

LIFEGROUP STUDY
REAL GOOD QUESTIONS:
“How Can Christianity Claim It’s Right and All Other Faiths are Wrong?”
20210502

LEADER NOTES

OVERVIEW

Welcome back to our series, Real Good Questions. Over the weeks of this series, we’re exploring six common challenges to Christianity and how Christ followers can respond. Our challenge this week is – “How can Christianity claim it’s right and all other faiths are wrong?” Isn’t it arrogant to say we’re right and others aren’t? Aren’t all religions basically teaching the same thing anyway? In our culture that encourages inclusivity and tolerance of all views, there is a resistance to any religious claims that are exclusive or that would claim to be unique. In today’s study, we will explore how, while Christianity is narrow in its claims about Jesus being the only way to God, it is broad in its invitation that “whosoever will may come”.

ICEBREAKER My Connections to People of Other Faiths

Increasingly in our world today, we have first-hand connections with people from other faith backgrounds. Perhaps you work with people, or have neighbours or family friends from a different faith background than your own. **How have your connections with people of other faith backgrounds impacted your life? How have these connections helped you understand your own faith?**

STUDY

1. On Sunday, Pete spoke to the key reasons why Christianity can claim it is the one true faith. **What was a highlight for you from what he taught?**

In our study today, we will explore two key truths about Christianity. Christianity is *exclusive* in its claims and the teachings of Christianity are *unique*. These truths set Christianity apart from other world religions and belief systems and are the basis on which we make this claim – Jesus is the only way to God.

Our Beliefs – Salvation

We believe every person needs to be restored to life with God. Salvation is a gift from God graciously offered to humanity. It cannot be earned by any human effort. To receive this gift a person must repent, which involves turning from one’s own way to God’s way, and place their faith in the person and sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. By placing one’s faith in Jesus Christ a person becomes a child of God and begins a new, eternally secure relationship with God. Salvation will be evidenced by a changed life.

Christianity is Exclusive in Its Claims

The exclusive claims of Christianity are based on the claims Jesus made about Himself. Let's explore these claims, focusing particularly on his 3 exclusive claims in John 14:6.

READ: John 14:6

"Jesus told him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.'" NLT

NOTE: "I am the way, the truth, and the life" is one of seven "I Am" statements Jesus makes about himself. In the Greek "I Am" is a very intense way of referring to oneself. It would be comparable to saying, "I myself, and only I, am." The Jews of Jesus day recognized what Jesus meant when he said these words – that he was equating himself with God (see John 8:58). In using these words, "I am" Jesus made an exclusive and unique claim about himself. He is God in the flesh.

"I am the way ..."

2. In this passage, Jesus is talking with his disciples about where he will soon be going, back to the Father. When Thomas says to him, "We have no idea where you are going, how can we know the way?" Jesus responds with this statement – "I am the way ..." **How could Jesus make this exclusive claim?**

LEADER NOTE: In John 14:6, Jesus did not claim to be one of many paths that lead to God. He makes an exclusive claim, "I am *the* way ... to the Father." Jesus could make this claim because He was chosen by God to be the Saviour of the world (see John 3:16-18) because he was the only one to come down from heaven and return (see John 3:13) because he was the only one to live a perfect human life (see Hebrews 4:15) because he is the only sacrifice for sin (see Hebrews 10:26) and because he is the only mediator between God and people (see 1 Timothy 2:5).

"I am the truth ..."

3. Jesus second exclusive statement focuses on Him being our ultimate source of truth. **Why would Jesus describe himself as "the truth"?**

LEADER NOTE: Jesus did not claim to be one source of truth among many. In today's cultural we talk about "your truth" and "my truth", but Jesus claimed, "I am *the* truth." In claiming to be the truth, Jesus once again equated himself with God the Father, the source of all truth (see John 17:3). Jesus often started his teaching with "I tell you the truth ..." He said to Pilate, "Everyone on the side of truth listens to me." (John 18:37)

“I am the life.”

4. Jesus’ third exclusive claim, “I am the life” is a statement filled with hope and future promise.
How was Jesus able to make this claim, “I am the life”?

LEADER NOTE: In making this claim, Jesus confirms what John had written about him at the beginning of his letter, “The Word (Jesus) gave life to everything that was created, and his life brought light to everyone.” (John 1:4). As the Life, Jesus is the creative agent behind our universe. He is also our hope for eternal life. This is why Jesus said to Martha, “I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying. Everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.” (John 11:25-26 NLT).

Christianity is Unique

Jesus Christ is unique in that he alone, of all who ever lived, is both God and man. In the Bible we read about the fully unified deity and humanity of Jesus.

READ: Colossians 1:15-20

5. **What do you read in these verses about the uniqueness of Jesus?**

LEADER NOTE: These verses are likely a quote from an early Christian hymn about Jesus. In this hymn, we read that Jesus is the “visible image of the invisible God” – He is God in the flesh. “He existed before anything was created” – he is eternal “ ... and is supreme over all creation” – He is higher than and exalted far above any created thing. “For through him God created everything” – He is our Creator. He is also our Sustainer – “ ... and he holds all creation together.” “Christ is also the head of the church” – not a human, but God himself leads the church. “He is the beginning, supreme over all who rise from the dead.” – Jesus is the first to rise, making the way for us to rise. “For God in all his fullness was pleased to live in Christ.” – Jesus has every character trait of the Father. “ ... and through him God reconciled everything to himself.” – He is our Saviour. Wow!

Jesus Christ was unique in every way. From his complete deity to his perfect humanity; from his miraculous conception to his supernatural ascension; from his impeccable character to his incomparable teaching—Jesus stands above all other religious or moral teachers.

Norman Geisler: The Uniqueness of Jesus Christ

6. **How does this quote from Norman Geisler help you appreciate the uniqueness of Jesus?**

Christianity is Narrow in its Claims but Broad in Its Invitation

“Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.” Romans 10:13 NLT

While Jesus’ teaching and claims about himself are exclusive and while Christianity is unique among other world religions, the invitation Jesus gives us to put our faith in Him is broad. It is an invitation that is open to anyone who would come.

READ: Romans 10:9-13

7. In these verses we read about “how to be saved”. **What do you notice about who this invitation is open to?**

LEADER NOTE: Romans 10:9-13 show us God’s broad salvation invitation. The “you” in verse 9 is any person. Any person who confesses Jesus is Lord will be saved. In verse 11 we read a quote from Isaiah 28:16 – “Anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced.” The LORD, “... gives generously to all who call on him.” For everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.” Jesus’ salvation is open to anyone who calls on Him in faith.

READ: Romans 10:14-15

8. **What do these verses tell you about our mission to share the invitation, the Good News of salvation through Jesus?**

LEADER NOTE: Just as in Paul’s day, the church today is called to share the invitation, the Good News of Jesus. (also see Matthew 28:18-20). At Creekside we call this, “Involve and Invite”. Be involved in the lives of people who are not following Jesus. Pray for them and as God opens a door, invite them to check out the claims of Jesus!

PRAYER

Today let’s pray for our Celebrate Recovery (CR) Ministry at Creekside. CR exists to help people find recovery from their hurts, habits and hang-ups. This group meets weekly to find Christ in their recovery journey.

- Please pray for serving our community well as we move to Zoom Large Group instead of streaming on Facebook - that we can keep the group safe and provide a place for newcomers to feel welcome.
- Please pray that those joining us would continue to seek Jesus and his healing power. Our mission is to help people experience change as they .. Follow Jesus. Love God. Love People.
- Please ask God to provide more leaders and volunteers for our ministry. He is faithful!