

Jesus I Never Knew

Discussion Guide

Week of April 17 - The Resurrection of Jesus

Chapter 11

Scripture verse: Matthew 28:1-15, Mark 16:1-18, Luke 24:1-12, John 20:1-31

OPENING QUESTION: Introduce yourself and share what you hope to gain from this 7-week study of The Jesus I Never Knew?

LOOKING UP: The author, Philip Yancey, expresses this feeling, "No one who meets Jesus ever stays the same. I have found that the doubts that afflict me from many sources—from science, from comparative religion, from an innate defect of skepticism, from aversion to the church—take on a new light when I bring them to the man named Jesus." (p.25) What doubts, objections, or confusion surface in your mind about what you know about Jesus? Have you ever searched for answers from the bible? Church leaders? Trusted believer? Explain.

Choose one passage below to read and ask your group the four questions in the middle section. Then review Chapter 11 from the book, *The Jesus I Never Knew*, using the same four questions found in the middle section.

CHOOSE 1 PASSAGE Matthew 28:1-15 or Luke 24:1-12	What stood out to you most? What was challenging or hard to understand? What does this teach us about people? What does this teach us about God?	Chapter 11 The Resurrection: A Morning Beyond Belief
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LOOKING FORWARD: The foundation of Christianity is the resurrection of Jesus. The belief that Jesus' death, burial and resurrection happened just as it was revealed in Scripture is necessary for faith. This includes Jesus being both the Son of God and the chosen one revealed through prophecy who takes away the sins of the world at the resurrection. The good news of the Gospel is resurrection. Without Jesus' resurrection we have nothing to hope for after death. What holds unbelievers back from believing this truth?

Who do you need to share this truth with this week in the places you have influence? At work? School? Neighborhood? Community gathering? Social media? 1) What plan will you make today to share this truth? 2) Who will be your accountability partner to help you succeed? Practice sharing what you will say about the Resurrection with a friend to prepare for your encounter.

Week of April 24 - The Virgin Birth & Background of Jesus

Chapter 1, 2 & 3

Scripture verse: Matthew 1:18-25, Luke 1:26-38, Revelation 12:1-17, Colossians 1:15, John 1

LOOKING BACK: Last week, you were challenged to take action by finding an accountability partner, practicing what you would say about the resurrection and then sharing this truth with someone God laid on your heart to tell. How did you do? If this applies, what held you back from sharing? (no plan, didn't know what to say, didn't look for an opportunity to share it, didn't feel the need to share it, have not accepted it and still considering it)

LOOKING UP: What kind of portrait do you have of Jesus? Describe the image or portrait you have about him. Where did that portrait come from? (Sunday school, paintings, movies, or books) With that in mind was Jesus' birth just another ordinary routine experience? "If Jesus came to reveal God to us, then what do I learn about God from the first Christmas? ...Humble, Approachable, underdog, courageous... these hardly seem appropriate words to apply to deity." (p. 36) According to scripture Jesus was fully God and fully human. As a group, describe your view of Jesus.

If available, attempt to read the selected passage below from a different bible translation (Message, ESV, or NASB) Choose only

one passage below to read and ask your group the four questions in the middle section. Then review Chapters 1, 2 and 3 from the book, *The Jesus I Never Knew*, using the same four questions found in the middle section.

CHOOSE 1 PASSAGE

Luke 1:26-38

or

Matthew 1:18-25

What stood out to you most?
What was challenging or hard to understand?
What does this teach us about people?
What does this teach us about God?

Chapter 1, 2 & 3
The Jesus I Thought I Knew
Birth: The Visited Planet
Background: Jewish Roots/Soil

LOOKING FORWARD: Reflect on the content you have just studied. Jesus was fully human and fully God. **After the study...** As a group, encourage each person to pray privately asking the Lord to open an opportunity to have a conversation with a person He places on your mind... as your prayer experience is ending... (for 1-2 minutes) be still/quiet and listen for God to speak to your hearts. Who has he led you to share with... a friend? co-worker? or family member? Around the table ask this person, "How would you describe Jesus? Was he fully human? Fully God? Was he both? (see where the conversation goes and report back to your group next week)

Week of May 1 - The Temptation of Jesus

Chapter 4

**Scripture verse: Matthew 4:1-11 & Luke 4:3-21,
Hebrews 4:14**

LOOKING BACK: Last week, you were challenged to have a conversation about Jesus being fully human and fully God. What transpired from the conversation? Was there any continued conversation at a later time as a result of asking the question?

LOOKING UP: We all face temptation and so did Jesus. One reason we experience temptations is due to our freedom granted by God. This freedom offers choices which lead us in potentially two directions... to help or harm others... to build or tear down... to give life or give death. Unfortunately, "The same tempter who found a fatal spot of vulnerability in Adam and Eve aimed his thrust against Jesus with deadly accuracy." (p. 70). Although Satan wanted Jesus to act like God would act "Jesus replied, Only God makes those decisions, therefore I do nothing at your command." (p. 71) What temptations face you throughout the week? How do you resist?

CHOOSE 1 PASSAGE

Matthew 4:1-11

or

Luke 4:3-21

What stood out to you most?
What was challenging or hard to understand?
What does this teach us about people?
What does this teach us about God?

Chapter 4
Temptation: Showdown
in the Desert

LOOKING FORWARD: Does your faith suffer from too much freedom? Do people apart of your Christian community or a close Godly friend know the temptations that make you vulnerable to sin? Are you vulnerable enough with trusted friends that you can admit where you are spiritually weak and allow him/her permission to hold you accountable? Right away at the beginning of this week, seek out or set up accountability with a Godly person/friend whom you give permission to call out sin, to push you to be reading the word daily, and to intentionally listen to God through prayer. Choose that person today and then reach out to him or her.

Week of May 8 - Following Jesus

Chapter 6 & 7

**Scripture verse: Matthew 5:1-12, Matthew 13:1-23,
Mark 4:1-20 & Luke 6:20-26**

LOOKING BACK: Last week, you were challenged to seek out or set up accountability with a Godly person/friend whom you give permission to call out sin, to push you to be reading the word daily, and to intentionally listen to God through prayer. How did you do? If you did not set up accountability with a Godly person/friend what stopped you? (your schedule was busy—explain, you were out of town all week, you forgot, you did not see the need, you already have that set up in your life?)

LOOKING UP: What does it look like to live and love like Jesus? We find the answer in the pages of the bible. In fact, “the more I study Jesus, the more I realize the statements contained [in the Sermon on the Mount] lie at the heart of his message. If I fail to understand this teaching, I fail to understand him.” (p. 105) To understand Jesus we have to spend time listening to what he taught, examining what he did, and applying what said in our everyday routine. How often are you examining scripture to absorb his teaching and putting it into practice in your daily routine? Why is it so difficult to value things the way Jesus did? Discuss with the group obstacles that keep you from knowing Jesus’ values and spending time with Him (no plan to meet him regularly, packed schedule, no appetite/interest to spend time, see little value in making the time).

CHOOSE 1 PASSAGE

Matthew 13:1-23

or

Mark4:1-20

What stood out to you most?
What was challenging or hard to understand?
What does this teach us about people?
What does this teach us about God?

Chapter 6 & 7
Beatitudes: Lucky are the
Unlucky
Message: A Sermon of
Offense

LOOKING FORWARD: What do you have an appetite for? Social media, news channel, podcasts, TV series, Tik Tok? What's regularly getting in the way of you drawing closer to Jesus? Similar to the way we set alarms to wake up in the morning set a daily alarm to spend time in the bible. Invite a friend or small group member to join you and hold you accountable to reading. Send a text to that person each day asking, "Have you read your bible today?" Have a discussion with that same person over the bible passages you have been reading. How will you live intentionally by setting aside that obstacle and following Jesus?

Week of May 15 - The Miracles of Jesus

Chapter 9

Scripture verse: John 2:1-12, Matthew 8:2-4, John 11:1-44

LOOKING BACK: Last week, you were challenged to intentionally get closer to Jesus and obey what he reveals in scripture. Even invite a friend to help you stay committed to reading. How did you do?

LOOKING UP: Are Miracles still available to today? Thomas Jefferson certainly did not think so. He cut out every place a miracle was mentioned in the bible because he didn't believe they happened. That would have essentially erased Jesus' divinity. "As he strode through life Jesus used the supernatural power to set right what was wrong. Every physical healing pointed back to a time in Eden when physical bodies did not go blind, get crippled, or bleed nonstop for 12 years—and also pointed forward to a time of re-creation to come. The miracles he did perform, breaking as they did the chains of sickness and death, give a glimpse of what the world was meant to be and instill hope that one day God will right its wrongs. (p. 182) What is the miracle you want for yourself and for others? What is the miracle you are praying about? What is the impossibility you need changed for yourself and/or your neighbor?

CHOOSE 1 PASSAGE

John 2:1-12

or

John 11:1-44

What stood out to you most?
What was challenging or hard to understand?
What does this teach us about people?
What does this teach us about God?

Chapter 6 & 7
Beatitudes: Lucky are the
Unlucky
Message: A Sermon of
Offense

LOOKING FORWARD: “Jesus responded by overturning common notions about how God views the sick and disabled people. He denied the man’s blindness came from any sin, just as he dismissed the common opinion that tragedies happen to those who deserve them. Jesus wanted to stick to know they are specially loved, not cured, by God. Every one of his miracles of healing, in fact, undercut the rabbinic tradition of ‘You deserve it.’” (p. 170) Nonetheless, “Jesus never met a disease he could not cure, a birth defect he could not reverse, a demon he could not exercise. But he did meet skeptics he could not convince and sinners he could not convert. Forgiveness of sins requires an act of the will on the receivers’ part, and some who heard Jesus’s strongest words about grace and forgiveness turned away unrepentant.” (pp. 174-175)

How are you approaching Jesus today? Jesus reminds us to ask, seek and knock. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. (Matthew 7:8). Spend several times this week with a few trusted friends and pray for God to act supernaturally on your behalf. Look expectantly for God to take your request to the Father.

Week of May 22 - The Mission of Jesus

Chapter 8

Scripture verse: Matthew 9:9-13, Mark 2:17, Luke 19:1-9

LOOKING BACK: Last week, your group was challenged to spend several times during the week with a few trusted friends and pray for God to act supernaturally on your behalf. Look expectantly for God to take your request to the Father. What happened when you did?

LOOKING UP: Jesus' way of life was different from what audiences expected. In fact, it was upside down from culture. Philip Yancey raises this point by saying, "Somehow, we have created a community of respectability in the church. The down and out, who flocked to Jesus when he lived on earth, no longer feel welcome [in the church]. How did Jesus, the only perfect person in history, managed to attract the notoriously imperfect? And what keeps us from following in his steps today?" (p. 148) Then he continued, "What would it take for church to become a place where prostitutes, tax collectors, even guilt-tinged Pharisees would gladly gather? Jesus was the friend of sinners. They liked being around him and longed for his company. Meanwhile, legalists found him shocking, even revolting." (p. 149) Is Jesus changing any of your perspective today? How are you embracing the unloved, the unworthy, the nobodies, and the folks who do not matter at all to the rest of society? What does it look like to be on mission with Jesus?

CHOOSE 1 PASSAGE

Matthew 9:9-13

or

Luke 19:1-9

What stood out to you most?
What was challenging or hard to understand?
What does this teach us about people?
What does this teach us about God?

Chapter 8

**Mission: A Revolution of
Grace**

LOOKING FORWARD: When you join a church, you are stepping into a stream of activity where God is working and bringing His kingdom to reality on earth. And when you think of this spiritual community, the church, it is not a building you go to; it's not an event you attend or a club you sign up for... Rather... it's a people you go with, it's a mission you join, it's a spiritual family you're a part of. Jesus is inviting you into something new and something better. As His church, this invitation is to join His mission to go fishing for people, share the good news and set the oppressed free. Is this the mission of your family? Who is lost and needs to get near Jesus where you live? Work? Play? Because Jesus has invited each of us individually on that mission... plan to invite one person/family to dinner by the end of the month. Begin praying tonight and listening to God. Who comes to mind that the Lord has laid on your heart to invite?

Week of May 29 - The Kingdom

Chapter 13

Scripture verse: Mark 4:26-34, Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

LOOKING BACK: Last week, you were challenged to invite a person or family to dinner? How did you do? Have you already chosen someone and invited them to dinner? If not yet, pray for the Lord to help you hear whom He might be bringing to your mind and heart to invite to dinner this week.

LOOKING UP: As we investigate this last chapter in *The Jesus I Never Knew* the author brings home a powerful observation, "Sheep among wolves, a tiny seed in a garden, yeast in bread dough, salt and meat: Jesus' own metaphors of the kingdom describe a kind of "secret force" that works from within. He said nothing of a triumphant church sharing power with the authorities. The kingdom of God appears to work best as a minority movement, in opposition to the kingdoms of this world. When it grows beyond that, the kingdom subtly changes in nature. (p. 246) Spend a brief moment and discuss this question, "How would you describe the kingdom of God?"

CHOOSE 1 PASSAGE
Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43
or
Mark 4:26-34

What stood out to you most?
What was challenging or hard to understand?
What does this teach us about people?
What does this teach us about God?

Chapter 13
Kingdom: Wheat Among
the Weeds

LOOKING FORWARD: To the crowd's dismay, it became clear that Jesus was talking about a strangely different kind of kingdom. The Jews wanted what people have always wanted from a visible kingdom: a chicken in every pot, full employment, a strong army to deter invaders. Jesus announced a kingdom that means denying yourself, taking up a cross, renouncing wealth, even loving your enemies. As he elaborated, the crowd's expectations crumbled." (pp. 241-242) Discuss with the group ways [this week] you can and will deny yourself, take up your cross and love someone who is lost, or is an unbeliever, or is poor, or is trapped in pain, or is in a broken home, or is oppressed financially, or is down-and-out, or works as a prostitute, or parties every weekend, or is addicted to drugs, or who _____... YOU FILL IN THE BLANK. How will you, who has been rescued by Jesus' resurrection and forgiveness, start bringing the kingdom of heaven to someone THIS WEEK who is far from Jesus and needs rescued?

The Jesus I Never Knew

Leaders Guide

The following information will help you lead your group.

Before Your Group Meets:

- Encourage your group members to obtain a copy of Philip Yancey's book, *The Jesus I Never Knew*. Books can be picked up on the weekends for a suggested donation of \$10.00.
- Encourage your group members to read the chapters being discussed and listen to the sermon from the previous weekend prior to your group meeting. Recordings of the sermons can be found at media.cccgo.com.
- Download and print off copies of The Jesus I Never Knew Small Group Discussion Guides for the members of your group. The Discussion Guides can be found at (website).
- Contact your group members and remind them of your meeting time and location.

When your Group Meets:

- If your group is large, consider breaking into smaller groups for the discussion.
- Questions are intended to be answered by all members of the group.
- Do not be afraid of silence. Allow time for your group members to process and think before moving on to the next question.
- Encourage your members to read along with the book and listen to the weekly sermons but do not exclude them from the discussion if they are unable to.

During your Meeting:

The weekly meetings are broken into three parts: Looking Back, Looking Up, and Looking Forward.

Looking Back: In this section, you will discuss the challenge that was presented the previous week. Check in to see if each person had the opportunity to follow through on those challenges and celebrate their successes. If someone has not followed through with their challenge from the previous week, encourage them to do so in the upcoming week.

Looking Up: In this section, you will have the opportunity discuss the content of the chapter(s) your group read as well as the Scripture passage(s) that are foundational to

those chapters. First, take time to read the Scripture passage(s) and answer the four questions. Then, ask those same four questions about the chapter(s) from the book.

Looking Forward: This section is intended to encourage each person to identify one action they will do in the upcoming week in response to the chapter and Scripture passages. Allow time for each person to share their intended response. Encourage your group members to be specific in their intended response and how they will accomplish it. Write down their responses on paper to review their commitment the following week. Take time to pray for each person and the specific ways they will respond in the upcoming week.