

Who Is Jesus? Leader Guide Session 2: Friend or Foe?

When we consider who Jesus is, we wonder how he will view us. Is he going to be for us or against us? Is he going to be mad at us or merciful towards us? Is he going to welcome us or condemn us? Is he going to love us, or is he going to hate us? Is Jesus our friend or our foe?

Watch

Play the video for session two. As you watch, use the following outline to record any key points that stand out to you.

Notes

When a lot of people hear about Jesus, they wonder if he is going to be a friend or a foe. Will he be mad at them or merciful toward them? Will he love them or hate them?

The story of Zacchaeus provides insights into this question. Zacchaeus was a tax collector for the Roman government - a position that was despised by the Jewish people.

It is likely Zacchaeus was quite surprised when Jesus came *directly* over to him in the tree, told him to come down, and invited himself to supper at Zacchaeus' house.

Many people in the crowd were outraged that someone proclaiming to be the Son of God would stoop to mingle with someone they considered so sinful.

But Zacchaeus' encounter with Christ changed his heart - so much so that he vowed to give back what he had stolen with interest and give half of what he had to the poor.

Jesus responded to the crowds by pointing out that Zacchaeus was still a "Son of Abraham" - a child of God like them - and that he had come to seek and save sinners.

We're all broken and in need of Jesus. So let's get off our high horses, back down from our self-righteous judgements, and be a friend to the sinners in our lives.

Being a friend with Jesus means inviting the transformational power of God into our story. When we do - like Zacchaeus - our lives are forever changed.

Discussion Questions

Take a few minutes within your group to discuss what you just watched and explore these concepts in Scripture.

1. Zacchaeus was an outcast who had been condemned by those in society. In what ways can you relate to his story? When in your life have you felt like an “outsider” to others?
2. Do you tend to struggle more with feeling judged by others or with judging others? What insights did you gain on each of these perspectives in this week’s teaching?
3. How would you feel if you were Zacchaeus’ shoes and Jesus invited himself to your home for dinner? Excited? Nervous? Afraid? Explain.
4. On average, how often do you worry about what others think of you? How do you typically handle situations where you want others’ acceptance and approval?
5. Imagine talking with a friend who believes Jesus only wants to judge and condemn her because of her past. What example from the Bible would you choose to help change your friend’s mindset (see, for example, John 8:1-11, Luke 15:11-32, and Galatians 1:13-24)? Explain the basis for your choice.
6. Has there been a time in your life when you viewed Jesus differently than you do now? What caused the change in your understanding of who Jesus really is?