

Personal & Group Study Guide: September 11, 2022
Message Series: DEEP TRACKS: The Lesser-Known Teachings of Jesus
Message Title: JESUS and DIVORCE

Series Intro: Anyone can sing along to the hits, but it takes a true fan to know the *deep tracks* - an album's less popular songs that get buried between the more radio-friendly Billboard bops. If Jesus' teachings were an album or a playlist, scattered among his *greatest hits* (*The Good Samaritan*, *The Golden Rule*, *Love One Another*) you'd also find his *deep tracks* that may shock or even offend you - such as *Hate Your Parents*, *Die Fig Tree Die*, and *I Came to Bring the Sword!* What are we supposed to do with the most confounding things that Jesus had to say? Join us Sept 11 - Oct 9 as we explore the deep tracks of Jesus.

What are "deep tracks", and what is the purpose of this message series?

Whether directly or indirectly, how has divorced impacted your life? How has divorce affected you personally?

Generally speaking, Jesus has a reputation for being very loving and extremely kind. What, then, do you think the average person today might assume that Jesus said about a topic as delicate and potentially painful as divorce?

Matthew 19:3 Some Pharisees came to him to test him. They asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?"

Why did the Pharisees ask Jesus this? Why do people often resort to making things political instead of getting personal with God?

DIVORCE is THEOLOGICAL, NOT MERELY LEGAL or POLITICAL.

Deuteronomy 24:1 If a man marries a woman who becomes displeasing to him because he finds something indecent about her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house...

What were the "two camps" of teaching about divorce in the first-century Jewish world, and how did they differ?

Matt. 19:4-6 "Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate."

How did Jesus' view of divorce contradict both popular views (Shammai & Hillel) in his day?

GOD CREATED MARRIAGE in the BEGINNING. MAN CREATED DIVORCE after the FALL.

Matt. 9:7-9 "Why then," they asked, "did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?" Jesus replied, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning. I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery."

How did the Pharisees misinterpret Moses' divorce law? How is a *command* different from a *concession*?

DIVORCE is a CONCESSION, not a COMMAND

What good news does the Bible offer to people who've been impacted by divorce, and especially those who've been through divorces of their own?

The STORY CHURCH

Personal & Group Study Guide: September 18, 2022
Message Series: DEEP TRACKS: The Lesser-Known Teachings of Jesus
Message Title: Eating Flesh and Drinking Blood

Series Intro: Anyone can sing along to the hits, but it takes a true fan to know the *deep tracks* - an album's less popular songs that get buried between the more radio-friendly Billboard bops. If Jesus' teachings were an album or a playlist, scattered among his *greatest hits* (*The Good Samaritan*, *The Golden Rule*, *Love One Another*) you'd also find his *deep tracks* that may shock or even offend you - such as *Hate Your Parents*, *Die Fig Tree Die*, and *I Came to Bring the Sword!* What are we supposed to do with the most confounding things that Jesus had to say? Join us Sept 11 - Oct 2 as we explore the deep tracks of Jesus.

Let's take a look at this week's DEEP TRACK found in John 6:53-54: *Jesus said to them, "Very truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day."*

What's your first, instinctive reaction to this passage? If you're a longtime Christian, and you immediately thought about Communion, try to imagine how Jesus' words must have sounded to his followers *before* he instituted the Last Supper. **How do you think they might have reacted upon hearing Jesus insist that they eat his flesh and drink his blood?**

CONTEXT MATTERS: Whenever you come across a passage of Scripture that is confusing or hard to understand, it's a good idea to explore its context. **What happened just before Jesus offered today's "deep track"** (John 6:1-15)? **In the aftermath of this miracle, what did the people want Jesus to do for them, and how did he respond to their intentions** (v.15)?

When Jesus' adoring fans tracked him down in Capernaum, they approached him with several pointed questions (*When did you get here? What must we do to do the works God requires? What sign will you give that we may believe you?*). Their verbal exchange with Jesus raises three questions for every Christian today (and for anyone who is thinking about following Jesus):

Question #1: _____?

John 6:35 - *"I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry..."*

What is significant about how Jesus said, "I am the bread of life", and what's the Old Testament connection?

What is unique about Jesus' repeated claim that he is divine? Why is this important to remember when many (if not most) people today are under the impression that all religions are basically the same?

Question #2: _____?

John 6:26 - *Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw the signs I performed but because you ate the loaves and had your fill."*

What sort of accusations did Christianity's earliest critics levy against the Church?

Look at John 6:66. **How did many of Jesus' followers react to this "deep track" teaching about flesh and blood? Have you ever considered walking away from Jesus? Why or why not?**

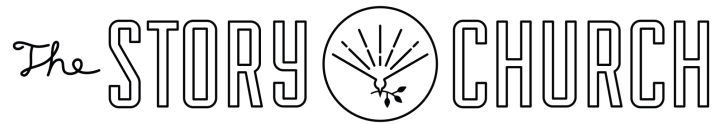
Do you think most Christians are following Jesus because of who he is, or because of what he can do for us? And what about you? Do you follow him primarily for who he is (identity) or for what he does (benefits)?

Question #3: _____?

Jn 6:27 - *"Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you."*
How did Jesus say this "bread of life" can be attained? (See vv.28-29) What does belief in Him entail?

Which bread do you want - the bread of this world, or the Bread of Life? Which have you been working for?

CS Lewis once wrote, *"Aim at heaven, and you will get the earth thrown in. Aim at earth, and you will get neither."* **What do you think he meant? How do you plan to "aim at heaven" this week?**



Personal & Group Study Guide: September 25, 2022

Message Series: DEEP TRACKS: The Lesser-Known Teachings of Jesus

Message Title: TRACK 3 - Jesus Brings a Sword

Series Intro: Anyone can sing along to the hits, but it takes a true fan to know the *deep tracks* - an album's less popular songs that get buried between the more radio-friendly Billboard bops. If Jesus' teachings were an album or a playlist, scattered among his *greatest hits* (*The Good Samaritan, The Golden Rule, Love One Another*) you'd also find his *deep tracks* that may shock or even offend you - such as *Hate Your Parents, Die Fig Tree Die*, and *I Came to Bring the Sword!* What are we supposed to do with the most confounding things that Jesus had to say? Join us Sept 11 - Oct 2 as we explore the deep tracks of Jesus.

This week's DEEP TRACK is found in **Matthew 10:34-39** -

“Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to turn

**‘a man against his father,
a daughter against her mother,
a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law—
a man’s enemies will be the members of his own household.’**

“Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves their son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it.

What are some common assumptions that people - Christians and non-Christians - make about Jesus these days?

One common assumption people make about Jesus is that he's an absolutely non-violent pacifist who would never ask or allow his followers to take up arms. People who like the idea of "Pacifist Jesus" often point to Matthew 26:52 to prove their point: Jesus said, "Put your sword back in its place...for all who draw the sword will die by the sword." But why was Peter carrying a sword in the first place (see: Luke 22:36), and how does that change the "Pacifist Jesus" narrative?

What's the difference between making assumptions about Jesus based on what we've heard *about* him, instead of what we've heard *from* him? Why does this matter?

3 False Assumptions that Jesus Addresses with This *Deep Track*

1. Assumptions about his _____.

Matt 10:34 *Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.*

John 7:43 *The people were divided because of Jesus.*

What did Jesus mean when he said he came to bring a sword?

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The legendary preacher Charles Spurgeon once said, “*Truth comes before unity.*” What do you think he meant, and why does this idea matter?

Read Colossians 1:20. How did Jesus come to make peace? Why is the idea of “Christ crucified” so hard for so many people to accept?

2. Assumptions about our _____.

Matt. 10:35-36 “*For I have come to turn ‘a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law - a man’s enemies will be the members of his own household.’*”

How does the Truth of Jesus and his Gospel divide families and turn people against each other? How was this happening among Jesus’ Jewish followers in the first century?

Which is better: for half a family to love Jesus whole-heartedly, or for a whole family to embrace him half-heartedly? Why?

**Loving _____ more
starts with loving _____ most.**

3. Assumptions about _____.

Matt. 10:37-39 “*Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves their son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it.*”

Why did Jesus say that some people are “not worthy” of him? What else did he say about our “worth”? (See Matthew 10:26-31) What causes people to go from being “worth more than many sparrows” (Matt. 10:31) to being “unworthy” of Christ (Matt. 10:37-38)?

Would you say that you’ve mostly tried to keep Jesus in *your* orbit, or that you’ve mostly submitted yourself to orbit Jesus? Why would you say that?

What does it mean to you that Jesus represents a “dangerous and deadly weapon in this dark and fallen world”? How does this image of a sword-bearing Savior challenge some of the common assumptions people make about him?

How are you willing to let Jesus take a sword to the darkness in your life this week?

The STORY CHURCH

Personal & Group Study Guide: October 2, 2022

Message Series: DEEP TRACKS: The Lesser-Known Teachings of Jesus

Message Title: TRACK 4 - *The Unforgivable Sin*

Series Intro: Anyone can sing along to the hits, but it takes a true fan to know the *deep tracks* - an album's less popular songs that get buried between the more radio-friendly Billboard bops. If Jesus' teachings were an album or a playlist, scattered among his *greatest hits* (*The Good Samaritan, The Golden Rule, Love One Another*) you'd also find his *deep tracks* that may shock or even offend you - such as *Hate Your Parents, Die Fig Tree Die*, and *I Came to Bring the Sword!* What are we supposed to do with the most confounding things that Jesus had to say? Join us Sept 11 - Oct 2 as we explore the deep tracks of Jesus.

This week's DEEP TRACK is found in **Matthew 12:31-32**, where Jesus said:

*“And so I tell you, every kind of sin and slander can be forgiven, but **blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven**. Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but **anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.**”*

Why has this teaching been the source of so much confusion and angst over the years?

How do religious manipulators and charlatans use a passage like this one for their own selfish gain?

CONTEXT MATTERS, so let's examine the circumstances that gave rise to this week's *Deep Track*.

Matthew 12:22-32 - Then they brought him a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute, and Jesus healed him, so that he could both talk and see. All the people were astonished and said, “Could this be the Son of David?” But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, “It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons.”

What was the significance of the title (“Son of David”) that the people began ascribing to Jesus? And what was the meaning of the name (*Beelzebul*) that the Pharisees associated with Jesus?

Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, “Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and every city or household divided against itself will not stand. If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then can his kingdom stand? And if I drive out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your people drive them out? So then, they will be your judges. But if it is by the Spirit of God that I drive out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

How did Jesus refute the Pharisees' accusation that he was driving out demons by Satan's power?

Or again, how can anyone enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can plunder his house. Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters. And so I tell you, every kind of sin and slander can be forgiven, but



blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.

What does it say about Jesus that he's willing to forgive "every kind of sin and slander", including anyone who "speaks a word against the Son of Man"?

Who is the Holy Spirit and what are some of His particular roles and characteristics? (See John 16:7-8, Romans 8:26-27, 1 Corinthians 12:7-11, 2 Corinthians 1:21-22)

If the Holy Spirit brings conviction about sin and inspires repentance in the believer's heart, how are we to understand someone who knows God and refuses to repent?

If someone asked you whether there is any sin that God will not or cannot forgive, how would you respond and why?

How has the Holy Spirit been convicting you and leading you toward repentance?

Your Notes: