
*In His Own Words:**“Who Are You?”*John 1. 19-29

Thoughts to Shape and Spark Discussion:

“Good, upstanding, proper people, who consider themselves regular human beings with no real weaknesses or guilt, cannot understand this passage. They offer grace no entrance gate, the gate that sin by its very nature is . . . Because such people lack nothing, that which they most need - which means everything - is not brought to them. Even the love of God does not bandage the person who has no wounds . . . whoever has not fallen will never be lifted, and whoever is not soiled will not be cleansed.” - Charles Peguy

“As ‘the Lamb of God’, Jesus saves the anti-godly world out of its fallenness into sin by means of his substitutionary atoning death on the Cross. Precisely in the place where the Johannine Jesus for the first time comes into actual view, right here, he appears as the Crucified One. Already in the beginning, therefore, the end is present, and the hearers/readers know that the way of the preexistent and incarnate Word leads to the Cross.” - Udo Schnelle

“If God is dead, somebody is going to have to take his place. It will be megalomania or erotomania, the drive for power or the drive for pleasure, Hitler or Hugh Hefner.” - Malcolm Muggeridge

Themes and Questions to Guide Reflection and Response:

- After reading through the passage together, ask your group what makes an impression upon them from the passages and why it strikes them.
- At the outset of this series of sermons, what would you hope to discover or re-discover about Jesus? What dull and routine places of your relationship to him would you like to be stirred and revived?
- Why does John, the gospel-writer, emphasize that John the Baptist confessed, did not deny, but confessed “I am not the Christ”?
- On the one hand, it is fairly simple to acknowledge our inability to be the Messiah for ourselves and others. On the other hand, we invest much time and many resources to protect and promote ourselves.
 - What is the liberation that comes with confessing what John confesses? Why is it fairly simple?
 - What is the cost that comes with confessing what John confesses? Why is it supremely difficult to come up with that sentence?
 - In which areas of your life are you tempted to be the Christ?
- Why do confessing what John confesses and beholding what John beholds go hand-in-hand?
- How are you balancing and being empowered to live out your agency as an image-bearer even though you are “not the Christ”?