

Who Gets to Define Jesus?

Built by God | Week 4
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Main Idea

Culture may change its opinions about Jesus, but it cannot change who Jesus is. Scripture reveals Jesus as the Son of God, Savior, Lord, and King.

The church cannot build its understanding of Jesus on culture, politics, trends, or personal preference. It must be built on who Scripture reveals Him to be.

“Culture can change its definition of Jesus, but culture cannot change Jesus.”

1. Culture Doesn't Get to Redefine Who Jesus Is

In Matthew 16, Jesus asks His disciples what people are saying about Him. Everyone had an opinion about Jesus then, just as everyone has an opinion about Him today.

Some want Jesus as a teacher but not Lord. They want His grace without His truth, forgiveness without repentance, blessing without obedience, and promises without commands.

Jesus makes the question personal: **“Who do you say that I am?”**

Peter answers, **“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”**

Our understanding of Jesus must come from Scripture rather than opinions or culture. If we redefine Jesus, eventually we redefine the church, truth, holiness, and salvation.

“We do not get to make Jesus in our image.”

Scriptures:

Hebrews 13:8

“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.”

Matthew 16:13–16

“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

John 1:1, 14

The Word was God, and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

2. Culture Doesn't Get to Separate Jesus From Truth

Culture often says that Jesus is love. He absolutely is. But culture increasingly defines love as affirmation without transformation.

Biblical love tells the truth.

Jesus did not claim to offer one possible truth or one possible way to God. He declared Himself to be the way, the truth, and the life.

When culture, our feelings, our desires, or our lifestyles disagree with Jesus, Jesus does not need to change. We do.

Following Jesus means surrendering ourselves to Him rather than reshaping Him around ourselves.

“Following Jesus isn’t asking Him to follow me. Following Jesus means I follow Him.”

Scripture:

John 14:6

“I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

3. Jesus Isn't Just Savior. He Is Lord.

Jesus is Savior, but He is also Lord. Culture wants a Jesus who rescues but never rules, forgives but never leads, and saves our souls without having authority over our lives.

Biblical Christianity calls us to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Jesus.

“Christianity isn’t adding Jesus to the life you’ve already decided to live.”

Jesus came because humanity needed rescuing. Religion, good works, morality, money, education, and politics could not save us.

Jesus went to the cross, took our sin, carried our shame, and paid the debt we could not pay. But the cross was not the end. Jesus walked out of the grave.

He is alive. He is Savior. He is Lord. He is King.

Because of who He is, Jesus does not simply deserve a place in our lives. He deserves first place.

“The question isn’t, does Jesus fit into my life? The question is, does my life bow to Jesus?”

Scriptures:

Romans 10:9

“If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”

John 1:14

“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.”

Colossians 1:15–18

Christ is before all things, all things hold together in Him, and He is to have first place in everything.

Built on Christ

Culture changes. Governments rise and fall. Popular opinion shifts. Generations come and go.

Jesus does not change.

If the church is going to be Built by God, it must be built on the Christ revealed in Scripture.

When culture says change Him, we will preach Him.

When culture says hide Him, we will lift Him higher.

When culture says there are many ways, we will declare Jesus is the way.

When culture says truth changes, we will declare Jesus is truth.

Culture does not get to redefine Jesus. Neither do we.

He is Savior. He is Lord. He is King. He is the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Key Takeaways

- Culture cannot change who Jesus is.
- Scripture, not culture or personal preference, defines our understanding of Jesus.
- We do not get to create a version of Jesus who always agrees with us.
- Jesus is both loving and truthful.
- Following Jesus requires surrender to His lordship.
- Jesus came to rescue people who could not save themselves.
- The cross and resurrection are central to who Jesus is and why He came.
- Jesus does not simply deserve a place in our lives. He deserves first place.
- A church Built by God must be built on the Christ revealed in Scripture.

Standout Lines

“Culture can change its definition of Jesus, but culture cannot change Jesus.”

“Revelation of Jesus produces a church Jesus can build.”

“We do not get to make Jesus in our image.”

“Culture has redefined love to mean affirmation without transformation.”

“When culture disagrees with Jesus, Jesus doesn’t need to change. We do.”

“Christianity isn’t adding Jesus to the life you’ve already decided to live.”

“The question isn’t, does Jesus fit into my life? The question is, does my life bow to Jesus?”

“Jesus didn’t come primarily to make bad people nicer. Jesus came to make dead people alive.”

“Don’t you ever let culture give you a Jesus without the cross.”

“Jesus doesn’t want a place in your life. He deserves first place.”

Reflection

1. Is my understanding of Jesus being shaped more by Scripture or by the voices around me?
2. Are there areas of my life where I want Jesus as Savior but resist Him as Lord?
3. Does Jesus simply have a place in my life, or does He have first place?