

“For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of his Son.”

- ROMANS 5:10 NLT

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION:

THE GOSPEL = GOOD NEWS

We were enemies of God, but because of what Jesus has done, we are now His sons and daughters. This is good news!

WEEK 2

JESUS

Believing that Jesus is anything less than what He claimed to be is a dangerous game.

Jesus is not just at the very center of Christianity, He *is* the center of Christianity. The Apostle Paul writes this about Christ and His Church saying,

*“Together, we are His house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the **cornerstone** is Christ Jesus Himself.”*

[Ephesians 2:20 NLT - emphasis added]

Many have said that He is a great historical figure, teacher, or prophet, but what about you? As Jesus asked His own followers, *“Who do you say that I am?”*

This then begs some serious questions: Who is Jesus? Why did He come? What does this mean for me?

1. WHO IS JESUS?

God has made Himself known by self-identifying to us through His Word and His Son, Jesus. John 1:1-4 says this:

*“In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2** He existed in*

the beginning with God. 3 God created everything through Him, and nothing was created except through Him. 4 The Word gave life to everything that was created, and His life brought light to everyone."

What insight does this writing give us about who Jesus is?

Then, jumping down to verse 14, John writes:

"So the Word became human and made His home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen His glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son."

This is Christmas! This is what Isaiah wrote about 400 years before Jesus fulfilled it:

"...The Lord himself will give you the sign. Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son and will call Him Immanuel (which means 'God is with us')." [Isaiah 7:14 NLT]

Let that phrase sink in for a moment: *"God is with us."*

What does this specifically say about the identity of Jesus?

He is God: coequal, coeternal, and unchanging.

Believing that Jesus is anything less than what He claimed to be is a dangerous game. John also writes:

"...Anyone who believes in God's Son has eternal life. Anyone who doesn't obey the Son will never experience eternal life but remains under God's angry judgment." [John 3:36 NLT]

So, we have established that, according to the Bible, Jesus is God. Believing that we are all tracking with that idea, let's move on to the next question.

**If you would like more insight into the Bible's claims pertaining to Jesus' nature, check out the following verses: Mark 2:1-12, Colossians 1:19, 2:9, Hebrews 1:8-12, and Revelation 1:17.*

2. WHY DID HE COME?

Jesus' reason and mission for coming to earth is clear and simple. The plan is laid out in Luke's biography of Jesus' life:

"...The Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost." [Luke 19:10 NLT]

Jesus came into this world to save all people from the grips of sin and death. We read the famous passage in John's Gospel:

"For this is how God loved the world: He gave His one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life." [John 3:16 NLT]

What do these two passages teach us about why Jesus came?

These two passages show the immense, immeasurable, prodigal love of our God for us. He has been relentlessly chasing after us because He longs to have a relationship with us. He doesn't need us. We cannot let Him down, because we are not holding Him up. Rather, He *wants* us. He wants our worship. He wants our time. He wants our heart, soul, mind, and strength. He want *all* of us. 95% will not do. Listen to the words of Jesus:

"Father, I want these whom you have given me to be with me where I am. Then they can see all the glory you gave me because you loved me even before the world began!" [John 17:24 NLT]

This is why He came, because you are so dearly loved. What is your response to this?

3. WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR ME?

This is The Gospel — which literally means “good news”! This means that you are completely and wholly loved by the Almighty, Creator of the Universe. The question now becomes, *“Have you accepted that love?”* Have you allowed God to love you in spite of knowing the real you? Guess what? He knows the real you, and He loves you anyway. He doesn't see you as who you are at the moment. He sees you as who you can become through His Son, Jesus. This is a journey.

Where are you on this journey?

The Bible tells us that our sin is what is holding us back from having a relationship with a Holy God (*Romans 2:23*). Sin is any time we have ever missed the mark. *Romans 3:10-18* lays out a detailed account of how sin affects our lives, while *Romans 6:23* tells us that there are consequences for that sin.

What do these passages teach you about your sin?

There is, however, good news. Even though we are seeing that God is just, cannot tolerate our sin, and must judge rightly, we also see that God is merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgement. Paul and John both write that if we confess our sin, Jesus will actually forgive us of that sin because of His redeeming work on the cross (*Romans 10:9-13*; *1 John 1:9*).

Now we have a life filled with peace (*Romans 5:1*), we are no longer condemned (*Romans 8:1*), and nothing is able to separate us from God's love (*Romans 8:38-39*). We must remember though, that this is a gift. This has so much less to do with us, and everything to do with Jesus (*Ephesians 2:8-10*).

Have you experienced the life that is talked about in these verses?

Next week, we will look at the Bible, why you should read it, where to start, and how to hear God's voice more clearly.