

There and Back Again (part I)

The story of the Church

Supplemental questions Devotion book

Week 1: April 6 – 12

Write out a definition of what you believe the 'church' to be.

Have your ideas about 'the church' ever changed? How?

Col 2:16-19 Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ. Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize. Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen, and his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions. He has lost connection with the Head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow.

What religious symbols or traditions do you find in modern Catholicism and Christianity?

If you chose which faction in Israel you most closely align with (Pharisees, Sadducees, Zealots, Essenes) which would it be and why?

How do you think the modern church would respond to Jesus if he lived and walked today?

How can you live and walk today as if Jesus were alive in you? What changes would take place in your heart/life?

Why do you think God chose to begin Christianity with the death of His son?

In what ways do you think the resurrection of Christ benefits you?

Romans 5:9-11 Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

Xtra readings (if you want them)

Daniel-Rops **Jesus in His Times.**

Flew, R. Newton. **Jesus and His Church.**

Lessing, Erich. **Jesus In History and Culture of the New Testament.**

Stewart, James S. **The Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ.**

Wednesday Night Message Notes

Many people would say The Cross, others will say The Resurrection, still others would say The Indwelling of God's Spirit in man...but the early church referred to all of it as THE EVENT. "God invading time and space as a man to redeem mankind."

If you lived your entire life waiting for something to happen – and it finally did happen – how would you feel?

How would you react?

The early church was ignited that God came through. That he showed up...and that made a movement happen.

When you hear the words 'Catholic Christianity' what do you think of?

How was the catholic Christianity of the early church different that it is today?

Rom. 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation. . . to the Jew first and also to the Greek

Why do you think Christianity spread so fast once ignited?

James 2:1-7 My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don't show favoritism. Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in shabby clothes also comes in. If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, "Here's a good seat for you," but say to the poor man, "You stand there" or "Sit on the floor by my feet," have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?

Listen, my dear brothers: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him? But you have insulted the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you in court? Are they not the ones who are slandering the noble name of him to whom you belong?

How prone are we did treat people of varying stations differently?

How do you think people felt to come to early church and be treated with respect, honor, and love in a world that despised those who were poor and needy?

How could the church today emulate the early church this regard to reach a disheartened world?

Wednesday Night Message Notes

What things in Christianity are non-negotiable?

What things are worth fighting for?

What things are worth giving in?

Rev 12:11...by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death

Xtra reading if you want it

Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church. – W. H. C Frend
Augustus to Constantine. – Robert M Grant

Wednesday Night Message Notes

Week 5: May 4 – May 10

1 pet 3:15-16 But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.

Have you ever had to answer someone who asked about your faith? What happened?

Have you ever felt mocked or picked on for your beliefs? What happened?

What do you think of when you hear the word 'theology'?

Can you name any current cultural thoughts that are trying to dismantle Christianity?

What do you think can be done about them?

Write down your view of who you believe Jesus was/is (I know it sounds abstract but just go for it).

Matthew 16:15-17

"But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"

Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven."

Why do you think the early church put such a high value on the person of Jesus?

Do you think the modern church places that much value on Christ's person? Why or Why not?

How do they or how do they not place this value on Jesus?

How can you live to show that Jesus has value to you and that His life means something?

Xtra readings if you want them

Early Christian Doctrines - J. N. D Kelly

Worship in the Early Church – Ralph Martin

The Four Great Heresies – J. W. C. Wand

Wednesday Night Message Notes

What do you think are the appropriate marks of someone in church leadership?

Should a church 'leader' or 'pastor' have different identifiers than you do...and what would they be?

Titus 1:6-9 An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. Since an overseer is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless--not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.

Have you seen or known of anyone in church leadership not holding 'firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught'? Who were they and what has happened to them?

Why do you think it is that so many people not meeting the qualifications in Titus become leaders in churches?

Why do people follow others who are morally bankrupt?

What are the dangers in any man having too much power?

The New Testament constantly reminds us what God wants our lives to full of... **Gal 5:22-23** "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace,

patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control"

Why is it that we so often have a hard time displaying these characteristics?

What can you do to begin to listen to God and allow Him to develop this fruit in your life?

Xtra readings if you want them

The Early Church – Henry Chadwick.

Early Latin Theology - S. L Greenslade

The Mission and Expansion of Christianity. Adolf Harnack

Wednesday Night Message Notes

Cyprian – the bishop of Carthage (died 258), who died a martyr's death after opposing the so-called "pure" Church of Novation in Rome which opposed the reintegration of the "lapsed" into the communion of the Church.

Diocletian (VALERIUS DIOCLETIANUS) - Roman Emperor and persecutor of the Church - born A.D. 245; died at Salona, A.D. 313.

Eusebius Pamphili - Bishop of Cæsarea in Palestine, the "Father of Church History."

Gnosticism – The doctrine of salvation by knowledge. This definition, based on the etymology of the word (*gnosis* "knowledge", *gnostikos*, "good at knowing").

Ignatius of Antioch – Also called Theophorus (died at Rome between 98 and 117). He was among the auditors of the Apostle John. Ignatius was the third Bishop of Antioch.

Irenaeus – Bishop of Lyons and called the Father of the Church. Nothing is known of the date of his death. His feast is celebrated on 28 June in the Latin Church, and on 23 August in the Greek.

Jesus – Savior of the world. The sent one, messiah. 2nd person of the Trinity, God made flesh.

Justin Martyr – Christian apologist, born at Flavia Neapolis, about A.D. 100, converted to Christianity about A.D. 130, taught and defended the Christian religion in Asia Minor and at Rome, where he suffered martyrdom about the year 165.

Marcion – Founded a heretical in A.D. 144 at Rome. They rejected the writings of the Old Testament and taught that Christ was not the

Son of the God of the Jews, but the Son of the good God, who was different from the God of the Ancient Covenant.

Montanus - A recent convert who began to prophesy in the village of Ardabau in Phrygia. The same prophetic gift was believed to have descended also upon his two companions, the prophetesses Maximilla and Prisca. The prophets did not speak as messengers of God, but described themselves as possessed by God and spoke in His Person. "I am the Father, the Word, and the Paraclete," "I am the Lord God omnipotent, who have descended into to man", and "neither an angel, nor an ambassador, but I, the Lord, the Father, am come."

Orthodoxy – Correct thinking/beliefs.

Orthopraxy – Correct living

Pantaenus - Head of the Catechetical School of Alexandria about 180. He was succeeded by Clement who left Alexandria about 203 the probable date of his death would be about 200.

Polycarp – Disciple of the Apostle John. (martyred).

Presbyter –An elder of the congregation in the early Christian church.

Tertullian – (died 220), the great father of Latin theology in North Africa, and a prolific writer of Christian treatises of every kind.