

Jesus is _____ .

A handful of studies are being produced to coincide with the “Jesus is...” mission. The real aim of these studies is to help us *listen* to the point of view of other people and learn how to share the good news and truth about Jesus into other people’s lives. Each study will have the following four components.

- 1) **A Story.** We’ll introduce the theme of the study with a short story to explore one true or false perspective of Jesus.
- 2) **Listen.** Proverbs 18:13 says, *“To answer before listening - that is folly and shame.”* We want to step into the shoes of the other person before launching back with an answer. We will take a moment to consider how real their perspective is and why it sounds good to them.
- 3) **Test It.** Proverbs 18:17 says, *“In a lawsuit the first to speak seems right, until someone comes forward and cross-examines.”* How true is that! It may only take one or two questions to highlight pitfalls in a person’s worldview.
- 4) **Gospel Solution.** Psalm 119:105 says, *“Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.”* We want to land on what the bible says about this topic. Jesus is at the centre of everything and so we need to know what difference a right and true understanding of Jesus and his work makes to every and any worldview.
- 5) **Pray.** Some points will be offered to assist us in bringing our concerns to God about his mission.

These studies will be published separately as they are finalised. The topics will cover Jesus is: ‘one way among many’; ‘irrelevant’; ‘trustworthy’; and ‘alive and risen’.

Study 3 - Jesus is... trustworthy

A Story

Susan is a single Mum with three kids, all in Primary school.

"The only person I can trust, is myself" said Susan at the school gate looking agitated.

Listening to the morning news tipped her over the edge.

"You can't trust what any politician says. I'm sick and tired of the lies". Susan began to cry.

"I didn't know you cared that much about politics?" I asked.

"I don't...it's just..." Susan took a breath and composed herself. It had been a difficult month.

As we spoke over the coming 20 minutes Susan shared some of her struggles. Her son had been lying to her for months now about his use of the internet. Her colleague at work was always dropping the ball, saying he'd "get around to it" but in the end did nothing and left everything for her to do.

Her sister's husband last week decided he wanted a divorce and the little money Susan had invested following the advice of a financial planner had been lost.

"I'm just done with people!" Susan said under her breath, "The only person I can trust, is myself!"

LISTEN

- 1) Can you empathise with Susan? In what ways has she experienced people letting her down?

- 2) How would you summarise Susan's frustration in a brief statement? It sounds like Susan is....

TEST IT

- 3) Who of us has not let others down at some point?

- 4) Is it possible to live life without trusting anybody?

- 5) What kind of a world do we live in? If it's true that the only certainties in life are death and taxes, what kind of a life can we hope to have?

THE GOSPEL SOLUTION

John 18:28-40

²⁸ Then the Jewish leaders took Jesus from Caiaphas to the palace of the Roman governor. By now it was early morning, and to avoid ceremonial uncleanness they did not enter the palace, because they wanted to be able to eat the Passover. ²⁹ So Pilate came out to them and asked, "What charges are you bringing against this man?"

³⁰ "If he were not a criminal," they replied, "we would not have handed him over to you."

³¹ Pilate said, "Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law."

"But we have no right to execute anyone," they objected. ³² This took place to fulfill what Jesus had said about the kind of death he was going to die.

³³ Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?"

³⁴ "Is that your own idea," Jesus asked, "or did others talk to you about me?"

³⁵ "Am I a Jew?" Pilate replied. "Your own people and chief priests handed you over to me. What is it you have done?"

³⁶ Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place."

³⁷ "You are a king, then!" said Pilate.

Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me."

³⁸ "What is truth?" retorted Pilate. With this he went out again to the Jews gathered there and said, "I find no basis for a charge against him. ³⁹ But it is your custom for me to release to you one prisoner at the time of the Passover. Do you want me to release 'the king of the Jews'?"

⁴⁰ They shouted back, "No, not him! Give us Barabbas!" Now Barabbas had taken part in an uprising.

6) Caiaphas was the High Priest and Pilate was the Roman governor over Jerusalem. How exactly did they serve justice in this account of Jesus' trial?

7) Read Verse 37 again and discuss what Jesus means.

8) Jesus claimed to be trustworthy - on the side of truth. How did Jesus make good on his word? Read the following passages from Matthew to help with this question.

Matthew 12:39-40

³⁹ [Jesus] answered, "A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. ⁴⁰ For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Matthew 16:21

²¹ From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

Matthew 27:62-64

⁶² The next day, the one after Preparation Day, the chief priests and the Pharisees went to Pilate. ⁶³ "Sir," they said, "we remember that while he was still alive that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise again.' ⁶⁴ So give the order for the tomb to be made secure until the third day. Otherwise, his disciples may come and steal the body and tell the people that he has been raised from the dead. This last deception will be worse than the first."

- 9) Compare the trustworthiness of Jesus with that of the Pharisees and Jewish leaders.

- 10) Although the world is full of people and plans that are untrustworthy, the Lord Jesus Christ can be trusted all the way. Finish by reading Luke 6:46-49 and praying that we would be people who put our trust in Jesus because he is trustworthy.

Luke 6:46-49

⁴⁶ “Why do you call me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say? ⁴⁷ As for everyone who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice, I will show you what they are like. ⁴⁸ They are like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built. ⁴⁹ But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete.”

Pray

- Thank God that Jesus came into this world to testify to the truth.
- Pray for one another that you would build your life on the solid foundation of Jesus Christ.
- Ask God to help us demonstrate living faithfully so that those who know us will know that we trust him.
- Pray for the people who you have shared with your group that they may hear the good news of Jesus and have life in his name.
- Pray for people you know who struggle with life. Ask for the Spirit of God to show them how to trust God.
- Pray for opportunities to hear who people think Jesus is.