

The Authentic Christian and the Incarnation — October 7 & 8, 2017
Follow-up Bible Studies

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Day One: Mark 14:32-42

- Set the scene of this text (32). What did Jesus want the disciples to do (32)? Describe his emotional state (33). What did he say to Peter, James and John (34)? He was distressed “to the point of death” and needed his friends nearby. What does this tell you about God’s experience of being “in the flesh”?
- What happened next (35)? Describe Jesus’ prayer (35-36). He was vulnerable before God, just as he was with his friends. He even feels it in his body – “he fell to the ground.” Think of troubling times in your own life. Recall your emotional state, how your body felt, etc. Ask Jesus, who knows what it’s like to be human, for a deep sense of how very near he is in times of distress.
- When Jesus returned from praying, what did he discover (37)? What human struggle does he describe (37-38)? How does the whole incident basically repeat itself (39-41)? Describe the abrupt ending to their time at Gethsemane (41-42).

Day Two: John 1:1-18

- How does John describe Jesus’ eternal and divine nature (1-5)? Jesus is “the Word” because he is the embodiment of the entire message of scripture. What do you think of this? How does John describe John the Baptist (6-8, 15)? What was it like for Jesus to come to earth, and how was he received (9-14)? Where do you see yourself in this description?
- Meditate on verse 14, especially the latter parts. What glory of God do you see in Christ? What makes Jesus God’s very best? What light do verses 16-17 shed on verse 14? How does John reiterate that Jesus is God incarnate (18)?
- What similarities do you observe between this passage and 1 John 1:1-4? Why do you think this subject – that of Jesus being God incarnate – mattered so much to John? Why is the incarnation important to you? Talk to the Lord about this.

Day Three: Ephesians 4:1-16

- Describe the life Paul urges followers of Christ to live (1-6). How does Jesus inspire you to live this way? Specifically, what about when you’re at work? How does Jesus – God in the material world – help you “live a life worthy of your calling” in the workplace?
- Summarize how God distributes grace (7-12). What does this reveal about both Jesus’ humanity and divinity? What does it achieve (12-13)? Paul claims building up the body of Christ is the way toward “attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.” If you struggle to love the church, ask Jesus to speak a fresh word to you about how intimately the church is tied to him.
- What does Paul then say about spiritual maturity (14-16)? Note that the only pronoun he uses is “we,” implying maturity is something best pursued together. How does this make you feel? Meditate on verse 16. What role do you have in building up the body of Christ? Pray for grace to walk this out.

Day Four: Ephesians 5:25-32

- Summarize all the ways Christ loved the church (25-27). How did the incarnation make each of these expressions possible? Think about it: everything Jesus did, he did it for the church. Therefore, how do you think God wants you to relate to the church?

- Describe how Jesus is intimately connected to the church, his body (28-30). What does this mean for someone who claims, “I love Jesus but I hate the church”? Pray that people who struggle in this way would be moved by the Holy Spirit to love the church, which is Christ’s body. May they see this as an authentic expression of love directed at Jesus himself.
- How is this love and union between Christ and the church, his bride, reflected in earthly marriage (31-32)? Meditate on verse 32. What seems particularly mysterious to you about the incarnation and Jesus’ profound relationship with the church? Lift this up to the Lord, and ask him to pull back the veil, even for just a moment.

Day Five: Philippians 2:1-11

- What is Paul saying we should have in Christ, even if it’s just in tiny doses (1)? Which of these do you think you experience most often today? Give thanks to God. With these blessings, how can we make Paul’s “joy complete” (2-4)? Where do you see this united love expressed in the church today? Where is it lacking? Pray that the church – especially your own spiritual community – would be the things that make Paul’s joy complete.
- Paul then tells us to do relationships with a Jesus mindset. What does this entail (6-8)? Without the incarnation, would Jesus be able to model any of this for us? Why or why not? Of these attributes, which one are you most grateful for? Tell God about it.
- What does Jesus’ earthly obedience to Father God mean for his eternal destiny (9-11)? What are some ways you acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord? What else may he be asking of you, particularly as it relates to your relationship with the church?