



September 24-25, 2022

Ice Breaker Questions

- How would you describe your heritage?
 - Your “physical” heritage - nationality / where you grew up.
 - Your “spiritual” heritage - who were the important people who influenced your faith?

Understand Their Story

John 1:19-34 reads like a courtroom drama! John (the author) uses words like **testimony** (1:19), **confess** (1:20,) **deny** (1:20),and **borne witness** (1:32, 34) to demonstrate that the identity and mission of John and Jesus are on trial. Read the text and answer the following questions.

1. How would you characterize the “crown prosecutors”? Who are they? What seems to be the attitude and the motivation behind their questions?

2. How would you characterize John the Baptist’s defense? What is his “tone”: Do his words seem defensive or tentative? What does he disclose about his identity and his mission?

3. What is John the Baptist’s testimony about Jesus? How does he describe Jesus’ identity and mission? What are the big differences that John identifies between his ministry and Jesus’?
 - i. Are you surprised by what John says in 1:31 and 1:33? Why or why not?

Connect to His Story.

If people in your group have NOT worked through the devotional on this passage, work through Question #4 only. If they HAVE worked through the devotional, skip to Question #5.

4. Read John 1:19-34.The priests and Levites are not asking him random questions about his identity. Rather, they are asking questions based on the Old Testament. What do they want to know?
 - a. “Are you Elijah?” (1:21) Why, according to read Malachi 4:5-6 would they ask this?

 - b. “Are you the Prophet?” (1:21) Why, according to Deuteronomy 18:15-18 would they ask this?

 - c. John the Baptist answers them by providing his own Old Testament reference: “I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way of the Lord,’ as the prophet Isaiah said” (1:23). Read Isaiah 40:1-5.

- i. Whose arrival is this “voice” announcing?
 - ii. How does this information tie in with what is said about Jesus in John 1:1-4?
5. Isaiah has further descriptions of this future prophet. What kind of a person will he be according to the following texts?
- a. Isaiah 9:1-7
 - b. Isaiah 11:1-5

Apply to Our Story

John 1:19-34 does not necessarily call readers to do anything. Instead, John wants his readers to know who both Jesus and John are. While John the Baptist had a unique calling to testify about Jesus, all people who follow Jesus may have others ask us who we follow and why.

1. If people questioned you why you go to church or call yourself a Christian, what would you say?
2. Last week we suggested that you identify and begin praying for people in your life who don't know Jesus, and those who “know him” but have not received him. Think of who you listed. What “testimony” about Jesus could you share that would help them to understand who he is and what he has come to do?

Prayer

- *Pray in Adoration: Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world!*
 - *Pray in Confession for the times in which you have been unprepared to testify about Jesus.*
 - *Pray in Supplication for clarity, and sensitivity to describe Jesus to your friends and neighbours.*
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God's work and our Work

How All of Life Connects to the Gospel - in John 1:19-34

John the Baptist answered the questions that his “prosecutors” were asking (question #4). People we encounter are asking very different questions! To testify about Jesus to ‘modern day’ people, it's helpful to think about the Gospel message and the Christian worldview using the 4 “chapters” of the Bible.

1. **Creation** (Genesis 1 - 2) - How the world **OUGHT** to be. The world was created orderly and abundant. There was relational harmony between people, and with God. People had purposeful work.
2. **Rebellion** (Genesis 3 - 11) - How the world **IS**. As a result of people's sin, the world is now filled with death, pain and relational discord. Our work is frustrated; it is plagued with “thorns and thistles”.
3. **Redemption** (Genesis 12 - John 20) - How the world **CAN BE**. God called to Israel to reveal his character to the world. Israel failed, but God's character and plan were perfectly revealed in Jesus' life, death and resurrection. We **CAN** now represent God on earth as we are forgiven through Jesus and transformed by the Holy Spirit. We **CAN** work in the world as Jesus' representatives.
4. **Re-creation** (Acts 1 - Revelation 22) - How the world **WILL BE**. When Jesus returns, all the effects of sin on this world **WILL BE** wiped away. Followers of Jesus **WILL** live again in harmony with one another, with God and with the world. We **WILL** again have purposeful work in God's kingdom.

Think about 1 person who you work with or know who is not a Christian.

- What would he/she identify as the problem(s) with the world?
- How could you discuss this problem in light of the root of human problems? (What the world **IS** because we've rebelled against God), and how it **OUGHT** to be, it **CAN** be, and **WILL BE**?)