

CALVARY CHAPEL COSTA MESA

– COMMUNITY GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE –

Jesus Encounters Series “Jesus & the Seekers” – John 12:20-36

FELLOWSHIP

Just after fall classes had started in late August 1993, the city of Chicago was buzzing with activity as the Parliament of the World's Religions was convening at the Palmer House Hotel in the heart of the city. This was the largest gathering of religions and its leaders in one event since its initial meeting at the Chicago's World Fair in 1893. Every guru, cult, and mainstream religious group was represented in one place and moment. Through a relationship I had at the time with an apologetics ministry I was able to secure a press pass. What a surreal experience to walk the convention hall floor and see booth after booth of religious groups, some I didn't even know existed, soliciting their spiritual wares. The keynote addresses and press meetings were filled with dignitaries and broadcast media. The platforms were reserved to showcase the biggest names. One afternoon I found myself just a few feet away from the Dali Lama and his entourage. As he shared his hopes for world spirituality and peace, I narrowly escaped a personal blessing from him as he exited, touching and waving to people on his way out. This kind of spiritual climate and fervor is an everyday experience in Jerusalem. To this day it is the hub of the world and every major religion has sought some kind of representation there. This was true in Jesus' day too. John records the story of certain Greeks, who were no doubt on a "truth pilgrimage," trying to get an audience with Jesus. It was a reminder that Jesus' mission was a global one, and that his purpose of redeeming the world was soon to be followed through on. The way every person would have access to God was being unfolded and soon this would be visible to every culture and language.

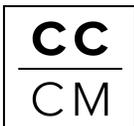
READ & DISCUSS

Read out loud together as a group John 12:20-36 and discuss what seems to be happening in this story and the implications it has for readers today. It is a mixture of spiritual beliefs and expectations that only Jesus would be able to straighten out. Also, we normally don't hear God audibly speaking from heaven, but this passage records one of those rare occurrences. Why did God do this?

John 12:28-30 *“Father, glorify Your name.” Then a voice came from heaven, saying, “I have both glorified it and will glorify it again.” Therefore the people who stood by and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, “An angel has spoken to Him.” Jesus answered and said, “This voice did not come because of Me, but for your sake.”*

- Jesus asked the disciples at one point, “Who do you say that I am?” This was answered with a variety of ideas his disciples had heard from the cities they had visited. Why were there so many different opinions about Jesus' credentials? Why were his crowds and events so large and exciting? What separates Jesus from other famous, religious leaders?
- Most people, like the Greeks in this story, want to “see Jesus,” or get a glimpse of him. How might your neighbor answer Jesus' question about who he is? What was Peter's answer? What is yours? (Read Matthew 16:13-17 if you need some help). What has been an experience you could share when you dialogued with someone about who Jesus was?
- Angels have been popular through the ages, and they are mentioned 18 times in the New Testament. Today there are pop-culture movies, books and articles that tell stories about how angels have helped or hurt people's lives. Why the fascination? What do think the purpose of angels are? What has been an experience that you or someone you've known had with angels? The people in verse 29 thought maybe they had heard an angel. How can someone know how to interpret supposed angelic encounters? Verse 31 talks about a specific angel, who is he and what will happen to him? Why do we need to be cautious when it comes to angels?

PRAY Jesus said that when he was lifted up, he would draw all to himself. Who can we pray about introducing Jesus to this week?



Community Group Discussion Guide

Based on Pastor Brian Brodersen's message on July 9, 2017.

Watch: <https://cccm.com/teaching/jesus-encounters/video/jesus-and-the-seekers/>