

Chapter 23: Jesus' Ministry Begins



Discussion Questions:

1. John the Baptist's role was to prepare the way for the Messiah.
 - a. How did he go about doing that?
 - b. What was John the Baptist's message?
 - c. What did it mean for those who heard it?
 - d. Why did Jesus have John baptize him?
2. What was the special occurrence that happened at Jesus' baptism?
 - a. What does this represent theologically?
 - b. Why is this important in Christian faith?
3. What is a fast? What does it look like in 2019? Do you practice Lent in your home or personally? What does that look like?
4. Jesus fasted for forty days –
 - a. What do you imagine that would be like?
 - b. What do you believe Jesus occupied His time with?
 - c. What was He praying and preparing for?

5. At the end of that time, when Jesus was at His physical weakest, Satan tempted Jesus three times.
 - a. What were these temptations?
 - b. How did Jesus react to each of these temptations?
 - c. What is the example that Jesus sets for His followers in resisting temptation?
6. What did the Jewish leaders question John about & what was his response?
7. John's ministry was one of preparation and once Jesus began to minister John's significantly lessened.
 - a. What way did John respond to this?
 - b. What ways could he have responded?
 - c. When we are confronted with a lessening of influence or power how are we likely to act? What does God call us to do when this occurs?
8. Jesus began to acquire followers, He was a teacher, and this was the practice of the day.
 - a. Why do you think Jesus' disciples were willing to leave everything and follow Him?
 - b. Who were the initial recruits?
 - c. How did they help in the recruitment?
 - d. What was Jesus' recruiting tactic?
 - e. When we think of following Jesus in 2019 is this statement phrased any differently or the expectations any less? Why?
9. What was Jesus' first miracle? Where was it & what were the circumstances?
10. Who was Nicodemus?
 - a. What were his questions to Jesus? & How did Jesus respond?
 - b. What does it mean to be 'born again'?
11. What was the snake lifted in the wilderness by Moses used for, and how did Jesus use that example to refer to Himself?
12. What was the purpose of Jesus coming into the world?
 - a. What is the response of many to the presence of Jesus?
 - b. How do we share this message today?
13. Jesus went through Samaria, a land filled with people who were neither Jewish but not Greek or Roman either.

- a. What was the attitude toward Samaritans in Jesus' day?
 - b. Why was it unusual for Jesus to go through Samaria and speak to the woman there?
 - c. What did they speak of, and what was the result of their conversation?
 - d. Do you have a "Samaria"? If so, how do you make sure you "go through it" and present the gospel there?
14. Where did Jesus go and how did Jesus reveal himself in Capernaum?
- a. What was the response of the people?
 - b. Do you see that today, when Jesus is revealed He is proclaimed or feared? In which ways the most?
15. The supernatural is quite real and active, especially in proximity to Jesus.
- a. What kinds of experiences with dark supernatural events have you had?
 - b. What kind of examples and practices do we find in scripture for dealing with the supernatural?
 - c. How have you responded to these situations?
16. What did Jesus do for the man with leprosy?
- a. What did Jesus tell the man TO do and NOT to do?
 - b. What did the man do?
 - c. What was the result?
 - d. When Jesus was at the height of His popularity the people sought Him out and were relentless – Why?
17. What did Jesus do first for the man lowered through the ceiling?
- a. What was the response of the Jewish leaders to this?
 - b. What does this whole episode show about Jesus' divine nature?
 - c. Why can Jesus forgive sins and know what people are "thinking in their hearts"?
 - d. What does it mean for God to forgive YOUR sins? How does this affect the way you live and go about your daily life?
18. When Jesus was eating at Levi's house He was criticized.
- a. What kinds of people did Jesus minister to and spend a lot of time with?
 - b. What does this tell you about Jesus?
 - c. What was the criticism of the Pharisees?

- d. What was Jesus' response?
 - e. Does this same sentiment apply to 2019? If so in what ways?
19. What was the staged event for the Pharisees and Herodians to join together to plot how to kill Jesus?
- a. If Jesus knew their hearts why do you suppose He went ahead and played into their hands?
 - b. What does it mean for Christians today to be "wise as serpents and innocent as doves"?
 - c. What ways do you think Christians (*specifically you*) need to live by faith and not care about the reactions and threats of those who are opposed to the Gospel?
20. What were the Jews of Jesus' time expecting a Messiah to do/be?
21. Who were the twelve chosen by Jesus?
- a. He knew in advance that Judas would betray Him – Why do you think Judas was allowed to be a part of the group?
 - b. He also knew in advance that Peter would deny Him – Why do you think Peter was allowed too?
 - c. What does it mean to be chosen by Jesus?
22. What was the role of the women who followed Jesus around?
23. What was Jesus response to John when questioned about His role?
- a. People often today expect many different things from or about Jesus. What does the Story tell about what we should be expecting from this Jesus of Nazareth?
24. When the words of Jesus are spoken and lived out the response is often "we want to hear more" or Be Quiet.
- a. What exhortation would you give to those who need to speak up?
 - b. What encouragement would you give to those who need to speak louder in the face of opposition?