



THE PROBLEM OF JESUS

The Problem of the Gospels // Mark Clark // April 11th, 2021

Jesus upends everything we ever thought about God, ourselves, and what life is all about. From demons to miracles, from why we tell lies to questions about heaven, hell, and the purpose of our lives--Jesus speaks to every area of life, even the topics we don't want him to talk about. Every person must make their own decision about Jesus. You must investigate him and his claims as if your life depends on it. Because it does.

Scripture: [John 5:31-47](#)

Getting Started:

1. What are a few common critiques people have regarding the authenticity and accuracy of the Bible?
2. Do you trust what the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) have to say about Jesus? Why or why not? Is there a question or doubt you would like to investigate as a small group during this message series?

Discuss:

3. Read [John 5:31-47](#). In this passage, Jesus tells the religious leaders that they are studying the scriptures but missing the ultimate point--him! They were reading the written word but ignoring the Living Word. In what ways does our understanding of Jesus impact the way we read and study the Bible?
4. What reason does Jesus give for their rejection of him? Do you think this is also the reason we at times push back against his authority?
5. Mark explained that the four Gospels are a blend of history and theology, not biographies in the modern sense of that term. The writers were highly selective in the content they shared and the order they recorded it in order to advance their purposes. How does this understanding change the way we read and study the Gospel accounts?
6. In the message, Mark outlined various indicators that point to the authenticity of the Gospels:
 - a. *The criteria of embarrassment:* Numerous potentially discrediting events and details were included rather than edited out.
 - b. *The criteria of authorship:* The Gospels were ascribed to authors who were ordinary, obscure, and even disregarded.

- c. *The criteria of differences*: If these stories were fabricated, the authors would have been careful to eliminate various discrepancies.
- d. *The criteria of external evidence*: The authors grounded their accounts in verifiable historical contexts.
- e. *The criteria of timing*: The Gospels were written within decades of Jesus' life, and thus the stories could be fact-checked by eyewitnesses who were still living.

Discuss these criteria briefly. Which one(s) stood out to you most, and why?

- 7. Are we settling for "print instead of the person" in our lives? Are we settling for "rules instead of a relationship" with Jesus? Are we settling for "letter instead of spirit"? What does this look like? Why do we do this? How can we overcome it?
- 8. How can we ensure that pride and fear don't keep us from opening up our hearts to Jesus?

Bottom Line: Will you have the courage to read the Gospels in order to meet the God who loves you and wants you to experience a meaningful and abundant life, both now and forever? Pray that the Holy Spirit would open up your heart in a fresh way to who Jesus is and what he has done for you.