



SAME BUT NOT WITH A REALLY BIG PROBLEM

Romans 8:1-4

study questions

Use these questions in your community group time to dig deeper and discover how you can apply today's message to everyday life.



INTRODUCTION

"After all, we are all following the same God." Have you ever heard someone say that about the major religions of the world? How have you handled it? Most people, even some Christians, see religions this way.

However, sticking all religions in the same bucket doesn't help anybody because sooner or later, no matter what religion a person picks, they are faced with one giant human dilemma that only Jesus can solve. We Christians share moral codes and a belief in the divine with other religions. The trouble is we can't keep "the list" and we can be sure the divine is pleased!

Jesus came to save us from our sinful mess and set the world right. But in order to fulfill his mission he had to blow up all our categories and expectations. The effects of that explosion are still felt today. He just doesn't comply with our expectations.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever come across someone who says "Christianity, Islam, Judaism...even Buddhism are all basically the same. They're all after the same god."
 - a. What do you make of that idea? What do you say to something like that?
2. As we said last week, here in Portland we have lots of religious philosophies, many of which don't even call themselves religions – though that's how they really operate. Yet all of them have certain moral human codes on which we all agree.
 - b. Make your own "list." What are some of those codes?
 - c. Do you think the very existence of "the list" is evidence for the reality of the Creator God from the Bible in some way?
3. **Read Romans 8:1-9 together.** Remember Paul has been spending the first 7 chapters explaining the extent and deep invasive nature of sin sickness, in detail.
 - a. Talk about the contrast in verses 1 and 2 between "condemnation" & "freedom." How does that play out in our lives?
 - b. Define "flesh." Is it just physical life?
 - c. Define "spirit" [small "s"]. Is it just your spiritual or soul life? Is there overlap?
 - d. How does all of this affect our struggle with "the list?"
 - e. **Reread verses 7-9.** What would you say to someone who is not living for or with Jesus, but claims to be a Christian and forgiven? Paul is saying "no condemnation" is a free gift that can't be earned after all.
4. Is there someone you need to share Jesus with, who thinks all religions are the same and wonders why should they bother? How about a "Christian" friend who may think Allah is basically the same as our God. How can your group pray with you as you ask Jesus to help you know how and when to share true Christianity with them?

MOVING FORWARD

To know Jesus is to be free. There is no more condemnation. We have no need to feel threatened by anything in our culture, the future, or questions people may have of our faith. We are free to move onward living out Jesus' love and grace. And yet we do all this with the expectation that his Spirit will take over as we tell everyone we can about what Jesus was done for us, and what he can do for them.

CHANGING YOUR MIND

"For what the Law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his Son... Romans 8:3