

DISCERNMENT

WORSHIP - Worship God because He came in the flesh and has died and rose again.

WELCOME - When you go to buy a product how do you know it is the real thing? How do you make your decision about what you are about to pay your money for?

WORD - Read 1 John 4:1-6 and answer the following questions.

1. Why was it so important for John to tell them to test the spirits? Does it really matter what you believe just as long as you believe? (Don't read this out loud but if the discussion goes crazy bring this up. Note - It does matter what you believe. Our faith is based on truth and the Christian faith is a historical faith. Jesus really lived and died and arose from the dead. It's not just wishful thinking. It is fact.)

2. Mark presented different world views Sundays. In the people you are around what one do you think they fit it? Which ones have you fit in before?

Naturalism - no spiritual only physical and truth is determined by what you can observe with the 5 senses.

Pantheism - only spiritual exists. Everything is god. The physical world is an illusion.

Polytheism - there are many gods and goddesses, there are evil spirits and good spirits. Taboo - is the way. You have to appease the good gods and the bad gods or spirits.

Postmodernism - reality is determined by your worldview. There is no ultimate overarching story. They are all equal because they are important to you. So not any of them is more important than any other. They are all true and all equal.

Monotheism - there is one God who created the world. History has a beginning and will have an ending.

3. In these different views they all fall into two categories: Legalism and Fatalism. Legalism - you have to earn your way to heaven or enlightenment but you never know when you have done enough. Fatalism - it is all predetermined so it doesn't matter what you do. You can do good your whole life and not make it in because you were not picked. In your lifetime have you related to either of these views? Sometimes the church mistakenly embraces these views. Can you name some Church beliefs that fit into either of these?

4. When Mark talked about costly suffering in order for there to be true forgiveness, does that make sense to you? In other words someone has to pay for

the sin or the offense. To forgive means you bear the cost of the offense. Jesus did that for us.

5. Love can only exist through a choice. We can either accept God's love or reject it. We can either accept Jesus into our lives or reject Him. If we have to work for it, legalism, it is not a choice, we earn it. If it is predetermined, it is not a choice, it is all fixed. Do you see why Jesus coming into the world and becoming a man is so important? How has He brought about freedom in your life?

WORKS - Baptism Sunday so if anyone in your group needs to be baptized tell them. Matthews Party Sunday at 5 p.m. at Sherman Park in Middletown. We need lots of help. Please bring your group to help demonstrate God to this neighborhood.