

## ***Encounters with Jesus, Week 3*** **Small Group Discussion Guide, week of Nov. 13<sup>th</sup>**

### **NOVEMBER 13<sup>TH</sup> SERMON SUMMARY**

#### **ENCOUNTERS WITH JESUS: CAIAPHAS (JOHN 11:45-53)**

Caiaphas failed to grasp the mystery of God's humility, love, and grace. How could Caiaphas, who worshipped and loved the Father, get to a point where he would want to kill the Son?

- The reason Caiaphas (and other religious leaders) could not recognize Jesus as God was because he didn't really know God. He was convinced that God couldn't be that humble, loving, and gracious. (John 8:42-43; 47).
- The best indicator of how well we know God is how we see people and how we feel towards them – and whether we see them as God does (1 John 4:7-8). We are like Caiaphas when we choose to limit God's love and grace towards other people.
- God doesn't call us to be perfect. But He does call us to be open to the idea that He is more humble, loving, and gracious than we think.

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. How have you experienced love and grace from God or people recently?

#### **READ JOHN 11:41-53**

**41** So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. **42** I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me."

**43** When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" **44** The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go."

**45** Therefore many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him. **46** But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. **47** Then the chief priests and the Pharisees called a meeting of the Sanhedrin.

"What are we accomplishing?" they asked. "Here is this man performing many signs. **48** If we

let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and then the Romans will come and take away both our temple and our nation.”

**49** Then one of them, named Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, spoke up, “You know nothing at all! **50** You do not realize that it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish.”

**51** He did not say this on his own, but as high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the Jewish nation, **52** and not only for that nation but also for the scattered children of God, to bring them together and make them one. **53** So from that day on they plotted to take his life.

2a. Discuss what you know about the Sanhedrin.

- who were they?
- what did they do?

b. Why were they so concerned about Jesus?

3. Think about the miracle that Jesus did just prior to the meeting of the Sanhedrin in v. 41-46.

- a. What was going through Jesus’ mind? What was he thinking about?
- b. How did people respond to the miracle? What were various people thinking about?
- c. What are some ways we might have responded, if we saw this miracle?

4a. Why did the Sanhedrin, especially Caiaphas, respond in the way they/he did?

b. Why do you think Caiaphas couldn’t recognize Jesus as the Son of God?

5. What is the significance of Caiaphas words in v. 50? Re-read v. 49-53 and discuss:

- What did Caiaphas mean when he said it?
- How does our perspective bring new meaning to his words?

## APPLICATION QUESTIONS

In Sunday's message, Erik said: *God wants to show us how humble, loving and gracious He is. Caiaphas was not willing, not open to the possibility. God is not calling us to love perfectly; but He is asking us to consider the possibility, to be open to the mystery that when it comes to other people, perhaps God is more humble, loving, and gracious than we think he is.*

6. Are you a person who feels comfortable with mystery and possibility? Or are you a person who prefers certainty and predictability?

- How does this affect your spiritual life and relationship with God?
- How does this affect your openness to loving other people, especially those who are hard to love?

7a. Think about a specific person that you consider hard to love.

- How do you think God sees that person?
- How is God's humble, loving, and gracious view different from yours?
- How does recognizing this difference between God's perfect love and our imperfect love make you feel, and why? [Help each other not to get stuck in guilt and shame!]

b. How does this cause you to feel gratitude or praise for God and His love?