

Part 23: Jesus Christ for me

Choose a reader and begin with a short prayer for openness. How is the sharing? Remember to stick to the 'Guidelines for Group Sharing' given on page 12. If there is 'chipping in', wandering off the point, etc., it may be useful to read them again as a reminder. Giving advice to another may deaden our relationship with them. Share your pictures of God with the group, perhaps explaining what the different images mean to you. (30 minutes)

Who is Jesus Christ for me?

In unmasking our distorted ideas of who God is for us, we do well to reflect on Jesus' understanding of the Father, and Jesus' own relationship with him.

Jesus came not only to reconcile us to God through his sacrifice of himself, but also to show us how to relate with the Father, and so, how to grow in this living relationship with a God of love and mystery.

Jesus was fully divine, yet he subjected himself to the limitations of being fully human. In his love and concern for us he chose to identify with our struggle entirely; our struggle against the brokenness and sin of our human condition. Whilst he went through his human experience, he had the same agonies and joys that are ours. He was familiar with tiredness, overwork, constant pressure and frequent opposition. He felt the extremes of human interaction: close companionship, but also betrayal; homelessness but also sweet hospitality; having authority and being held in respect but also being derided and denied any rights.

Since the essence of his work was to establish and deepen relationships, he countered the fragmenting and isolating effects of breakdown in relationships by being tirelessly consistent in his interaction.

In regard to the Father, he prayed even if it meant missing sleep and was always sure that he was doing only the Father's will. This was not a legalism but a desire and a union of will in deep relationship.

In his relationship with himself, he knew his limits and respected his needs and abilities. He had steadily developed over the years and grown as a whole person. In facing others, he was totally open, honest and loving. He stayed with the truth even when it became uncomfortable, and so enabled others to face the truth about themselves. He was true, supportive and thus freeing.

For this meditation, look at Jesus' humanity in the Garden of Gethsemane. (Mark 14:32–42)

In what ways are you being called to share Jesus' experience in the Garden?

Meditate for 20 minutes, then reflect and journal for 10 minutes. Share your reflections in the group. (30 minutes)



At home this week, meditate on the following:

Matthew 17:5

John 4:34

John 5:30

Matthew 26:39–44

Stay with each passage for as long as you need to.

Who is Jesus the Christ for me?

Who am I for him?

In reflecting on Jesus' life, we can easily fall into the trap of building up high expectations of ourselves. We then have trouble living up to these and easily become disillusioned or depressed. We need to be true to our present stage of development and allow ourselves the gift of time and love to mature.



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