

# THE TRUE PROPHET

## + SESSION OUTLINE

1. Jesus, the Word, possesses unique authority (Mark 1:21-22; Deut. 18:18-20).
2. Jesus, the Word, provides eternal life (John 6:66-69).
3. Jesus, the Word, reveals the Father (John 14:6-7).

Background Passages: Deuteronomy 18; Mark 1; John 6; 14

## + WHAT WILL MY GROUP LEARN?

Jesus fulfills the office of prophet, declaring words of eternal life to the world.

## + HOW WILL MY GROUP SEE CHRIST?

In the Old Testament, God sent prophets to the people to share His words. Jesus, the Word of God, is the ultimate Prophet, sharing words of eternal life found through faith in Him.

## + HOW SHOULD MY GROUP RESPOND?

Because Jesus came to us sharing words of eternal life found in Him, we share the good news of Jesus with all those around us, always open to follow God's leading to go anywhere to proclaim the gospel.

# GROUP TIME

**Group content** found in the Daily Discipleship Guide is included in the shaded areas throughout the session.



## SCRIPTURE HANDOUT

Scan this QR code for a reproducible handout of this session's Scripture passages.

## INTRODUCTION

**ASK:** As participants arrive, ask: **Who were amazing teachers in your life, and what made them so?** (wait for a volunteer to respond first; only share your response as a conclusion to the discussion)

**SUMMARIZE:** Help your group understand the **setting** for this session.

- When Jesus began His earthly ministry, He immediately turned heads. He taught with authority in a way that completely stunned and amazed the people who heard Him. No one had ever seen or heard anyone teach the way Jesus taught. But Jesus wasn't accepted by everyone. In fact, though many people immediately desired to follow Jesus, they lacked staying power because the teachings of Jesus were very difficult for them to understand and accept. Jesus, the true Prophet, not only declared the way to the Father, but when He did, He revealed Himself as the only way.

**TRANSITION:** Many have come and claimed to know the way to heaven. But anyone who doesn't begin and end with the work of Jesus is wrong. God sent His Son, Jesus, both to speak the message of eternal life and to do the work necessary for us to receive eternal life. There is no other way to receive eternal life but through faith in Jesus, who alone has provided justification for sinners. Continued and sustained belief in Jesus is the only way to truly know and understand the goodness and grace of God.



**Listen to session-by-session training every week on**

*Ministry Grid, Apple Podcasts, or Spotify:*

*[ministrygrid.com/gospelproject](http://ministrygrid.com/gospelproject) | [gospelproject.com/leader-training](http://gospelproject.com/leader-training).*

# POINT 1

## JESUS, THE WORD, POSSESSES UNIQUE AUTHORITY (MARK 1:21-22; DEUT. 18:18-20).

**READ:** Invite a volunteer to read aloud **Mark 1:21-22** from his or her own Bible.

**21** And they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath he entered the synagogue and was teaching. **22** And they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes.

**EXPLAIN:** Using the content below, explain from **Mark 1:21-22** (Daily Discipleship Guide [DDG] p. 54):

Jesus taught with authority in the past, and He continues to teach with authority today through His Word. The sixty-six books of the Bible, coupled with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, tell us all we need to know about Jesus for salvation.

- When Jesus got to Capernaum, He prioritized getting to the synagogue to teach. The synagogue served as a meeting space for the Jews mainly on the Sabbath day. There they would gather for worship, prayer, and a teaching from the Old Testament. It was customary for visiting teachers to be invited into the synagogue on the Sabbath to teach the people. Even though Jesus had no formal training in the law, He taught in the synagogues and was considered a teacher.
- As Jesus taught, the Jews gathered in the synagogue were astonished at His teaching. The Greek word for “astonished” carries the idea of knocking people out of their senses and causing them to feel great emotions like fear, wonder, and joy.<sup>1</sup>
- What was amazing about Jesus was that He taught as one who had authority. The Jews were used to the teaching of the scribes. The scribes didn’t teach with authority. In fact, the way that the scribes validated their teaching was typically by referring to other scholars.<sup>2</sup> Not so with Jesus. He didn’t need any extra-biblical evidence to prove the validity of His words. He was His own reference and source.
- The authority of Jesus over Scripture was evident to all, even His opponents, who constantly tried to explain away His teaching.

**ASK:** (DDG pp. 49,54)

From Day 1 in the DDG: **What are some things believers can do to live in submission to the authority of Jesus over their lives?** (study the Word with diligence; stay connected to Jesus through prayer; live in joyful obedience; look for Jesus’s guidance in all things)

### CAPERNAUM

Located on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee, this city was an economic center in Galilee. It served as a base of operations for Jesus and His disciples. Jesus was in Capernaum so much that in Mark 2:1 when Jesus returned to Capernaum, the people called it His home.

### VOICES from CHURCH HISTORY

“A Word sent down from God in heaven, A Word from Christ to mortals given, A Word of truth, a Word of love, What matchless mercies doth it prove: God’s Holy Word. A Word inerrant always true Through all the ages ever new; Though heaven and earth shall pass away, This Word abideth on for aye: God’s Living Word.”<sup>3</sup>

—R. E. Neighbour  
(1872–1945)

**READ:** Invite a volunteer to read aloud **Deuteronomy 18:18-20** from his or her own Bible.

**18** “I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. **19** And whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him. **20** But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in my name that I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that same prophet shall die.”

**HIGHLIGHT:** Call attention to and read the key doctrine below (DDG p. 54).

**Key Doctrine #52: Christ as Prophet:** As one of His offices, Jesus fulfills the role of prophet: He alone is the ultimate teacher and has the words of eternal life (John 6:68). Jesus is also God’s ultimate revelation of Himself, the very Word of God (John 1:1).

**INTERACT:** Ask the group: “How are **Mark 1:21-22** and **Deuteronomy 18:18-20** reflected in this key doctrine?” Clarify their answers when needed with the bullet points on the previous page and below.

- In Deuteronomy, as God was giving instructions to Moses, God told Moses that He would raise up a prophet from among Israel. That prophet would have the words of God in his mouth, and he would speak everything that God commanded of him. His words would be the very voice of God, so much so that anyone who doesn’t listen to the prophet’s words will be held accountable to God Himself.
- Prophets would come before the Prophet that God described, but not all of those prophets would come by the command of God. Some would even speak in the name of other gods. False prophets were to be put to death in Israel because God doesn’t take lightly those who lead His people astray.
- The Prophet God spoke of in Deuteronomy 18 is Jesus. He fulfilled the role of prophet, being the Son of God and the ultimate authoritative teacher of the Word of God. In Him are the very words of eternal life. Jesus, God’s ultimate revelation of Himself to humankind, is the Word and the final revelation of God before the coming of the new kingdom (Heb. 1:1-3). We don’t need further revelation as God has given us all that we need through Jesus.

**DISCUSS:** In groups of 3-4, ask (DDG p. 54):

**How does Jesus’s being the final Word of God shape our understanding of people who claim to have new revelation?** (anyone claiming to have new revelation since Jesus is lying; no new revelation is needed; we need to be aware of wolves in sheep’s clothing)

**TRANSITION:** Jesus’s words are the words of eternal life because through faith in Jesus, we have all that we need for salvation.

# POINT 2

## JESUS, THE WORD, PROVIDES ETERNAL LIFE (JOHN 6:66-69).

**READ:** Invite a volunteer to read aloud **John 6:66-69** from his or her own Bible.

**66** After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him. **67** So Jesus said to the twelve, “Do you want to go away as well?”

**68** Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, **69** and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.”

**EXPLAIN:** Using the content below, explain from **verse 66** (DDG p. 54):

True faith accepts and receives Jesus’s sacrifice as the only way to salvation as we give Him our all.

- In John 6:54, Jesus said that in order to receive eternal life, His disciples must eat His flesh and drink His blood. Upon hearing this teaching, many of the disciples—those who had been following Him until this point—went home, either not fully understanding what Jesus wanted of them or not wanting to be fully obedient to such a command. It sounded harsh, demanding their all and full commitment. Those who left were those who followed Jesus because they saw His miracles and heard His teachings, but their astonishment never turned to faith.
- Right before the focal passage, Jesus said He came from heaven and He is the Bread of Life. Anyone who will eat of it (alluding to accepting and receiving Jesus’s broken sacrificial body as payment for sin) receives eternal life (vv. 41,48,51). Many disciples found His teaching difficult to believe and accept (v. 60). So they turned their backs on Jesus and headed home as if Jesus was out of His mind.
- The gospel, though it is good news, is offensive. It’s offensive because the message of the gospel says that we can’t possibly be good enough to save ourselves. No one wants to hear that he or she can’t be good enough to be accepted, but we can’t be good enough. Yet Jesus was good enough on our behalf. We must place our faith in Jesus in order to receive the justification that He offers.
- Every time the gospel is preached, the invitation to surrender to Jesus is extended. There is no such thing as an indifferent response. Everyone falls into one of two categories: those who believe it to be true and show that belief through faith and works, and those who don’t. That choice is a difficult one for some, as many of us don’t want to let go of control of what we have.

### THE TWELVE

Though Jesus had many followers and disciples, Jesus had a special connection to His twelve close disciples whom He chose, possibly representative of the twelve tribes of Israel (see Matt. 19:28). This band of followers was privileged to be part of His inner circle, to whom He revealed more truth. They were His friends and confidants.

**ASK:** (DDG p. 54)

**What's the difference between a true disciple and one that just follows for a time but one day will turn away?** (a true disciple knows Jesus is the only way to salvation; a true disciple knows that the road with Jesus may be difficult but walks on anyway; a true disciple gives up everything for Jesus; a true disciple has the same mind-set and mission as Jesus)

**SUMMARIZE:** Call attention to and read the statement below (DDG p. 54). Solicit a response from the group to rank the church's belief in this statement from 0 (complete rejection) to 10 (full acceptance). Allow for some discussion.

Believing and accepting Jesus as God and Savior will give us eternal life.

**EXPLAIN:** Communicate the meaning of **verses 67-69** using the bullets below.

- After many of His followers abandoned Him, Jesus asked His disciples, "Do you want to go away as well?" (v. 67). Peter asked Jesus where else would they go, after seeing that Jesus taught and did things that proved Jesus to be "the Holy One of God," a title of Jesus also found in Matthew, Mark, and Luke (but made only by demons who clearly knew who Jesus was and were afraid of His power). Peter's use of the phrase alluded to what Isaiah said no less than thirty times about God being the Holy One of Israel who redeems and saves His people (e.g. Isa. 41:14; 43:3,14; 47:4; 48:17; 54:5).
- Peter then said that Jesus has "the words of eternal life." Only through Jesus can eternal life be found. Even as others who were following Jesus at the time turned away, Peter knew there was nowhere for him to go. Salvation is in Jesus alone.
- Peter's last statement sums up the heart of a true believer. Belief and acknowledgment that Jesus is God and Savior brings salvation and eternal life. A simple yet challenging statement. As believers, we have a choice to make between the truth of Christ and the false truths of this world. What will we choose? So when Jesus asks us if we want to go away, may we answer like Peter and say where else can we go. We have come to believe and know that Jesus is the Savior of the world.

**DISCUSS:** Eternal life is a gift, but in today's world, some may not think much about it. Ask (DDG p. 54):

**What's so amazing about eternal life?** (we not only live forever but live forever with Jesus, who loves us completely; with glorified bodies, we get to worship God forever; living joyously on a new earth sounds amazing)

**TRANSITION:** Eternal life with Jesus is what we were made for. Jesus makes it possible for us to have eternal life by reconciling us to the Father.

# POINT 3

## JESUS, THE WORD, REVEALS THE FATHER (JOHN 14:6-7).

**READ:** Invite a volunteer to read aloud **John 14:6-7** from his or her own Bible.

**6** Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. **7** If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”

**INTERACT:** Place people in pairs and lead them into making an expanded translation of **verse 6**, pointing them to the DDG and Bible reference resources for assistance. Invite pairs to share their expanded translations.

**EXPLAIN:** Using the content below, explain from **verse 6** (DDG p. 55):

Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. He is the only path to God the Father.

- In context, Jesus just told the disciples that He is going to prepare a room for them in His Father’s house, and He would return and take them with Him, for they knew the way. Thomas then said that they didn’t know where He was going, so how could they know the way (vv. 2-5)? Jesus’s answer to Thomas’s question is an authoritative declaration of the truth, telling him and the other disciples that Jesus Himself is the way, the truth, and the life necessary to get to God, for no one goes to the Father except through Him.
- Right from the beginning of Jesus’s statement to Thomas, He declares Himself to be God. The words “I am” come from the Greek equivalent of what God told Moses at the burning bush (Ex. 3:14). Jesus declared to them that the way had come, and the way was through Him.
- As the way, Jesus provided reconciliation between God and man as He served as both our propitiation and High Priest through His life, death, burial, and resurrection (Heb. 2:17). As the truth, Jesus perfectly revealed not only the way to the Father but also the Father Himself (Heb. 1:3). As the life, Jesus provided for the resurrection of our souls because those who died with Christ will one day live with Him forever (Rom. 6:8-9). There is no other way to God.
- Many people will say absolute truth doesn’t exist when it comes to God because all religions lead to God. There are two primary problems with this line of thinking: One, the statement refutes itself, being a statement of absolute truth. Two, every religion claims their way to be the way to God, and they all contradict each other. If Jesus says He is the way and Buddha says nirvana is the way, they can’t both be right.
- Jesus’s claim to be the only way to get to God differs from all other religions because every other religion essentially says that you have to do something in hopes that what you do is good enough. Jesus says that you’re a sinner who can’t be good enough, but you can be justified through His finished work if you place your faith in Him.

**DISCUSS:** Using the Internet or the group's knowledge of other religions, answer the following question (DDG p. 55):

**If Jesus is the only way, what are some of the important distinctions between Christianity and other religions?** (in Christianity, the path to heaven is through faith in Jesus, while other religions say that the path is through our own works; in Christianity, heaven is guaranteed through Jesus, while all other religions don't guarantee heaven; in Christianity, God in Christ came to us and died, while no other god claims to have done such an act to save)

**EXPLAIN:** Using the content below, explain from **verse 7** (DDG p. 55):

Within the Trinity, Jesus, the Father, and the Spirit are three in one. If we know Jesus, we know the Father and the Spirit.

- Jesus ended His statement to Thomas by declaring Himself and the Father to be inseparable. All throughout the Gospels, the concept of Jesus and the Father being one (10:30) was something the disciples didn't understand. Truthfully, no one really understood what Jesus meant. At one point, some Jews even picked up stones to stone Jesus because of His declaration of being one with the Father (10:31). They saw this as blasphemy because they completely missed that the Son of God, the prophesied Messiah in the Old Testament, had come.
- As we said in Point 2, at least some of the disciples understood that Jesus had the words of eternal life, but their eyes would not be fully opened to who Jesus is and what He came to do until after He revealed Himself post resurrection.
- We have a completed Bible that tells us all we need to know about Jesus for salvation (2 Pet. 1:3). We who have surrendered our lives to Jesus also have the Holy Spirit, who illuminates the truth of God's Word. The Holy Spirit guides us in the knowledge of truth and convicts us of sin (John 16:7).

**ASK:** (DDG p. 55)

**How does knowing Jesus, the Father, and the Spirit are one encourage you?** (reminds me I have access to all three Persons; helps me know I have divine power and authority on my side; helps me see a God who is holy yet personal; reminds me that God loves me with His all)

**TRANSITION:** The Bible makes it clear that the only path to God the Father is through the Son. In Jesus we have all that we need to see and know the Father.



# MY RESPONSE

**SAY:** In the Old Testament, God sent prophets to the people to share His words. Jesus, the Word of God, is the ultimate Prophet. Because Jesus came to us sharing words of eternal life found in Him, we share the good news of Jesus with all those around us, always open to follow God's leading to go anywhere to proclaim the gospel.

## HEAD:

Jesus is the true Prophet who speaks the words of God with all authority. In the Old Testament, God sent prophets to speak on His behalf, but they all pointed to Jesus. Jesus is the only way sinners can get to the kingdom of God. God loved us so much that He sent His Son to die in our place. Jesus is the only name by which we can be saved (Acts 4:12).

**How does Jesus's death and resurrection demonstrate God's love for humanity?**

## HEART:

Jesus's authority was tested again and again by religious leaders, but they could never discredit Jesus. Everyone who heard Jesus teach recognized that He taught with an authority unlike anyone else. Today, Jesus's authority as the way, the truth, and the life continues to be tested in the world around us. But even though the gospel message isn't accepted by the world around us, the gospel is still true. This should give us confidence and peace as we seek to live in relationship with Jesus.

**How can you praise God for the steadfast truthfulness of His Word?**

## HANDS:

Jesus is the true Prophet who provided salvation and revealed the way to the Father. As those who have surrendered to the lordship of Jesus, we should be filled with gratitude because of the relationship Jesus has won for us. But Jesus also commanded that we take the message of the gospel to the people around us. Jesus alone has the words of eternal life. He has put those words in our mouths so that others might find the way to the Father as well. Thus, we must take the message of the gospel with us everywhere we go, ready to share and show the gospel to people who desperately need it.

**How will you take Jesus's words of life to those around you?**

**PRAY:** Jesus, only through You can we have eternal life. Thank You for Your sacrifice that we may have access to the Father. Help us share with others that You are the way, the truth, and the life. There is no one like You. Amen.

### VOICES from CHURCH HISTORY

"It is not only impossible but useless to know God without Jesus Christ."<sup>4</sup>

—Blaise Pascal  
(1623–1662)

# EXTRA

## **POINT 1: JESUS, THE WORD, POSSESSES UNIQUE AUTHORITY** (MARK 1:21-22; DEUT. 18:18-20).

### **+ ILLUSTRATION**

When Jeff Han, a blind tech blogger, first heard about the iPhone, he emailed Steve Jobs, the co-founder of Apple, to ask how the iPhone was accessible to the blind. Jobs replied and invited Han to Apple's headquarters to show him iPhone features, such as voiceover, which read aloud the contents of the screen, and adjustment settings that made the iPhone more accessible. Han left the meeting thankful to Jobs for improving the lives of the visually impaired. Steve Jobs, as the pioneer of Apple, was the best possible person to help Jeff Han learn the accessibility features of the iPhone. In a similar way, Jesus, as the ultimate authority over the Word, has the ability to amaze His people when He reveals the Scriptures like no one else.

## **POINT 2: JESUS, THE WORD, PROVIDES ETERNAL LIFE** (JOHN 6:66-69).

### **+ ILLUSTRATION**

In *A Beautiful Mind*, a movie released in 2001, John Nash, a genius mathematician who suffered from paranoid schizophrenia, had colleagues and friends at Ivy League universities turn away from him as his condition became worse. His wife and some of his other friends and colleagues, however, supported him, even though they struggled to understand his condition. Despite the challenges he faced, he eventually won the Nobel Prize in Economics in 1994. Similarly, those around Jesus struggled to understand His teaching, and many people who began following Him eventually turned away. But those who didn't were eventually able to see and understand the authority by which He taught, spoke, and performed miracles.

#### **References**

1. A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1933), Mk 1:22.
2. James A. Brooks, *Mark, vol. 23, The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1991), 50.
3. R. E. Neighbour, *Gems of Gold: Daily Meditations (WORDsearch, 2010)*, 167.
4. Blaise Pascal, *Blaise Pascal*, trans. by W. F. Trotter, M. L. Booth, O. W. White, ed. Charles W. Eliot (New York: P. F. Collier & Son Company, 1910), 175.