

Frosh Discipling Team

Assignment #1: Jesus is the Answer, What's the Problem?

The Importance of a Biblical Framework

We as Christians say that Jesus is the solution. But what is the problem? What is the problem that Jesus is solving? How we answer that question directly determines how effective we will be mentoring younger Christians. It also directly determines how effective we will be sharing the importance of Jesus on campus.

Nowadays, I get concerned that many Christians basically act and think as if Jesus solves the problem of 'your lack of community.' And of course, a frosh comes to BC wanting to find friends, future suitemates, and probably someone to date. If that person comes from a church youth group background, they have been told that 'finding a good church,' or 'finding a good fellowship on campus,' will be the answer to their problem of 'your lack of community.' Clearly, 'community' is an important concept in Scripture, and Jesus calls us into his vision of community. But more often than not, Jesus and the apostles had to call people away from 'community' – from exclusive, narrow, cliquey kinds of 'community' that are too family-centric ('If anyone comes to me, and does not hate his own father and mother...he cannot be my disciple,' Lk.14:26, or Lk.8:19 – 21), or ethnicity-centric ('Lord, do you want us [Jews] to command fire to come down from heaven and consume [the Samaritans],' Lk.9:54). If anything, the New Testament writers make a much more challenging point: Jesus solves the problem of 'your inability to provide community' to others! So clearly, while joining a healthy church or fellowship is helpful in many ways, Jesus is not simply solving the problem of 'your lack of community.'

Or, sometimes we Christians say that Jesus solves the problem of 'your spiritual loneliness,' there may be ways that you or I have experienced that. And perhaps we can read some of the stories of the Gospels where Jesus touches a leper who hasn't known human touch in years as examples of Jesus solving the problem of 'loneliness.' There is *some* truth to that. But fundamentally, there is a lot more. Our problem goes far deeper than just 'loneliness.' So what problem did Jesus come to resolve?

The New Testament says that Jesus came to resolve three major problems simultaneously. First, the wrath of God was a problem for us, and Jesus gives us *forgiveness*. Second, Satan and the demonic powers were a problem for us, and Jesus gives us *deliverance*. Third, evil in our very own humanity was a problem for us, and Jesus gives us *the Spirit of his new humanity to be in us*.

Over the years, I have come to discover that, while all three of those themes are important, the third one (evil in humanity, answered by Jesus' new humanity) is the most comprehensive and important. Both in Scripture and in life, the fundamental problem we wrestle with is 'evil in humanity.' And when we call Christians to grow and non-Christians to Jesus, we invite them to yield themselves to a living relationship with Jesus by his Spirit.

In the following three questions, I ask you to find Bible references to the three major problems. I'd like you to find 'strong' references. By 'strong,' I mean if you were to show these verses to someone else and explain what is going on there, how easily would they understand this? Is it clear? How does the context support it?

Question #1

Find at least 10 passages in Scripture where 'the wrath of God' is said to be a problem for us as human beings. It doesn't have to say the words 'wrath of God.' If it's demonstrated, or there in concept, but not verbatim, that's fine. Of course, you may include passages where Jesus is said to provide us with God's forgiveness. Please comment on what you think the 'strongest' passage is, and why you think it's the 'strongest.' In other words, which of the 10 passages would you show a younger Christian or non-Christian? Why?

Example: Romans 1:18

Question #2

Find at least 5 passages in Scripture where Satan or the demonic are said to be a problem for us as human beings. Of course, you may include passages where Jesus is said to provide us with deliverance. No need to comment on the passages here.

Example: Hebrews 2:14 – 15

Question #3

Find at least 10 passages in Scripture where ‘evil in humanity’ is said to be a problem for us as human beings. It doesn’t have to say the word ‘evil.’ If it’s there in concept but not verbatim, that’s fine. Of course, you may include passages where Jesus is said to provide us with his Spirit of his new humanity. Please comment on what you think the ‘strongest’ passage is, and why you think it’s the ‘strongest.’ In other words, which of the 10 passages would you show a younger Christian or non-Christian? Why?

Example: Jeremiah 17:1 – 9

Question #4

Please share a personal story with me: Jesus helps us be victorious over our own self-centeredness and sin, in all its various forms. Even if it takes a long time, or even if you’re ‘still in process.’ How have you experienced that? What Scriptures have been significant to you in that process? Please write one to three paragraphs.