

The Politics of Jesus (2 of 7) Small Group Discussion Questions

SUNDAY WORSHIP DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The global pandemic COVID-19 has forced us to adjust and adapt how we do church and stay connected to one another as a congregation. We're not closed as a church, we're just doing church differently! So, please stay connected to the body at Grantham Church. Join our congregation for worship online at 10:30 am each Sunday morning. Follow the worship liturgy and watch our [Vimeo](#) videos at granthamchurch.org/liturgy.

As usual, the sermons will be posted to the [recent sermons page](#) on our website and at the [Grantham Church Podcast](#) the following day, along with the small group discussion questions under Worship Resources. Thank you for engaging with us online!

Sunday, September 27th 2020



Sermon Title: Jesus & the Third Way

Scripture Reading: Matthew 4:8-11; 22:15-22; John 17:20-23; 18:36; Ephesians 4:2-3

Sermon Focus: As the Messiah, Jesus resisted the temptation to use worldly kingdom power. He showed us that the Kingdom of God is about power-under, not power-over. And he called disciples with divergent political views to set aside their opinions in order to follow him and discover a "third" way to live within the empire. Listen as Pastor David challenges us to pledge allegiance to Christ and trust in *his* way of changing the world.

Thank you for going deeper in conversation with your small group in person, by phone, or video call! Use the following questions to guide your small group discussion:

1. Pastor David began by talking about the picture of Jesus (on the series graphic) that was constructed using AI technology. Why do you think it's important to see Christ in this way? Share how this image makes you feel and think differently about Jesus.
2. Read Matthew 4:1-11 together. In his classic book, *The Upside-Down Kingdom*, Donald Kraybill says that these are not random temptations just so we can see how Jesus didn't sin, but instead they symbolize *three* social institutions that kings must control: the *bread* represents the economy, the *temple* represents religion, and the *mountain* is all about wielding political power over a king's domain. In other words, this scene is about Jesus deciding what kind of Messiah he is going to be, and how his Kingdom will operate. With that in mind, consider as a group what Jesus is rejecting with each temptation, and then what he is choosing to be and do instead.
3. Pastor David talked about how nationalism has manifested itself in "patriotic" church services today. He then shared a story of when he served in a church that held one of these services, and how he challenged them on his way out. How do you see nationalism at work in the church? How do you see people putting America before Jesus? Also, do you see anything wrong with having the American flag in the sanctuary? Share some of your own thoughts and experiences with nationalism.
4. Pastor David shared how Jesus had multiple party options in his own day (e.g. the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Essenes, the Herodians, the Zealots, etc.). Have you ever considered how Jesus didn't align himself with any of them? Now, think about how he chose a rag-tag group of misfit disciples with divergent views (i.e. rural fisherman, a tax collector, a violent extremist, etc.). Why do you think we've not taken these things more seriously? What do we miss out on when we don't?
5. As we see in Jesus, the "third way" is political, but not partisan. The third way creates a space for people with diverging views to put love and unity on display for the world to see (Jn 13:34-35; 17:2-23). How can we work for this at Grantham Church? What does this look like in your personal life, and in our church life?
6. In his invitation, Pastor David gave us some ways that we can follow Jesus in the third way. Discuss each of these together. How can we live these out?
 1. Reflect on ways you've trusted in power-over, rather than the power-under way of Christ
 2. Enter relationships with folks who have divergent views and follow Jesus together
 3. Use your words and influence to create third way spaces