

Speaking Jesus

Intro

Welcome and introductions. Going to be a lab, so let me lay some ground rules for us.

1. We can disagree without being disagreeable. There will be things said in here that offends you or makes you pause in your thinking.
2. I don't know and I'm not sure are acceptable answers.
3. The ultimate goal of this seminar is to learn, not to win an argument.

The Schedule

Here's how the next few weeks will play out. At the end of every morning, I'll have a set of my notes here for you.

Week 1: How Jesus Talked (Mark 4)

Week 2: Jesus and the Muslims

Week 3: Jesus and the Mormons

Week 4: Jesus and a Postmodern Mindset

Opening Shots

If I told you that you had to sit across the table from someone who did not believe that Jesus was God, wasn't really sure that their even was a God, what would be the predominant emotion inside you? How would you start that conversation? How far would you push it?

If you have ever found yourself in that position, how did it go? What do you wish you would have done differently? What do you think our mindset should be when we engage in a conversation like that? What is the end goal for conversations like that?

For the next 4 weeks, we are going to take a journey together looking at how Jesus spoke about himself, how he presented himself and how that fits (or doesn't fit) in some current worldviews and religions. You can see the schedule in front of you but before we do that, I want to investigate Jesus.

Mark 4:1-9

What stands out to you? Anything shock you? How would a sermon go over like that here on Easter Sunday?

In some of my more vain moments, I actually think that if I'm clear and creative enough with the story of Jesus - that will convince them to follow Jesus. It's hard for me think of something more arrogant than that.

What kind of idiot would think that his or her command of the language is better than the Spirit of God? Well, we do all the time. That's why we wig out when we have to tell someone else about Jesus.

Jesus taught not to get the last word in, or to win the argument. But to create the opportunity to dialogue, to converse further, to engage in a heart conversation. The only time Jesus ever forced the discussion into debate and argument was when he was talking to "educated religious people." Even then, he dove to the heart of the matter, not getting distracted on issues that didn't matter. (John 3 vs. Matt 27)

Kinds of Soil

Path - hard hearted, anti-gospel, seed just bounces off of them, satan comes and steals the message right out from underneath them...think Pharaoh.

Rocky - shallow, immature, no root, "event/mountain top" decisions.

Thorny - distracted, choked out, busy with stuff that doesn't matter - Rich Young Man

Fertile - the only soil called good, produces a fruit, multiplies

GE's Observations

Soils are people.

Farmer not responsible for determining what kind of soil gets seed. He's only responsible for sowing the seed, telling the story.

Many of us think we are "fertile" soil but what have we produced? Have we produced a crop or been just great warehouses of knowledge?

Dangerous to slot people into one of the soils. We don't know the whole story. We aren't "soil experts." God is. Woman at the Well (John 4). What kind of soil is she? What kind of soil do you think the disciples thought she was? She could be classified as any one of the soils depending on the point in the story.

Beginning - path - hard to God, not following God with her life-choices.

Rocky - gets busted on her personal life and tries to bring up shallow argument on geography of where to worship God. Real issue wasn't that at all.

Thorny - do you want this water I offer? Can hear the hesitation in her voice - if you show me, yes. Questions she might be dealing with - Can God forgive all my sin? What will I do with my life? what about my current relationship?

Fertile - goes back to town, tells the city, they respond, many in the city believe because of her story.

People are constantly in process. Mark 4:26 -the farmer doesn't know HOW a seed changes and transforms, it just trusts that it does. Same attitude for us. There is no way of knowing how Jesus' story is going to intersect people's lives. For some it will be redemptive, others it will be foolishness, still others it will be convicting. But let's let Jesus be the offending party, not us and how we present Jesus.

If someone encounters the real Jesus, his words, his heart and they still walk away - Jesus seemed to be okay with that. See Rich Young Man, see crowds here in Mark 4. How many people walked off the shore that day thinking Jesus was a complete fraud, nut case, or at best an interesting, batty old professor? How many just walked away never further investigating Jesus?

BIG IDEAS FROM Mark 4 TO TAKE WITH US ON THE JOURNEY...

1. We are not soils experts. We are seed throwers...throwing the love and grace of Jesus around.
2. Soils/people are in process. I was once path...now I'm fertile. Let Jesus take care of the soil. Trust the transformation process - as slow as it is at times.
3. When we disagree with a faith/religious viewpoint - having the right answer is only half-right. How we communicate that is the other half.
4. If Jesus was okay with people walking away - we should be too. If Jesus didn't have to have the last word in every theological discussion, neither do we.
5. If Jesus was okay people have an incomplete theology but they were trying to follow him - so should we. (Disciples constantly came back to Jesus for clarification.)
6. "You've heard it said, but I tell you" Principle. Tradition, good ideas, sound philosophy will always take a back seat to what Jesus says.
7. ***It may feel like we're spinning our wheels, it may feel like it's in vain, but whenever we just allow Jesus to say it for himself - it will never return void.

Jesus told 1 more parables in this setting - ***Parable of the Mustard Seed***. How does it relate? (see #7)