

SMALL GROUP GUIDE FOR

9/19/2021

Introduction

- This story occurs several times in Scripture where someone from the crowd steps up to ask Jesus a question about “What is the greatest commandment?” It is usually a scribe who asks. A scribe was the person who wrote and re-wrote copies of the Scriptures for use in the Temple and in local synagogues. They knew the Scriptures inside and out. So, they already know the historic answer to this question. They are simply trying to catch Jesus in some moment of heresy so he can be denounced.
- Luke’s version includes 2 pieces that the others do not. First is the parable of the good Samaritan. Second is Jesus asking the scribe a question – What is said in Scripture and how do you read it?

Discussion

- The first question is the easy one, it simply requires regurgitation of biblical passages that every Hebrew boy and girls would have known. Something similar perhaps to asking a Christian “What is John 3:16?”
- But the second question, “How do you read it?”, is actually asking for an *interpretation* of that Scripture, in other words, what does this passage mean? How would you apply it?
- For your discussion consider this – Since all Christian denominations read the same basic Bible, how is it possible to have two very different interpretations of the same text?

Going Deeper

- Biblical interpretation is nothing new. Even the Jews of Jesus’ day were divided into “camps” or “schools” belonging to this rabbi or that one, all depending on how they read/interpreted Scripture. The Pharisees and Sadducees were no different. Pharisees believed all of what we call the Old Testament was God’s word, while Sadducees only held that the Torah, or first five books, were on that level. Pharisees believed in the resurrection of the body, Sadducees did not. Yet they all read from the same text.
- That difference in biblical interpretation has continued and often been the source of denominational splits throughout church history. Part of the problem is that so much of Scripture did not come with “cliff notes” or any sort of commentary on the Scriptures until long after they were written. For Jewish people this is part of the reason for the use of the Talmud and the Mishnah. For Christians, there are an endless list of biblical commentaries available for helping to understand Scripture.

Application

- The next time you read the Bible, try to have 3-4 different versions side-by-side and read a passage in all four versions. What differences do you see? Some will be because of translation issues. But many will be due to interpretation differences from the experts who helped create that version in the first place.