

Way of Discipleship Small Groups

Jesus: How can He be God and a human being?



Touching base (5 minutes)

Open in prayer as is helpful for your group.

If this is your first session take time to introduce yourselves and set any ground rules you want to for your time together.

If you met previously take the opportunity either as a group or in pairs to check in with each other about how your response from last time has gone.



Opening question(s) (5 minutes)

Why do you think it matters that Jesus is both fully God and fully human?



Understanding the information (25 minutes)

Share these thoughts in your own words or read them together:

The Christian claim is that Jesus was more than a 'good teacher', but actually "God with us" – both a fully human being and fully divine. This has huge implications for us as disciples.



Jesus claimed to be God both in what He did, but also in what He said. He acted as God's kingly representative, doing things only God can do, and adopted the title "Son of Man" for Himself which reflected a human-divine nature. In addition, throughout Mark's gospel Jesus is called "Son of God" (the title He is given in the first sentence of the book). In Mark 5:7 demons recognize Jesus as "Son of the Most High God", God calls Jesus his Son at the Transfiguration (Mark 9 : 7) and even the Roman centurion near the cross calls Jesus by this name. (Mark 15:39)

In case we think Jesus' claim to be God was a misunderstanding, the clearest statement about it comes in the gospel of John: "Again his Jewish opponents picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus said to them, 'I have shown you many good works from the Father. For which of these do you stone me?' 'We are not stoning you for any good work,' they replied, "but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God.'" (John 10:31-33)

Finally, despite it being clear from the commandments that only God should be worshipped, Jesus' disciples worshipped Him. (Luke 24.50-53)

While the early Christians wrestled with how to understand this, the clear understanding they arrived at is that Jesus was fully God AND fully human (see the Athanasian creed).

Through the ‘incarnation’, entering into our flesh, Jesus didn’t stop being God in any way, but instead took on what it means to be human. Whatever happened to Jesus, happened to, and inside of, God.

Neither was Jesus a mixture of “human body/divine mind” – He was completely human in every way.

As disciples knowing that Jesus was fully God and fully human helps us because it means:

We don’t have to choose between being ‘godly’ and human. Jesus being fully God and fully human shows how God can be present in a human life without restricting what it means to be human. When we allow Him to work in and through us (like, for example, Mary) He does not overwhelm us and paint us out of the picture but releases us to contribute even more than we could by ourselves.

We have an example we can truly follow. St Athanasius said, “He became what we are so that we could become what He is.” By meeting us as we are, in Jesus God makes Himself truly accessible to human beings. Jesus tells His disciples, “Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father?’” (John 14:9). The WW1 army chaplain Geoffrey Studdert Kennedy put it like this: “In Christ I meet the real God. In him I find no metaphysical abstraction, but God speaking to me in the only language I can understand which is the human language.”

In addition, Jesus has taken our full humanity into the heart of God, showing us that God fully understands us. “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to feel sympathy for our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet he did not sin.” (Hebrews 4:15)

Discuss: What difference might it make to know that the fully human Jesus understands grief, pain, or injustice?

Reading the Bible (15 minutes)

Read Philippians 2: 1-12 which describes how completely human and divine Jesus is.

Discuss the Discovery Bible Study questions:
What does this passage teach me about God?
What does this passage teach me about people?
How does this passage call me to obey God?
What might I do in response to this this week?



Seeing how it looks in real lives (10 minutes)

There is no video, but you are invited to discuss your experience of what you love about Jesus being God and human.



Responding to God's leading (5 minutes)

Give people an opportunity to think about, "What might God be showing me and how might I respond?" They may like to write this down and/or share it with the group and/or share it with one other person. A friendly question is to ask each other, "Is there anything that would be helpful to ask you next time?"



Group prayer (5 minutes)

If Christ is with me, whom shall I fear?
Though the waves and the sea
and the anger of princes are roused against me,
they are less to me than a spider's web.
Indeed, unless you, my brothers,
had detained me, I would have left this very day.
For I always say "Lord, your will be done";
not what this fellow or that would have me do,
but what you want me to do.
That is my strong tower,
my immovable rock,
my staff that never gives way.



John Chrysostom.



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