of "Holy Land" differ between the perspectives of Jesus and the traditional beliefs of the time, as highlighted in Psalm 103 and John 14:3?
5. What does the historical and biblical significance of the Holy Land, as described in Psalm 37:11 and Joshua 1:13, reveal about its importance to various cultures and religions?

Jesus' Redefinition of Holy Land:

6. In what ways did Jesus challenge the traditional understanding of the Holy Land, as shown in Matthew 19:22 where Jesus asks a young man to sell his possessions and follow him? What alternatives did he propose?
7. How does Jesus' emphasis on spiritual inheritance, promise, and rest as found in John 14:27 differ from the territorial focus on land?

Possessions, Home, and Discipleship:

8. Reflecting on Luke 12:15 and Luke 14:33, how does Jesus address the significance of possessions in relation to discipleship and the Kingdom of God?
9. How might redefining our concept of "home" to be centered around Christ rather than physical places impact our daily lives and perspectives, as indicated in Matthew 11:28-30?

Applying the Sermon's Message:

10. What are some practical ways individuals can reassess the importance of possessions and redefine their understanding of home in light of Jesus' teachings, particularly considering Mark 10:21's story of the rich young man?
11. How can understanding Jesus' challenge to the idea of Holy Land influence our attitudes towards territorial disputes or conflicts today, considering his emphasis on spiritual principles over physical territory in John 18:36?

Personal Reflections:

12. What is your most valued possession, and how might Jesus' teachings, such as in Matthew 19:21-22, challenge your attachment to it?
13. How might you practically incorporate the idea of finding rest and home in Christ rather than physical locations into your spiritual journey, considering Matthew 11:28-30's invitation to find rest in Jesus?



January 14 2024

Hot Docs

Reflection on Scripture's Significance:

1. Rob mentioned two stories at the beginning of the sermon. Why do you think the Roman officer Apostomas faced such severe consequences for burning the Torah scrolls? Why do you think Hananias was willing to die rather than give up his sacred texts?
2. Is your own relationship with your Bible one of Reverence? Appreciation? Respect? Utility? Something else?

Elevation of Scriptures in Jesus' Time:

3. How did people in Jesus' time show reverence for the Torah and other sacred texts, as mentioned in the sermon? Are there similar practices or attitudes in our culture today?

Jesus Above the Prophets:

4. Rob's first point was that Jesus held a status above the prophets. How did Jesus distinguish himself from the prophets of old, and what significance does the idea of Jesus being "Immanuel" and "Son of God" hold in this context? (Scripture References: Matthew 1:23, Matthew 3:17, Matthew 17:3,5)

Jesus as the New Moses:

5. What unique role did/does Moses hold in Judaism? Investigate the parallels between Jesus and Moses that Rob mentioned in the sermon. How does Matthew's gospel cast Jesus as the new Moses, and what implications does this have for understanding Jesus' role and mission? (Scripture References: Exodus 19:3, Deuteronomy 9:9, Matthew 5:17, Matthew 8:1, Matthew 17:3,5)

Jesus Above the Scribes:

6. Examine Jesus' interactions with the Scribes and Pharisees as presented in Matthew 23. How did Jesus challenge their teachings, and what does this reveal about his authority and understanding of the law? (Scripture References: Matthew 23:2, Matthew 5:21-22, Matthew 5:27-28, Matthew 5:43-44)

Above the Law Itself:

7. Explore the idea that Jesus positioned himself above the law. How did Paul understand the limitations of the law as laid out in Romans 8:3-4, and what role did Jesus play in fulfilling the requirements of the law? (Scripture References: Romans 8:3-4)

Application for Today:

8. How can we, as modern believers, embrace the posture of a student and learn from Jesus, recognizing his authority above the Scriptures? What practical steps can we take to read the Bible with humility and openness to Jesus' teachings? (Scripture Reference: Matthew 7:24-27)



January 21 2024
Home Fires Burning

1. Who are you in this story? Are you Mary and her sons opposing Jesus because He is not following the cultural norms and is rocking the boat? Are you the disciples? Are you the Pharisees on the sidelines?
2. What are the ways that your family needs to be re-oriented to growing in God's Grace? Who can help you with that? What is one step you can take on this journey this week?
3. Are there things that I am doing in my church family that are getting in the way of me growing in Grace? And in listening to Jesus' teaching? And pointing others' to Jesus' Grace?
4. Social connection in a small group is a good thing! Are there ways that a good desire for social connection (or another good thing) are getting in the way of growing in God's Grace?
5. Activity: Admit your biases about what growing in Grace looks like for you. How would I know if I am growing in Grace? Share with your group. Are there any other perspectives that you need to consider?



January 28 2024

Holy Smokes

Key Scripture: John 2:13-22

Opening Reflections:

1. How often do you come across people in your life who, like Jesus, might be considered offensive, challenging, and provocative in their views?
2. Do you agree with the statement that Jesus came to both comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable? Why or why not? [Luke 12:49, Luke 12:52, Matthew 10:34]

Review #1: Jesus and the Holy Land:

3. How does Jesus challenge the conventional understanding of "holy land" in his teachings?
4. What is the significance of Jesus redirecting the focus from physical possessions and nationalistic pride to finding one's home in Him? [Luke 18:22, John 14:3]

Review #2: Jesus and the Torah:

5. How does Jesus approach the significance of the Torah and the laws of Moses in comparison to the prevailing views of his time?
6. Why do you think Jesus declares himself a better expositor of the law than Moses? Scripture Reference: [John 5:39-40]

Review #3: Jesus and Family Dynamics:

7. How does Jesus challenge traditional family structures in his teachings?

8. What is the new kind of family that Jesus creates, and why is it considered God's true family? [Mark 3:33-35, Luke 12:51-53]

Jesus and the Temple:

9. Why is the temple such a significant symbol in Judaism, historically and spiritually?

10. How did Jesus challenge the perception of the temple, and what was his purpose in doing so? [John 2:15, Mark 13:1-2, Hebrews 10:4, Matthew 26:28]

The Symbolism of the Temple:

11. Explore the various symbolic aspects of the temple, such as: a source of nationalistic pride, a place of pilgrimage, a place of pardon/forgiveness, and the locus of God's presence. How did Jesus replace these symbols with himself?

12. What do you think Jesus meant when he referred to himself as the new temple? Scripture References: [2 Chronicles 7:1-2, John 2:19-22, Matthew 7:24-25, Revelation 21:22]

The Destruction of the Temple:

13. Discuss the historical events leading to the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70. How did Jesus' predictions about the temple's destruction align with what actually happened?

14. How does the concept of a spiritual house replace the physical temple in the New Testament? Scripture References: [Mark 13:1, Luke 19:43-44, Luke 21:20-22, 1 Peter 2:4-6, 1 Corinthians 3:16-17]

Application to Today:

15. How can we apply the teachings of Jesus regarding the temple to our lives today?

16. In what ways can we ensure that our faith is built on the unshakeable foundation of Jesus, rather than relying on external symbols or structures?

17. In what ways can a church building today become an idol like the temple was 2000 years ago.



February 4 2024

Slow Burn

Key Scripture: Matthew 12:1-14

1. Transformation of Traditions:

Throughout this sermon series we have learned how Jesus transformed various traditions and symbols, including the Sabbath. How does this transformation align with the broader theme of Jesus fulfilling rather than destroying traditions? (Matthew 5:17)

2. Signs and Symbols:

Rob mentioned that Sabbath was a sign and a pointer to the great rest yet to come. How does understanding Sabbath as a sign help us grasp its significance in light of Jesus' arrival? (Colossians 2:16-17)

3. Overlap of God's Time and Human Time:

Reflect on the concept of Sabbath as an overlap of God's time with human time. How does this understanding impact our perception of rest and the rhythm of our lives? (Exodus 20:8-11)

4. Jesus as the Sabbath:

Jesus declared, "The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath." Discuss what this statement means in the context of Jesus being the embodiment of Sabbath rest. (Matthew 12:8)

5. The New Day of Resurrection:

Explore the significance of Jesus rising on the first day of the week (Sunday) and how it differs from the traditional Sabbath. (John 20:1, Mark 16:9)

6. Practicing Sabbath in a New Way:

The sermon suggests that Christians can still practice a form of Sabbath in a new way. How can we practically incorporate the principles of rest and renewal into our lives without being bound by the old Sabbath rules? (Hebrews 4:9-11)

7. Beyond Rest to Resurrection:

Discuss the shift from the Sabbath being about the cessation of work to being about the resurrection of life. How does this perspective influence our understanding of the purpose of rest and its connection to acts of justice, compassion, and generosity? (Matthew 12:10-13)

8. Living Out the Sabbath in Daily Life:

How can we, as followers of Jesus, weave the concept of Sabbath into our daily lives, not just as a day of rest but as a time for serving and giving back to the community? (James 2:14-17)