

War of the Worldviews Week 4 - Message Outline

MAIN IDEA: Life with God is better than anything, and He has the power to change everything.

TEACHING TEXT: ⁶‘I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. I will free you from being slaves to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment. ⁷I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. Exodus 6:6-7 NIV

WHAT DO WE WANT STUDENTS TO KNOW? There are a lot of gods you can worship, causes you can support, and people you can follow. But only God is worth devoting your life to. Because only God has the power to speak the universe into existence and save us from our sins. And only God is willing to walk through death and back to bring us home.

WHAT DO WE WANT STUDENTS TO FEEL? Confident that God is worth devoting their entire life to. Hopeful that God cares about them and is always working to bring about good to those who love Him.

WHAT DO WE WANT STUDENTS TO DO? Fully devote themselves to following God.

THE OUTLINE

TENSION: How many of you have ever experienced Choice Overload? That’s what you call it when you have so many options that it actually makes it harder to make any decision at all. Because when you have that many options, how can you be sure you’re making the right choice? Choice Overload is what happens every time you open up Netflix and don’t already know what you’re going to watch. You spend so long trying to figure out what you’re going to watch that you never even watch anything! It’s what happens to a lot of people when they’re preparing to graduate HS. Do you go to college or not? If you do, which one? If not, where do you try to find a job? There are so many options that we get paralyzed and end up not choosing anything.

I think this phenomenon is a big reason that so many people, young people especially, have become so drawn to spiritualism. **Spiritualism is being interested in spiritual things but not committing to follow any one god or religion.** And, this makes sense, because the God we choose to worship and the religion we decide to follow is a really big decision. Which, naturally, can make it so much more intimidating because nobody wants to make the wrong choice. To make matters worse, there are an estimated 10,000 different religions in the world. Talk about choice overload. So, what are we supposed to do? Work through every single one of those to figure out the true one? That feels like the definition of finding a needle in a haystack...

Thankfully, people way smarter than me have come up with some helpful ways to simplify things for us. There are what are known as **Twelve Classical Religions: Baha’i, Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Shinto, Sikhism, Taoism, and Zoroastrianism.** That’s still quite a bit though, but, thankfully, we can simplify it even

further to what are known as the **The Big Four: Christianity (31%), Islam (24%), Hinduism (15%), and Buddhism (7%)**. Which, when added together, make up 77% of the world's population. So, this is definitely easier than working through 10,000, but what if I told you we can make things even simpler? Because, there is One Name that shows up in all four of these religions. There is One Person, that all four of these religions recognize and respect. Can anyone guess that name? JESUS. **Islam: Jesus is the messiah and a great prophet. Hinduism: Jesus is a divine avatar. Buddhism: Jesus is an Enlightened One. Christianity: Jesus is the Son of God.**

So, if they all agree that there was something unique and special about Jesus, then, the wisest thing we can do is look to Jesus and see what He has to say. And, because He is so good, He makes it really simple for us.

⁶ Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." John 14:6 NIV

Every other religion makes room for Jesus. Jesus doesn't make room for any other religion. Everybody agrees that Jesus is special. Even people who don't believe in any god recognize the historical significance of Jesus, and the world changing impact He had. And, if we are going to take Jesus seriously, then we have to take what He said seriously. That the only way to God is through Him. And, this right here, is why, if you're taking notes, the main idea of our message is this: **Christianity is better, truer, and more beautiful than spiritualism.**

TRUTH: If you're just now joining us, we are in week four of a message series we are calling *War of the Worldviews*, where we have been looking at some of the most prevalent worldviews, systems of belief, in our world today, and showing how they pale in comparison to the goodness, truth, and beauty that Jesus offers. And, along the way, we've been walking through some of the key moments in the earliest parts of the Bible. In week one, we started in Genesis 1:1, and looked at the power behind those very first words, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. In week two, we learned that truth and morality aren't something we get to decide or define. Only God does. In week three, if you were with us, we talked about the countercultural, self-giving and sacrificial love that all followers of Jesus are called to live by. This week, we're talking about how much better, truer, and more beautiful Christianity is than spiritualism. Being interested in spiritual things may be popular, but it lacks the power to actually change your life.

And, this right here, is the reason, for many of you, your "faith" in Jesus hasn't done for you what you thought it would. This may sound intense, but I'm going to say it because I genuinely do care and want what's best for you. **You can say you're a Christian with your words, but show you are a spiritualist with your actions.** What does that mean? **Some of you are telling people you're a Christian, but at the same time, you're playing around with crystals and tarot cards and mediums. Others of you, you're coming to Switch every week, but when your friends who don't go to church ask you about what you believe, you hide the fact that you're a Christian because you don't want people to think you're "closed-minded". You call yourself a disciple of**

Jesus, but you only ever actually do what He says when it's convenient. If anything of that sounds like you, I need you to pay attention to these words from Jesus:

24 Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. 25 For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it." Matthew 16:24-25 NIV

Following Jesus is an all of life way of life. Every other religion wants a piece of Jesus, but Jesus makes it clear that if you want to be His disciple, you have to be willing to give Him all of you. And, if that sounds extreme, it's because it is. And only Jesus has the power, the wisdom, and the compassion to lead you to the life that is truly life.

All the way back in the Old Testament book of Exodus, the people of God were living in slavery in the nation of Egypt. From sun up to sun down, from the time they were born until they eventually died, they were subject to the whims of Pharaoh, the Egyptian King, a man who claimed to be a god. And, for generation after generation, the people of Israel were indoctrinated by the worldview and the religion of Egypt. A worldview that claimed they were nothing more than worms in the eyes of the Egyptian gods. That their lives didn't matter. And their only purpose was to live and die as servants of the gods.

But then, the God of their ancestors, the God who spoke the universe into existence, appeared to a man named Moses. A Jewish man, born as a slave, raised as a prince, and remembered as a prophet. And God chose Moses to be His messenger to the people of Israel and to Pharaoh. And this was the message Moses was told to give God's people:

⁶ 'I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. I will free you from being slaves to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment. ⁷ I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. Exodus 6:6-7

Did you pay attention to how much God referred to Himself as *the Lord* and *your God*? From the very beginning, the kind of relationship God has wanted to have with His people is a relationship defined by *commitment* and *exclusivity*. This is why, all throughout the Bible, our relationship with God is often compared to being like *marriage*.

MANDY AND I.

That's what God wants with you! A relationship defined by commitment, Him committed to you, and you committed to Him. And exclusivity. Where He *alone* is our God, and we are the people He has chosen. And, to demonstrate the lengths He was willing to go to for the people He has committed Himself to, God unleashed a series of ten plagues on the lands of Egypt. Each one was directly aimed at undermining the authority of Pharaoh and the Egyptian gods. Each one was a demonstration of God's power and might as He brought judgment on an empire that had been built on the backs of slaves and through the slaughter of innocents.

Why all of that? Why did God choose to do what He did? Because God knows, better than anyone, that the only way to truly experience the forgiveness of sins and fullness of life we are all desperate for, is through fully devoting ourselves to Him and Him alone. No other god, no other leader, no other religion can fulfill the deepest longings of our souls or unleash the nearly limitless potential for good that God has placed in us.

This is why Christianity is so much better, truer, and more beautiful than anything else the world can offer. And this is why Jesus wasn't playing around when He told us what is required from us to truly follow Him. Denying ourselves. Taking up our crosses. And following Him. It is an *exclusive* relationship that requires our *total commitment*. Because Jesus will not be satisfied with only a part of you. He wants all of you. And you will never fully be satisfied with only a part of Jesus. You were made to live for all of Him.

APPLICATION: So, what do we do? How do we resist the temptation to play it safe, stay in our comfort zone, and never really commit to anything? We do what Jesus said is most important:

29 "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. 30 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' 31 The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these." Mark 12:29-31 NIV

We love God with all of ourselves. Heart. Soul. Mind. And strength. Because He is the only God worth following, and the only God who was willing to lay down everything for us. Now, to make it even more simple and practical, let's look at what John, a friend and follower of Jesus has to say about what loving God looks like.

In fact, this is love for God: to keep his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, .. 1 John 5:3 NIV

If you're taking notes, write this down: **Demonstrate your love for God by doing what He says.** Think about it. If you really love and trust someone, then, when they ask you to do something, you're going to do it. Otherwise, you probably don't love and trust them as much as you say you do! And, this is so important, because God's commands are always an expression of His love and they are always for your good. This is why John says God's commands aren't burdensome! Doing what God says won't kill your joy, it will increase it. Because that's when you'll start to experience the life that you were made for, life with God, life on mission for the kingdom, and life surrounded by a family full of ordinary people being used by God to do extraordinary things. This is the way of life Jesus is inviting all of us into. But it's a way of life that we will only, and can only, experience if we commit ourselves to Him. In His own words, here is the invitation:

CONCLUSION: 28 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." Matthew 11:28-30 NIV