

I. Intro

II. ME

- A. Why Church for people who...
 - 1. Fun, not typical, **Picture of us having fun??**
 - 2. Main/Real reason... Majority of people I've talked to, read about who grew up in or tried out Xianity and left... left b/c of the religion of it...
 - 3. People unwilling to step foot in a church not b/c of Jesus but religion.
 - 4. The rules, the judging, the hypocrisy of the religion itself OR the people who say they follow it...
 - 5. Never b/c of Jesus.

B. The same things people reject about church... Jesus also rejected.

- C. If you've ever been invited to church and laughed and said, "**bleep** no." This series is for you.
- D. If you've ever felt there's got to be something more, better, deeper, than what you've experienced
- E. Ever said, I'm intrigued by Jesus but not xians/religion/church
- F. If you want to really understand and know the Jesus you are following... Stick around
- G. Spend a few weeks talking about one of my favorite subjects... Jesus V. Religion. **Graphic?**

III. WE

- A. **One of the most common issues people have with religion is its push for conformity.**
 - 1. Change who you are, become like us, and you can get in.
 - 2. So many people have grown up in, visited, or had a family member who was part of a church that had a sign on the front that said, "All are welcome..." but what was really meant was...
 - 3. We are the clean, good ones... You can be like us, be a part of this exclusive group... but 1st, clean up, change almost everything about yourself (especially men), follow these rules, conform to our niche culture (language and traditions), vote this way, then you can join us... **Ned Flanders**
 - 4. To which most people say... No thanks!
- B. What's interesting is **when Jesus invited people to join him they rarely said "no thanks"...**
 - 1. When we read through the historical accounts of his life, there's nothing boring there, there's no requirement for conformity, no list of dos and don'ts ...
 - 2. What's the difference? Why is that what his church seems to be known for now?
- C. Start at the beginning... Look at how his first followers actually became his followers.
 - 1. The people he chose to lead his entire movement, the people who grew that movement that helped end the Roman Empire and has changed the world in the 2000 years since.
 - 2. What they were like, what did he require for them to join him?
 - 3. **Jesus didn't bring a new religion. He created something better.**

IV. GOD

- A. Luke/ 60-70 AD / Historian / Biography

- B. Summary of v.1-3-
1. Teaching by Sea of Galilee, **Fishermen** washing nets (making dude jokes?), Simon's boat (**The Jesus Boat**), "oh crap you think he heard us?," push boat out a bit.
- C. **V. 4-** *When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Now go out where it is deeper, and let down your nets to catch some fish."*
1. Why? Had a plan for Simon. Knew he needed to get through to a real world, plain thinking guy.
 2. **Jesus uses who we are to show us who he is.**
 3. **Me and Humor.**
- D. **V. 5-** *"Master," Simon replied, "we worked hard all last night and didn't catch a thing. But if you say so, I'll let the nets down again."*
1. "Doesn't make sense, probably won't work. But fine." Maybe even an element of "this guy doesn't know what he's talking about, but when I show him that he's wrong, maybe he'll shut up and get off my back"
 2. But there's something about this guy so I'll try it.
- E. **V. 6-7-** *And this time their nets were so full of fish they began to tear! A shout for help brought their partners in the other boat, and soon both boats were filled with fish and on the verge of sinking.*
1. Side note: Jesus always seems goes above and beyond when he doesn't even need to.
 2. What would you be thinking? Stop and consider for a minute- if you knew exactly what you were doing, it was your livelihood, and this happened, how would you explain it? How would you feel about suddenly being able to feed you & your crew's families and maybe your entire community, pay off debts, etc?
 3. Simon's response...
- F. **V. 8-10a** *When Simon Peter realized what had happened, he fell to his knees before Jesus and said, "Oh, Lord, please leave me—I'm such a sinful man." For he was awestruck by the number of fish they had caught, as were the others with him. His partners, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were also amazed.*
1. Simon was thinking there was no worldly explanation for what had just happened. Obviously this teacher was someone different. Connected to God in some way.
 2. From everything Simon had seen in his experience with things associated with God he knew he wasn't worthy to be around Jesus. **Sweet Jesus with halo pic** He had spent enough time with himself and knew his own life, thoughts, and actions, to know this "Jesus" was something entirely other/better than himself.
 3. **Religion Simon had experienced...**
 - a. Focus on clean and unclean
 - b. Holy and Sinners
 - c. Holy followed traditions and rules, wore the clothes, spoke the right way, washed the right way...
 - d. Contact with sinners made you unclean
 - e. Prided themselves on staying away from sinners.
 - f. See it throughout Jesus' biographies.
 4. If Jesus (obviously from God) really knew who he was, what Simon had done, thought, said, who he had chosen to become... he wouldn't want anything to do with him.
 - a. But that was not Jesus' way.
 - b. Jesus didn't care about any of that
 - c. **Jesus loved surrounding himself with people who were not religious.**
 - d. One of the reasons the "Religious" wanted to kill him.

- e. In Fact...
- f. **The more a person loved religion the more they hated Jesus.**

5. At this point, you might be wondering... So what clarifications/changes **did** Jesus require... do this, do that, make sure you understand this and believe that...?

G. **V. 10b- Jesus replied to Simon, "Don't be afraid! From now on you'll be fishing for people!"**

1. **HUGE**
2. Not "You're right! I'm holy, you're not, get away from me you dirty sinner- you don't deserve to be anywhere near me!"
3. Not just, "hey don't worry we're cool." Or "Come learn about God."
4. But be my main guy.
5. "Fishing for people"... not pole and bobber... Nets to scoop up whole bunches of people to follow Jesus, too... looking to Peter's first sermon... **Acts 2:2:14-41**...3000 in a day. And beyond.
6. What had Peter done to earn this?
 - a. Wasn't seeking Jesus out.- Was minding his own business
 - b. Didn't have amazing faith- "It's probably not going to work"
 - c. Wasn't some holy, pious, religious guy- admitted it himself.
 - d. Hadn't repented and done the right rituals... still stunk of fish.
 - e. What had Peter done?! Stop and think about this for a moment...Nothing!

7. Following Jesus isn't a position to earn it's an invitation to accept.

- a. Zero prerequisites.
- b. No entrance exam
- c. No trial period
- d. Examples:
 - 1) "Want to come to my party? Sure. You're now a full part of the party." **Elaine dancing at party**
 - 2) Child doesn't have to pass a test to be full member of family. **Newborn**
8. So they accepted...

H. **V. 11 And as soon as they landed, they left everything and followed Jesus.**

1. And their lives were changed forever.
2. The journey was full of mistakes and missteps... especially for Simon/Peter.
3. But Jesus never kicked them out or demoted them.
4. Even after Simon denies Jesus... Jesus chases him down to make sure he still knows he's in. Check out **John 21** for eyewitness account.

5. Following Jesus isn't a religious obligation, it's an incredible invitation.

V. YOU

- A. So many people have felt if their religious leaders/friends found out who they really were they wouldn't be accepted ("hide the beer" "change the radio station" "watch your language" "hide the smokes").
1. Feels like they are trying to make us feel bad simply for who we are.
 2. Makes us hide our true selves or just give up.
 3. Keeps us from finding out who Jesus really is b/c we're afraid we won't be accepted if we get too close.
 4. Secret... **God knows everything about you and you're still invited** to explore, ask questions, and even follow.

B. Be you

1. There's room for all of us to better live out the **law of love.**

2. But Jesus can take who he purposely made you to be and enhance it/transform it into even more to use exactly who you are to love others through you.

C. Be curious

1. JF? Dig into who Jesus really was... not just what you've heard in sermons or think you remember from Sunday school.
2. Not JF- Maybe there's more/something better to this than you were shown... if it's even POSSIBLE that's true, isn't it worth checking out? you're invited to explore... **SUBSCRIBE.**
3. Read Luke. Like Novel. Section a day if you want.

D. Be open

1. Not inviting you to join a religion... inviting you to follow a man who changed my life... made me more me.
 - a. What would it be like to be a part of this? How could your life improve as a result?
 - b. Unconditional love, purpose, peace, freedom to be YOU...
2. JF- You were never invited to a religion or culture- you were invited to Follow Jesus.
 - a. Invited everyday to follow him in what he is doing in the lives of those around you... join in.
 - b. Be open to him using you to love people you wouldn't expect in ways you wouldn't have thought.
 - c. Be open to the idea that this might be more than just a tradition or routine.

VI. WE

- A. The things that keep people from discovering the real Jesus are the very same things Jesus fought against.
- B. It's so much more and so much better than accepting a religion.
- C. It's about the real you living a real life and discovering and sharing real love.

D. Jesus invites all of us to bring exactly who we are **to something bigger than all of us.**

IX. Outro

Questions

1. How would you describe your past experience with religion or church?
2. Read Psalm 139:1-18. What do you think this is saying about God? What do you think it's saying about you? What is your biggest takeaway from this passage?
3. What's your plan to find out more about Jesus or be more like him this week?