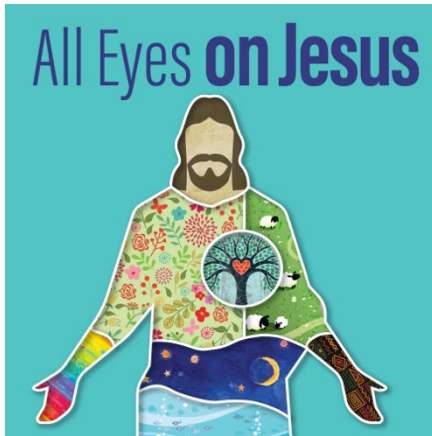


Small Group Questions

Small groups and individuals can use these questions to engage the content of Sunday sermons.



November 5-26, 2023 All Eyes on Jesus

As followers of Jesus, we model our lives after his. This, of course, is much easier said than done. This series will scrutinize aspects of Jesus' life and explore how we can be more like him.

*Let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us,
looking to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith.
– Hebrews 12:1-2*

November 5, 2023
His Generous Compassion
Mark 1:40-45

Connect:

Share when you felt like an outsider or were shunned by others.

Engage:

The life of lepers and others with skin diseases was socially isolating. To stop the spread of illness, they were required to announce their presence wherever they went to avoid contact with other people. Often, they were relegated to ghettos with others with similar diseases. They lost their families, their income, and their dignity.

Read Mark 1:40-45

1. What do you think life was like for the leper that made him so desperate to approach Jesus?
2. Mark 1:41 suggests Jesus was indignant or compassionate, depending on the translation. Which translation fits the story and is consistent with Jesus' character? Why?
3. Jesus touches the leper. Why is that significant for the crowd to see? Why would this gesture have been meaningful to the leper?
4. Who are the equivalent of lepers in today's society? In the church?
5. How do you imagine Jesus might see and respond to our modern-day lepers?
6. What acts of compassion could be extended to modern-day outcasts that would be a powerful expression of Jesus' heart for the marginalized?

Apply

To have a heart like Jesus, we must see people like God sees them and respond accordingly. Jesus saw the divine spark in all people and acted with generosity and compassion.

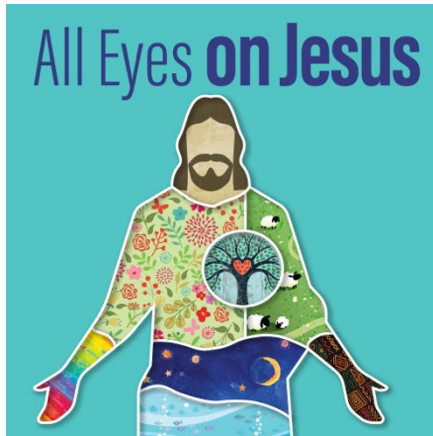
Consider your upcoming week. Are there neighbors, co-workers, or family members who you prefer to avoid? How can you reset your perception of them and then respond to them with more Christ-like compassion?

Pray

Share joys and concerns and pray for one another, the church, and the world.

Small Group Questions

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November 12, 2023
His Radical Inclusion
Luke 7:36-50

Connect:

Describe a time when you were incredibly thankful for something someone did unexpectedly for you.

Engage:

First-century hospitality standards included greeting one another by kissing a guest's cheek and washing their feet. Additionally, if one was a prophet, it was customary to anoint their head with oil; the more expensive, the better. Of note, an alabaster jar of ointment would have been worth a year's wages.

Read Luke 7:36-50

1. How is the woman described? What do you imagine were her sins?
2. What do you think motivated her to crash a dinner party of a religious leader? Why does she bring such an expensive gift? What emotions does she express?
3. What do you imagine were the motivations of Simon, the religious leader, in inviting Jesus to dinner? How did his behavior telegraph his attitude to Jesus?
4. Simon's internal outrage originates from religious classism, self-righteousness, and a judgmental attitude. How do you see yourself in Simon? In the woman?
5. The Pharisees grumble among themselves when Jesus pronounces her free from sin. How do our attitudes keep people locked into their past sins? How can we see others in light of their status as new creations in Christ?

Apply

To be inclusive like Jesus, we must welcome the "outcasts" into our community of love. Jesus dismantled the sharp social boundaries between pure and impure, righteous and sinner, oppressor and oppressed, male and female, rich and poor, Jew and Gentile. Jesus deliberately replaced the value of purity with hospitality and inclusion.

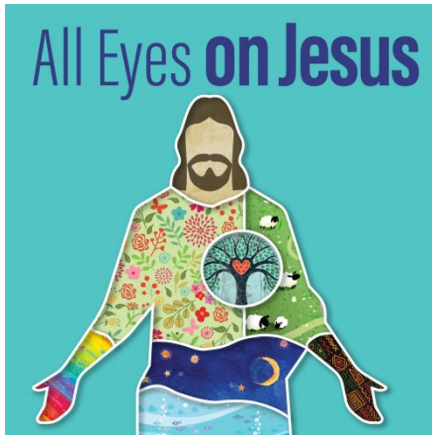
Welcoming others who are different can be a challenge. How can you be more welcoming to those who may live and see the world through a very different lens?

Pray

Share joys and concerns and pray for one another, the church, and the world.

Small Group Questions

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November 5-26, 2023 All Eyes on Jesus

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November 19, 2023
His Unexpected Forgiveness
Luke 23:33-43

Connect:

How would you describe heaven? What do you think would prevent or facilitate your welcome into heaven after you die?

Engage:

Jesus' brutal crucifixion came after being betrayed by a disciple, denied by a friend, beaten by guards, tried unjustly by religious leaders, and convicted by Roman justice due to popular demand.

Read Luke 23:33-43

1. Imagine the backstory for the various characters in this story: the soldiers, the leaders, the people, and each of the criminals. What were their motivations?
2. If you were in Jesus' position, how do you imagine you would react to all these people?
3. Why are Jesus' words of forgiveness so surprising and transformative? What facilitated his ability to forgive?
4. Even as he is dying, he still ministers to the criminal suffering beside him. What does this tell you about Jesus' character?
5. How does his response to his accusers, betrayers, and this criminal give you hope that Jesus will be compassionate toward you?

Apply

To forgive like Jesus, we must let go of the betrayals and slights we have experienced. Jesus saw others through God's caring eyes even though they did unspeakable evil to him. His heart was not hardened but open even as he ministered to the thief crucified beside him. Judgment and disdain ultimately put us in a prison of resentment, not allowing us the freedom that forgiveness can bring.

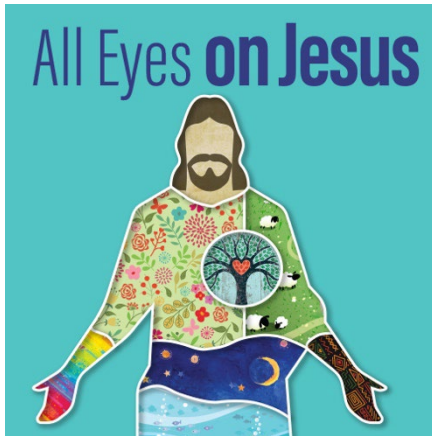
Are there people you need to forgive? How can you take one step toward extending grace to them?

Pray

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Small Group Questions

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November 5-26, 2023 All Eyes on Jesus

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November 26, 2023
His Service to Others
Philippians 2:5-8

Connect:

Talk about when someone sacrificed time or money on your behalf. How did you feel?

Engage:

Paul uses this ancient hymn about Jesus to remind his audience about Jesus' sacrifice for the sake of love.

Read Philippians 2:5-8

1. List all the aspects of Jesus' character and actions. What makes him extraordinary, according to this passage?
2. What is the significance of Jesus emptying himself into human form? What does this say about God's attitude about humanity?
3. Why would God require obedience to the point of death? Was this a fair ask of Jesus?
4. When Paul writes that we should have the same mind/character as Christ, what do you think that means for us in the way we behave toward one another?
5. What would be the upside to sacrifice and humility for others? What would be the downside?

Apply

To serve the world like Jesus, we must lay aside our privilege and instead use our status for the betterment of others. When we are full of pride and defensiveness, we are toxic to those around us. But by living with an open and humble heart, we can serve the world with love.

As you contemplate the meaning of this passage, how can you more practically emulate the character of Christ in this next week?

Pray

Share joys and concerns and pray for one another, the church, and the world.