

What If ...

Jesus Meant What He Said About the Lost

I see the bumper sticker regularly ... my neighbor has it on her car. "All Who Wander Are Not Lost." I know my neighbor and there's a dual meaning in there for the whole world to see. The first is that wandering through life and wondering at the awesomeness of the world is a good thing. Sometimes not knowing where you're going brings great peace. The other meaning is kind of a backhand slap at the church. Since the days Jesus walked the earth the term "lost" has been applied to those who were outside the faith. In recent years, even in the church, it's been considered a pejorative term – especially since so many both within and without the church have decided that many paths, perhaps all paths, lead to God. But ... what if Jesus really meant what he said about the "lost." When if those who wander through the spiritual forest really are lost ...

John 3:1–21

1. Nicodemus was at a loss. He couldn't _____.
2. There are two meanings of being "lost." Lost as in _____ and lost as in _____.
3. We can't use the _____ to reveal the mysteries of the faith.
4. We must use the tools God gave us: _____, _____, and _____.

My Count Me In! Commitments

- I'm Up for the Seven Day Challenge:** I'll spend the next 7 days praying for ONE PERSON who I think is lost ... blinded by the world. I will pray for their heart to be enlightened and for their mind to be unveiled. And then I'll invite them to join me in a watch party. (You can do that in your home ... you can do that through the worship watch party on Zoom.)

Additional Notes

Digging Deeper

What If Jesus Meant What He Said About the Lost

Scripture: John 3:1–21

Introduction: When Jesus used the word “lost” it was clear he meant a separation from the flock, or less metaphorically from the Kingdom of God. The church quickly came to understand that there were two levels of lostness: (1) The eternal separation from God; and (2) The inability to understand spiritual things. Nicodemus illustrated both of those characteristics. He was lost from the Kingdom and he was definitely lost in his understanding of spiritual things. Jesus had trouble shining the light into Nicodemus’ heart and mind, showing just how difficult it can be to get the word out.

1. Read John 3:1–15. What are some of the metaphors, explanations, and arguments that Jesus used to try and explain spiritual things to Nicodemus?
2. Why do you think Nicodemus had so much trouble understanding where Jesus was coming from and what he was trying to teach?
3. Read John 3:16–21. What do you think the writer meant when he spoke of condemnation? Condemned for what? And condemned to what?
4. John uses light and darkness throughout his Gospel to contrast good from evil, enlightened from lost, world and spirit. What do you think John is implying by his references to night, to light, and to dark in this passage?
5. Dr. Bill said there’s a difference between “believing” and “assent.” How would you articulate that difference? What evidence would you accept to prove that someone was a true believer?
6. Read 2 Corinthians 4:1–4. What do you think Paul means when he says that the “gospel is veiled”? What evidence have you seen that supports his contention?
7. Read 2 Corinthians 3:16–18. What removes the veil from those who are lost?
8. As Christians, what tools do we have to break through the veil of human understanding so that the gospel can be heard?

Next Week: *What If Jesus Meant What He Said About ... Discipleship*
Who will you be inviting to worship with you this week?