

ANNOUNCEMENTS IN SERVICE...

1. If you're looking for a group (or people for your group), come to a Connect Event this Sunday. We'll help match you up, in-person. We'll have a Connect Event in Oakley on Sunday evening, and Connect Events in Mason after each Sunday service. SEE YOUR PROGRAM FOR DETAILS.
2. Onsite groups will meet on Wednesday nights from 7-9pm during the journey in both Oakley (at 3500 Madison) and Mason (at Living Leaf Church). There's no RSVP required unless you need childcare. SEE YOUR PROGRAM FOR DETAILS.
3. Kids around here are experiencing Reset, too. If you have a child from age 3 through 6th grade, pick up a Family Guide from your child's room in Kids' Club this weekend. Only one per family, please.

SONGS

PERSONAL JESUS VIDEO

Some of us felt really uncomfortable that some of those paintings were being painted over. And if you were that was indicative that this journey is for you. For you to hold to one image of Jesus and think that it or a piece of artwork that depicts that image is somehow holy or to be revered is a sign that we need to reset.

Try to strip out the additives that there have been to Jesus. This mirrors many of our quest to strip out the additives of our life. That is why Fresh Markets are growing and why companies like Kroger are trying to jump into the Fresh Market market. In fact, Whole Foods Market Inc. stock price jumped 37 percent Thursday. This is why many of us are buying bottled water because we think it is purer. It is why school cafeterias don't serve mystery meat anymore. McDonald's profits have gone through the roof... During this series we are not going to try to second guess everything that is in the book of Luke but we also don't want to check our brain at the door either. Here's something to get us thinking...

VIDEO #1 (reliability of the manuscripts)

Let's try for a straight forward reading and interpretation of the book of Luke. Regardless of what some modern scholars say in the past few decades, the book of Luke has held up just fine for over 1900 years in every corner of the globe. Sense of trust in the Bible's straightforward account of Jesus. Therefore, let's just read it at face value and try it. Not only may we find that it works

Luke 1:1-4 (NIV)

¹ Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, ² just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. ³ Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, ⁴ so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.

Theophilus may denote a member of the equestrian order (possibly in some official position) or may be a courtesy title but most likely is just a real name. The Bible approaches anyone who would be an

honest seeker in coming to a potential relationship with Jesus as, "excellent." Luke is a physician who wrote the gospel of Luke and then the next book in the New Testament, "Acts."

Acts 24:1 (NIV)

¹ Five days later the high priest Ananias went down to Caesarea with some of the elders and a lawyer named Tertullus, and they brought their charges against Paul before the governor.

Why Luke? He is the one who wrote to non-jews which is mostly what we have going through the Reset Journey. The gospel according to Matthew was written primarily with Jews in mind and addressed unique cultural and theological issues which Jews of the 1st century were dealing with.

One night, Sherlock Holmes and Watson went camping. In the middle of the night, Holmes woke up and saw the stars shining above him. He called out to Watson, "What does seeing the stars in the middle of the night mean to you?" Watson woke up and gazed at the sky and then said, "Infinity is sometimes incomprehensible and sometimes comprehensible. We are but a speck in the universe, yet we are blessed with a thing called consciousness..." "Watson you idiot," Interrupted Holmes, "It means that someone stole our tent."

Sometimes it is the obvious that we are unwilling to see. The obvious is that there are beliefs or feelings we have which are positively or negatively impacting our potential relationship with Jesus. Lets notice the obvious and then Reset our assumption.

One of the things that plagues me is a continual feeling of guilt or that I don't measure up. Perhaps this is because I'm adopted and while I always felt fortunate and blessed to be chosen and loved by my parents I've started to second guess that there may be some psychological stuff about not being good enough or wanted. This actually dove tailed quite nicely with the theological persuasion of the early groups of Christians I used to hang out with. I was taught by people who emphasized God's wrath and need for justice. I believe God has genuine anger and I believe that he will ultimately execute justice.

John 14:7 (TNIV)

If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him."

I come with my assumptions about who Jesus is and what Jesus wants of me. I'm look at Jesus as seen in the book of Luke and take it at face value. I have a feeling I'm going to find a lot of answers I wasn't looking for and didn't know I would find. But I'm also hoping I do find an answer to the source of my paranoia that I'm not measuring up and something is going to happen.

Some people assume that since I lead a church that is big and growing with increasing numbers of people talking about how God is changing their life that I would assume that God is happy with me and more good stuff will be coming my way. I don't feel that way. I feel that the other shoe is coming. I had drilled into me that to whom much is given much is required so I'm constantly wondering if I'm doing

enough. I'm constantly second guessing my time management, my money management, my management of general morality.

When a lot of people pointed to the Jesus who was holding the little lamb, I can't relate to that image unless I am broken and hurting. Then I feel that could be me because God's justice has come on me and now he'll put me back together. But when I'm putting money in the bank, enjoying a vacation and having smooth sailing at home and at work I'm naturally thinking that God isn't happy and something is going to happen. In my sane moments I don't think this is Jesus but yet I feel plagued and I would like to get this figured out.

I spoke with a friend of mine this past week that he feels constant shame for past behavior. That his identity is one of being a loser who just can't cut it.

I know some who think Jesus is your buddy who will never challenge but always affirm what you feel. Isn't that what many of us are like in friendships? I want to encourage you in small groups that if someone voices something they are struggling with, don't immediately default to being their buddy and explaining away the tension they have. Sometimes Jesus brings tension for our growth.

We all want to be original. None of us want to feel like we are doing or believing what everyone else is believing. I like being original. I like not looking like a normal pastor. I like having some beliefs that I think the mainstream doesn't hold to. But I can't allow my admiration of originality keep me from reality.

However, trying to be original can often get you into trouble... at least eventually. It was original to have zero down loans. You are original when you are the first person in your school to smoke crack. You are original when

A lot of us in wanting to be an original individual and in fear that we'll become Jerry Falwell, or the person two cubes over with all the Christian paraphernalia, our grandparents who went to church on Sundays but were racists on Mondays will intentionally reject any view of Jesus that those folks may have.

VIDEO #2 (jesus not a myth)

Joseph Campbell wrote the book "Hero with a Thousand Faces" in which he studies all the myths and sees a pattern that emerges. Many have pointed to his work and noticed that Jesus fits fairly well into this pattern thus Jesus must be a myth too. In fact, this scene from Luke 2:41-50 could be the stage of "Call to Adventure" or "Helpers" where outsiders assist the hero in preparation of his journey and future success.

Luke 2:41-50 (TNIV)

⁴¹ Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the Festival of the Passover. ⁴² When he was twelve years old, they went up to the Festival, according to the custom. ⁴³ After the Festival was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. ⁴⁴ Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and

friends. ⁴⁵ When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. ⁴⁶ After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷ Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. ⁴⁸ When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you." ⁴⁹ "Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?" ⁵⁰ But they did not understand what he was saying to them.

Robert Funk who is one of the influential starters of the Jesus Seminar which is a think-tank which largely attempts to debunk and devalue the gospel accounts of Jesus says that the accounts of Jesus as seen in the Bible aren't trustworthy because they come from people who were emotionally involved.

People in institutions these days are regularly getting fired for teaching that the holocaust didn't happen. One of the things they point to is that we are all getting too emotional about it and the reports early on were influenced the emotionality of it all. I get emotional thinking about 6 million people being slaughtered. If I saw all the hair piled up as well as shoes and other personal items or other things that turned my stomach I would get very emotional and tell as many people as I could.

If people actually experienced being healed, seeing people healed, a sacrificial loving person being brutalized on a cross and then if they actually saw him come back from the dead and then hundreds of people die because they wouldn't recant that they saw him, couldn't we expect them to be emotional? I would hope so. Just because you are touched doesn't mean it wasn't real.

If you want to believe something you will be able to find someone to back you up. Everyone can find someone smart to validate something they believe. But what we normally don't hear is the person's personal story who has studied and is putting forth their conclusions. The fact of the matter is no one can be completely objective. What is helpful is to hear the honest subjective process by which smart people bring their attempted objective argument.

This is why I really appreciate what Anne Rice did at the conclusion of her novel "Christ the Lord." You may know her from Vampire Chronicles fame. She speaks of her assumption about Jesus and why she got away from all faith in Jesus. She talks about, experiencing personal pain, being married to an atheist and having a gay son who was shunned by traditional Christianity and how all that served to keep her from studying and embracing Jesus. But then it was time, and she applied the same scholarly tenacity in researching Jesus and the veracity of the Bible as she did for previous topics. Here's a lengthy excerpt in what she says about Jesus and assumptions at the end of her book "Christ the Lord."

And what would I write about my Jesus? I had no idea. But the prospects were interesting. Surely he was a liberal, married, had children, was a homosexual, and who knew what? But I must do my research before I wrote one word. These skeptical scholars seemed so very sure of themselves. They built their books on certain assertions without even examining these assertions... What gradually came clear to me was that many of the skeptical arguments—arguments that insisted most of the Gospels were suspect, for instance, or written too late to be eyewitness accounts—lacked coherence. They were not elegant. Arguments about Jesus himself were full of conjecture. Some

books were no more than assumptions piled upon assumptions. Absurd conclusions were reached on the basis of little or no data at all. In sum, the whole case for the nondivine Jesus who stumbled into Jerusalem and somehow got crucified by nobody and had nothing to do with the founding of Christianity and would be horrified by it if he knew about it—that whole picture which had floated in the liberal circles I frequented as an atheist for thirty years—that case was not made. Not only was it not made, I discovered in this field some of the worst and most biased scholarship I'd ever read. I saw almost no skeptical scholarship that was convincing, and the Gospels, shredded by critics, lost all intensity when reconstructed by various theorists. They were in no way compelling when treated as composites and records of later "communities." Christ the Lord: Out of Egypt (Anne Rice)

Luke 12:51 (NIV)

Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division.

Many of these scholars, scholars who apparently devoted their life to New Testament scholarship, disliked Jesus Christ. Some pitied him as a hopeless failure. Others sneered at him, and some felt an outright contempt. This came between the lines of the books. This emerged in the personality of the texts. I'd never come across this kind of emotion in any other field of research, at least not to this extent. It was puzzling. The people who go into Elizabethan studies don't set out to prove that Queen Elizabeth I was a fool. They don't personally dislike her. They don't make snickering remarks about her, or spend their careers trying to pick apart her historical reputation. Christ the Lord: Out of Egypt (Anne Rice)

The workout truths are never the same because authors and trainers have to make money by saying something different. We see this in the academia world. Robert Funk, Dominic Crossan, Marcus Borg, Greg Boyd, Brian MacLaren, John MacArthur, Bruce Chilton, John Piper... The cynic in me believes that they all make a living contradicting one another because if they don't say something different then no one will listen and buy their books.

No matter what you believe you will always find someone smarter who will devalidate your beliefs. And then you'll be able to find someone smarter to devalidate their conclusions. And then someone else will find someone smarter. It is like being a hired gun in the old west: there is always someone faster or smarter.

It doesn't matter what you read or what you believe relative to working out... just work out.

I want to feel like I'm unique. I want to think that I require a unique workout. I want to think that I'm a unique leader that is leading a unique church and it is not altogether a good thing that I'm trying not to be various pastors. I can learn from all people but I don't want to be like other people. I want to be a one of a kind. But I'm really not a one of a kind because as soon as I want to be that I realize I'm just like everyone else that thinks they are special. I'm not special in that gravity that leads to falling and oils that lead to zits still apply to me.

Just because people who live in rainforests haven't experienced snow doesn't mean it doesn't exist. And, just because we haven't experienced the presence or the miraculous nature of Jesus doesn't it doesn't happen.

This Journey we may experience something that we have never experienced before or we may come to believe in something that we won't experience for quite some time. However,

Jesus' main opponents were from the religious establishment. That still is the case today. And, I'm not talking about traditional church people but I'm talking about authors on the top selling spiritual books. Adulterers and addicts who are hurting have no interest in recasting who Jesus was to make him more palatable. They just want help. And, while I'm not a physical adulterer or an addict in the classic sense of needing a 12 step group. I am a spiritual adulterer who lusts and I do have behaviors that I need to get over that I can't. The real Jesus can help us.

TO BE SAID @ END...

1) Establish what the journey is about.

- Don't be assumptive about what people know relative to a journey.
- *We're not prescriptive very often. We are now and this is for your benefit not ours.*
- *On every journey there is a beginning and an ending point.*
- We have everyone on this journey to do the same thing so we can all experience things together as a community/family/etc. We do that no other time.
- Try to cut things out of your life and focus.

OBAMA SCAN and story on blackberry from Newsweek

In this Newsweek article they talk about cognitive psychologist lamenting "distraction overload and continuous partial attention." It is true that we have become the masters of continuous partial attention. And therefore, perhaps our best ideas or accomplishment will never be had. We are trying to eliminate distractions for 6 weeks and have focused attention on the most important issue we will ever deal with. Who is Jesus and If I knew the true Him how would that change the way I live my life?

2) Encourage People to Experiment.

Try different spiritual disciplines you've never tried before.

Try on for size a specific belief about Jesus and see how it feels.