

# Let's Talk about Jesus



# Recommended Resources

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- “Evangelism in a Post-Christian Age” (seminar)
  - » Glen Scrivener – Speak Life Podcast
  - » From 2024 Keswick Convention
- “Honest Evangelism”
  - » Rico Tice
- “Questioning Evangelism” and “Questioning Faith”
  - » Randy Newman
- “Out of the Saltshaker and Into the World” and “Stay Salt”
  - » Rebecca Manley Pippert

# Recommended Resources

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- “The Reason for God” and “Making Sense of God”
  - » Tim Keller

# Why This Topic?

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- Biblical Fidelity
  - » Matt. 28:16-20
- Opportunity
  - » Lots of anxiety, fear
  - » Longings for “something more” (transcendent?)
  - » Going “all in” on personal autonomy not working out – causing disillusionment

# Why This Topic?

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- Matthew 28:16-20
  - » [16] Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. [17] And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. [18] And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. [19] Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, [20] teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

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# Why This Topic?

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- Context
  - » How do we bring Jesus to people in 2024? How is that the same or different than 1884?
- Zeal
  - » “Want to” but not sure “how to”

## For Discussion:

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- #1 – If you're a Christian, who helped you become the Christian you are today? Pick someone and describe them in 60 seconds.



## For Discussion:

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- #2 – “What” or “who” comes to mind when you think about an evangelist?

# A Word of Encouragement

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- God is working through “normal people” (like us)
- Most people become Christians on account of the everyday faithfulness of family, friends, and neighbors
  - » This has always been the case and continues to be the case in 2024

# So Why Don't We Talk about Jesus?

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- Fear (social ramifications, etc.). See Rico Tice – the “pain line”.
- Feelings of personal inadequacy (“I’m not gifted in this area”)
- Want to but “don’t know how”
- Heart issues???
  - » Matthew 12:34 – “For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks”
  - » No seminar can solve this
  - » “Solution” is drawing near to Christ and abiding in him (John 15)

# Overview – “Six Seeds”

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- Six ways to “bring Jesus” to people in 2024
  - » Seed 1: “That’s What I Love About Jesus”
  - » Seed 2: The Jesus God
  - » Seed 3: “I couldn’t have gotten through \_\_\_\_\_ without Jesus”
  - » Seed 4: Emphasize Our Union with Christ
  - » Seed 5: “You Keep Talking about That Thing”
  - » Seed 6: Linger

# Seed 1: “That’s What I Love about Jesus”



## For Discussion:

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- What do you love about Jesus?
  - » Which biblical passages/scenes come to mind?
  - » Or talk about how you've seen Jesus at work in your life
  - » Let's evangelize one another!

# Debrief

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- What did you share?
  - » Which biblical passages/scenes come to mind?
  - » Or talk about how you've seen Jesus at work in your life
  - » Let's evangelize one another!
- Did you feel yourself loving Jesus more:
  - » When you hear other people tell you about Jesus?
  - » Or when you tell others about Jesus?
  - » Or is it a wash?
  - » We need both!!!



*“The Christ in his own heart is weaker than  
the Christ in the word of his brother”*  
*(Or to paraphrase - the Christ in the word of  
a brother or sister is stronger than the Christ  
in my own heart)*  
*- Dietrich Bonhoeffer*



# Debrief

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- At all times we need to evangelize and be evangelized
  - » When we do church together – we’re essentially evangelizing one another.
  - » We constantly need to hear the gospel from the “outside”
- Glen Scrivener:
  - » “One of the reasons we’re not telling non-believers the gospel is because we’re not telling our Christian friends the gospel either.
  - » “Start here! Tell your fellow believers first. It will help you get better at evangelizing the world.”

# Debrief

18

- How can we work “that’s what I love about Jesus” into everyday conversations?
  - » Reflect
  - » Discuss
  - » Consider looking at John 4:1-45 (especially v. 29 and v. 39)

# Seed 2: The Jesus God



## For Discussion:

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- If someone told you “I don’t believe in God” – how would you respond?

# A Potential Response

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- “What God do you not believe in?”
  - » Then listen carefully to their response (listening is so important in evangelism!)
  - » Then see to what degree their description matches the way God is described in the Bible
  - » Expect lots of variance

# A Potential Response

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- “I don’t believe in that God either. Let me tell you about the God I do believe in.”
  - » Then tell them about Jesus, who shows us what God is like.
  - » See Colossians 1:15-20

# A Potential Response

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- Col. 1:15-20
- “He (Jesus) is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. [16] For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. [17] And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. [18] And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. [19] For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, [20] and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.”

# A Potential Response

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- Then walk with people through the gospels, which show us who Jesus is (and therefore what God is like)
- When God conversations are being had, very often we're talking about very different things.
  - » So let's emphasize that we're talking about the Jesus God
  - » Scrivener: When we talk about God in the abstract, people will often think of something like "electricity or Zeus"



**Seed 3: “I couldn’t have  
gotten through \_\_\_\_\_  
without Jesus”**



**CITY  
CHURCH**

## For Discussion:

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- Who are you?

# How “The West” Responds

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- The modern, Western answer to the “who are you?” question tends to be very individualistic and “atomized”
  - » We choose who we are and inform the world. We’re self-defined.
- But in reality we are “our families” – both biologically and spiritually
- Biologically:
  - » “Who we are” is influenced far more than we realize (or like to admit) by our family, genetic makeup, where and when we were born, etc.
  - » E.g. World Series “human interest stories”
  - » Our choices make up a comparatively small amount of “who we are” – but we dwell on this!

# How “The West” Responds

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- Spiritually:
  - » Our world is shaped by two “family representatives” – Adam and Jesus
- We are all sinners by nature on account of Adam’s sin/choice (see Gen. 3; Rom. 5:12-21)
  - » And then we all ratify this nature with our own sin
  - » We’re attracted to different kinds of sin – but we all sin
  - » There are no small sins!

# How “The West” Responds

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- SOF Article 3: The Human Condition
  - » “We believe that God created Adam and Eve in His image, but they sinned when tempted by Satan. In union with Adam, human beings *are sinners by nature and by choice*, alienated from God, and under His wrath. Only through God’s saving work in Jesus Christ can we be rescued, reconciled and renewed.”
- We keep on doing what Adam did

# How “The West” Responds

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- Western angst: “But I didn’t get a choice!!!”
  - » You don’t get a choice about a lot of things
  - » Plus we all ratify our sinful nature
- However – more in line with western values – “original sin” does level the playing field
  - » “The line separating good and evil passes not through states, nor between classes, nor between political parties either -- but right through every human heart” - Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn

# Enter Jesus!

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- Contra Christopher Hitchens (and others), the story of the Bible is not:
  - » “Born sick, then commanded to be healthy”
- The real story:
  - » “God exiles Adam, and then JOINS HIM”
  - » OR “We’re born sick, and then the doctor comes”
  - » Or “Jesus comes and turns the prison into his palace”

# Enter Jesus!

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- The Man in the Pit
  - » Mystic: “There’s no hole – it’s an illusion”
  - » Religious authority: “You should have listened to my advice”
  - » Influencer: “Thoughts and prayers”
  - » Politician: “This was the other party’s fault”
  - » Pragmatist: “Why don’t you just climb out?”
  - » Cynic: “You’re better off down there”
  - » Idealist: “Look on the bright side!”
  - » Friend: Dives into the pit to help



# Enter Jesus!

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- Jesus is that friend!
  - » Jesus sees the sinner in the pit (of our own making), gets down in there with us, and put us on his shoulders
- Relevant for how we talk about salvation
  - » Also relevant for how we talk about any dark season
  - » How did Jesus help you in the wake of a tragedy? Failure? COVID?
  - » Especially helpful category for those of us who feel as though we have “boring” testimonies

- John 1:1-5, 14
  - » “[1] In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. [2] He was in the beginning with God. [3] All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. [4] In him was life, and the life was the light of men. [5] The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”
  - » “[14] And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

- 1 Corinthians 15:20-23
  - » [20] But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. [21] For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. [22] For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. [23] But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ.”

- 2 Corinthians 5:21
  - » [21] For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.
- 1 Peter 2:24
  - » [24] He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.”
- 1 Peter 3:18a
  - » [18] For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God

# Seed 4: Emphasize Our Union with Christ



# Union with Christ + Evangelism

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- “In Christ” shows up around 150 times in the NT
  - » But does it show up in our evangelism?
- The beauty of emphasizing our “union with Christ”
  - » #1: Helps us make it clear that salvation is more than a Golden Ticket to heaven – that Christ is truly offering HIMSELF to us – not just an outcome (Scrivener).
    - » We’re ultimately telling people about oneness with Jesus, which is eternal life.

# Union with Christ + Evangelism

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- The beauty of emphasizing our “union with Christ”
  - » #2: Helps us connect our evangelism with the church (as in the church broadly speaking – all believers past, present, and future)
    - » When we’re one with Jesus, we’re connected to other believers (the church) as well
    - » Another question to wrap into our evangelism: “that’s what I love about my church”

# Union with Christ + Evangelism

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- The beauty of emphasizing our “union with Christ”
  - » #3: Helps us emphasize the “with-ness” of Jesus
    - » God is with us in such a profound way that we are said to be IN CHRIST!
    - » Distinguishes Christianity from other religions (and from unbiblical forms of Christianity)
    - » See for example Christianity’s approach to suffering
- David Gibson (“The Lord of Psalm 23): “You are with me” is essentially the central message of the Bible (and the center of Psalm 23)



- Ephesians 1:3-14
  - » [3] Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, [4] even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love [5] he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, [6] to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.

- Ephesians 1:3-14
  - » [7] In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, [8] which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight [9] making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ [10] as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

- Ephesians 1:3-14
  - » [11] In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, [12] so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. [13] In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, [14] who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

# Seed 5: “You Keep Talking about That Thing”



# Caring is Sharing

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- Pay attention to what people care about – and why
  - » If the “why” isn’t obvious, ask about it
  - » And consider asking beyond the initially stated “why” as well
- When people tell us what they care about, they are essentially sharing their value system
  - » Value system = underlying assumptions about how the world works
  - » But is there a solid foundation for these assumptions?

# Caring is Sharing

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- What to listen for:
  - » Zeal for relatively abstract values/ideas like human rights, equality, compassion, justice, etc.
  - » Care for particular people or things
  - » Anger/frustration/sadness regarding personal suffering or the suffering of others

# Caring is Sharing

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- This kind of listening:
  - » Might soften our hearts toward people who have different beliefs or convictions than us
  - » Show us open doors, potentially open doors connected to our own testimonies

# Seed 6: Linger





# The Best Kind of Loitering

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- Behold the beauty of “being normal and hanging around”
  - » Evangelism isn’t for impressive people – it’s for faithful people indwelt by and fill with the Holy Spirit
  - » We constantly need to hear the gospel from the “outside”
- People are often most receptive to Jesus in seasons of great difficulty and suffering
  - » Hard to convince someone to take a life preserver until the seas get choppy

# The Best Kind of Loitering

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- The (somewhat cynical) way I talk about my job as a pastor, especially among people who don't follow Jesus:
  - » I hang around until “things hit the fan”
- The ministry of hanging around:
  - » Requires fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22) – especially patience
  - » Requires faithful presence (which, by the way, requires margin)
  - » Requires intentionality – “hanging around” is not the same thing as passivity

# The Best Kind of Loitering

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- Scrivener:
  - » “Pastoring is evangelizing Christians. Evangelism is pastoring non-Christians”
  - » Note: Expect SLOW
  - » Note: Folks who may not like you on account of Christian convictions might yet come to you in seasons of suffering. Prepare to be surprised!
- Pray a lot!
  - » This is the real work of “lingering evangelism”

# The More You Know...



# Did Jesus Rise from the Dead?

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- » NT Wright – “The Resurrection of the Son of God”
- » Michael Licona – “The Resurrection of Jesus”

# Is the Bible Trustworthy/True?

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- Online Resources
  - » <https://www.citychurchgmv.com/resources>
  - » “Can I Trust the Bible?”