

## Session #3

### The Good News of Jesus<sup>1</sup>

**Focus:** To learn that Jesus preached the gospel by preaching himself as the good news. To focus our idea of the gospel not around our own sin and forgiveness, or the good we can do on our own, but around the much bigger picture of Jesus himself as the good news.

*Start by saying the Jesus Creed out loud:* Jesus said – “The first commandment is: ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.” (Mark 12:29-31)

#### Opening Questions

1. What did Jesus believe about God’s Kingdom?
2. What did Jesus think about himself? Who did he think he was?
3. Did Jesus preach the gospel? How and why?

#### Bible Study – Expectations for God’s Work through Jesus (Psalm 72; Luke 1 & Matthew 11)

*Read Psalm 72:1-7.*

This Psalm is a prayer attributed to King David asking God to make his son the kind of king who could fulfill God’s promises to Israel and the world. In time it came to be seen as a prophecy for the Messiah.

1. As the Jews of Jesus’ time heard this poetic prayer for the king, how do you think it shaped their expectations of the coming messianic king?

*Read Luke 1:67-80.*

Zechariah was the husband of Elizabeth and the father of John the Baptist. After the birth of John (who is the cousin of Jesus), Zechariah prophesies in a song about Jesus and John.

1. Zechariah was a priest. How do you think his calling shaped the hopes he focused on in God’s work?
2. What does Zechariah think God is going to do through Jesus? What does he think God will do through John?

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from *Following King Jesus: How To Know, Read, Live, And Show The Gospel*, by Scot Mcknight & Becky Castle Miller (Zondervan 2019) p. 35-42

*Read Matthew 11:2-15.*

Here and in the similar passage in Luke 7:18-23, we see John asking Jesus an important question through some of his disciples (John was in prison for criticizing Herod Antipas, the ruler of Galilee).

1. Compare Jesus' words to John's disciples here with Jesus' words announcing his ministry to the people of Nazareth in Luke 4. What connections do you see between the two passages? (Hint: think about what Jesus was reading in Luke 4)
2. What does Jesus say about himself and John? Who does he think he is? Who does he think John is?
3. Take a moment to review the passages from this week's study again and make a list of repeated words and themes.

### **Further Study**

Jesus says many things about himself in the Gospels that show what he thought about who he was and his role in God's story. Take some time to read on reflect on what he says in the following stories:

1. Matthew 5:17-48 – What does Jesus say about his relationship to the Bible? Is he just saying what's always been said or does he have the authority to say something new?
2. Mark 6:7-13 – What message do you think Jesus was giving by appointing 12 apostles? (Hint: Israel had 12 tribes) Are the apostles equal to Jesus, or is he their leader? Consider what Jesus says about the apostles later in Matthew 19:27-30 and Luke 22:24-30.
3. Mark 8:27-9:1 – What does Jesus say about himself here (and in the similar passages in Mathew 16:13-28 and Luke 9:18-27)?

### **Prayer**

What are the specific hopes you have for God to act in your life, in your culture, in your time? How can you praise God for what God has already done, is doing, and will do? How could Psalm 72 or Zechariah's song help you pray these kind of things (you could also take a look at Mary's prayer in Luke 1:46-55)? Take some time and write this prayer down.

*Close your time of prayer with the Lord's Prayer.*