

WEEK 8 - How does Jesus interact with his betrayer? + Conclusion

Spring Emphasis 2024 // Canopy Guide

Love Your Neighbor

CONVERSATION STARTERS

Use the questions below to kickstart a community building, all-play conversation that connects to our weekly topic. If your group meets for dinner, these might be great questions to share around a table.

- Are you a grudge holder or do you readily forgive?
- Over the course of the semester, have you found a type of neighbor that is easy to love? Which have been the hardest to love?
- Do you see your neighbors differently? How has this topic worked its way into your everyday life?

STUDY GUIDE

Loving someone who deserves it comes pretty naturally. But loving a person who has rejected us or betrayed a trust or acted spitefully to us can loom as a challenge too far. The usual pattern is to write that one off our list and go on. It's usually not too hard to "roll with the punches" in life, but betrayal or outright rejection pushes past our limits.

Think how Jesus must have felt, especially toward Judas, the betrayer, and even Peter who denied even knowing Jesus after spending several years as His apostle. Yet the evidence in the Gospels shows us that He did love them and continued to care for them.

Jesus was not totally surprised by either Peter or Judas. In fact, at the Last Supper Jesus reached out to both of them, knowing what they would each do that very night (Mark 14:29-31; John 13:21-30). Nonetheless, it is clear that their choices and actions hurt Him (Luke 22:61-62; Luke 22:47-48).

Although those two were the extreme examples, they were not the only ones who rejected Jesus' love. The rich young ruler who asked about eternal life was loved by Jesus yet he turned away sorrowfully (Mark 10:17-22), and the impact of Jesus' very

Incarnation was rejected by those He loved (John 1:11; Matthew 23:37).

Obviously, Jesus experienced rejection and outright opposition, but He continued to love – even those who didn’t deserve it. The clearest example of His continuing concern was the effort to restore and rehabilitate Peter, as He asked him by the seaside to declare his love once again (actually three times – affirming without doubt where he now stood) and to resume his call to ministry (John 21:15-17).

Jesus’ whole life and ministry exhibit that love for the undeserving as ultimately seen in His sacrificial Death on the Cross (Luke 23:34). And His example now also includes us (Romans 5:6-11) and provides impetus and ability for us to do to others as He has done for us (Ephesians 4:31-32).

Scripture to Read

Mark 14:29-31	John 13:21-30	John 21:15-19
Mark 10:17-22	Romans 5:6-11	Ephesians 4:31-32

Deeper Discussion Questions

1. How do you handle being betrayed or rejected by someone you have trusted/loved? Do you make overtures to restore a relationship or wait for evidence of some repentance/regret on the part of the other person?
2. Have you been at fault in rejecting another person? What did you do about it, and what effect did it have? Has the relationship been restored?
3. When Jesus said that one of the disciples would betray Him, each of them asked, “Is it I”? Why do you think they all asked this question?
4. How does Jesus’ forgiveness and reconciliation provided for us make a difference in difficult relationships with others?

PRAYER

Make sure to claim some time as a group each week to pray specifically for each other.

EXTRA RESOURCES/ARTICLES/RESEARCH

1. CS Lewis Institute - [“Loving God and Neighbor”](#) - excellent 10-15 minute read
2. Tabletalk article by JR Vassar, [“Christ and the Love of Neighbor”](#)
3. SheReadsTruth devotion, [“Encounters with Christ: Peter’s Reinstatement”](#)

***LEADER NOTE**

Please note that in this conversation on betrayal, we are not talking about abuse. If a member of your group is in a circumstance where their safety or the safety of a loved one is in danger, encourage them to get out and let us know if you need help. There is healing and forgiveness that are part of that experience too, but overall those are different circumstances than what we are talking about with betrayal here. If you know that members of your group have a history of abuse or need the language of abuse and betrayal clarified better to engage in this conversation, feel free to add your own disclaimer to steer the conversation in the direction your group needs to go. -KW