



THE BLACKLIST | DOCTOR DISAPPOINTED | Week 2 March 17, 2019

Matthew 11:2-6; Matthew 26:57-68; Ephesians 2:14-21

Opening: During the Lenten season we are reflecting on the opposition that Jesus encounters on the way to the cross. It's extremely helpful for our own spiritual formation to understand what motivated their hostilities, perhaps what blinded them, from the very Truth in their midst. And once we understand we can prayerfully ask, "Are we doing anything like that?"

Context: Daily we are each confronted with a vast array of perceptions, stimuli and data. Some of it doesn't even register in our brain. Some of it is important to us and we ponder it. Some of it we quickly judge and "box" it according to our perception. But sometimes our perception isn't that accurate. *Share a time when you have misjudged someone? Why did you perceive them the way you did? How was reality different?*

Scriptural Authority: Last week we focused on the Chief Priests and the Pharisees. This week we move other contenders in the Jewish power structure, the Sadducees. The Sadducees were the "righteous guardians" of the scripture and maintained the purity of doctrine and scriptural tradition of Jewish life. *What does it say about the Jewish nation that the head of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish ruling council, was the "righteous guardian" of the scripture?*

We meet Caiaphas: Read Matthew 26:57-68. The intent of the ruling council in its inception was to safeguard the Jewish nation's respect for their Covenant with God as shared in the scriptures. Caiaphas was a high priest of high priests. He maintained that position for 18 years under the watchful eye of the Romans where the normal term was more like four years. Caiaphas was a master at the political finesse necessary to keep the Romans off his back. *What perspective did Caiaphas have of Jesus? Would you have justified him as the "enemy?"*

The "Blind Spot": The Jewish nation was based on the scriptures and the prophecies of the coming Messiah were fully known. How could the leaders miss Jesus as the Messiah? Go back to the exchange between John in prison and Jesus (read Matthew 11:2-6) *Why wouldn't Caiaphas ask that same question? What would Jesus' answer mean to him? What questions do you think the people were asking?*

The Power of Expectation: Pastor Dan describes Caiaphas' view from the head of the Sanhedrin, "Isn't God's Anointed One coming on the throne (like me)?" "Won't the Messiah establish the Law and obey it—not disobey it?" "The Messiah will come filled with the Glory of God not in the rags of a peasant?" *Jesus did not meet expectations because Caiaphas had a different idea of what the Messiah should look like. Can you identify a time when God was at work but you failed to see it because it was different from your expectation? Talk about it.*



Perception and Reality: Caiaphas' blindness led him to hold a secret trial, declare Jesus a heretic and condemn Him to death. The doubts of Caiaphas posed above could be classified as power, behavior and presence. *How did Jesus' life redefine each of those terms as opposed to how Caiaphas would have defined them? What does that threaten for Caiaphas? How do our definitions of these terms look to how we perceive Jesus defining them? How might we be threatened?*

Beyond Expectations: Whatever our expectations of God, He is "more than." Pastor Dan listed some types of things that may associate with our view of God:

- Conscience—does this feel right
- Father-image—just like Dad
- Pale temperance—passion and strength are too dangerous
- Sound doctrine—tight, correct, careful truth

Instead, take a look at Jesus' way of living and loving and read Ephesians 2:14-21.

What do you expect of God? When do you expect it? Have you "put God in a box" that limits where you can see God at work in your life? How can you get in touch with the "more than" God seeking to have relationship with you?

Practice of the Week: Daily Expectation

Each morning this week as you rise, have coffee, shower, get ready for work (all the usual stuff you do) repeatedly recite the Lord's Prayer—thoughtfully. "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done", "not into temptation, deliver us from evil", "Thy Kingdom and Thy Power" and enter the day expecting to see and feel Christ's presence in decision making, in conversation, in attitude. Talk about how this shaped your day at dinner or write about it in your journal.

Family Formation: Open the "Box"

What can we pray about? The idea is to find something in the life of your children that they expect to continue to be the same—the "box". Be curious about it. What would your child like to be different? Then ask questions about alternatives that might lead to a different outcome. If we expect something to happen and we begin to act like it is going to happen, then it probably will happen. We begin to change that by changing our expectation.

Additional Resources:

- *The Jesus I Never Knew*, by Philip Yancey
- You can find some helpful Lenten resources by downloading our Lenten Journey Guide by going to ChristChurch.us/lentdevo19.

We'd love to hear from you!

If you have thoughts questions, comments, ideas on how to make these study guides more meaningful for you and your group, please let us know.

We also enjoy hearing how God is using these scriptures and study guides in your lives.

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