

Why Sage Christianity?

Because Locating Jesus is Confusing

[modified transcript]

Imagine that a Person said to you that they're only going to relate to you on the basis of the things they prefer. Anything that they don't like about you or they wish was different, they're going to ignore and act as if those things aren't true about you.

If that were to happen, you and those who love you would know right away that this is not a healthy relationship.

A healthy relationship involves knowing each other as we are without exaggerating or minimizing one another.

We grapple with one another with our differences, and we engage lovingly with one another. We enjoy and delight in the things that are true, good and enjoyable together. Instead of trying to make each other become each other we respectfully regard one another as we are.

The Sage Christianity community is trying to do that with Jesus. We are attempting to relate to him the way we'd expect any healthy relationship to function.

Which Jesus?

It can seem confusing because there's so many versions of Jesus.

It's hard enough to make a friend and to get through a day without also having to figure out which Jesus is the real one.

But we're trying to do that. So, if it can help, maybe we can identify four ways to think of Jesus in our culture.

1. Jesus as the Bible presents him. The supernatural truth claims of Jesus and the love example and ethic of Jesus are all on display. We encounter that and grapple with that.

2. The culturally conservative Jesus. These dear neighbors tend to highly regard and emphasize the supernatural truth claims of Jesus but then often struggle with the love example and love ethic of Jesus and often struggle with the sexual ethics of Jesus.

3. The culturally progressive Jesus. These dear folks will maximize in a powerful way the love example and love ethic of Jesus. But they often resist or are suspicious of the supernatural truth claims of Jesus and often struggle with the sexual ethics of Jesus.

4. And then of course there's folks who are spiritual not religious or secular or who belong to other religions altogether. They're not looking to the supernatural truth claims or the love example of Jesus or his sexual ethics in any explicit way. They're looking elsewhere.

Those with culturally conservative and culturally progressive views of Jesus still tend to look to the Bible. Those who are secular or spiritual but not religious, tend to look at the Internet and cobble together varying pieces of a spirituality they create and that is comfortable for them.

The Jesus We Seek

In the community of Sage Christianity, we're coming from these various cultural versions of Jesus, trying to untangle from them, and trying imperfectly but earnestly to let the supernatural truth claims and the love ethic and example of Jesus remain how they are presented in the Bible. Instead of reshaping Jesus to fit our cultural convictions and preferences, we're trying to let him be who he is so that we can see where our honest disagreements with Jesus are and where we have actual questions and where our doubts meet faith.

All of this is so that we have a real relationship with Jesus. We don't want to turn Jesus into ourselves. we're trying to let him be who he is.

When we encounter Jesus as the Bible presents him all of us will be offended at some point. He's an equal opportunity offender because he has his own mind his own convictions his own point of view. He's his own person.

This also means that each of us will be attracted in some compelling powerful way to Jesus. Maybe moving toward Jesus as he is from wherever we're at in within these other cultural versions of him, we can gradually untangle from these competing visions, and relate to him as he is. That's our desire. That's what we're hoping for. That's what we're seeking.

Questions for Further Reflection

1. What encouraged you or surprised you in a positive way that you don't want to forget?
2. What bothered you or didn't set right with you in your first impression?
3. What did you notice about how Jesus was described? What about this description sounded attractive or inviting to you?
4. Did anything in these hints about Jesus raise a question for you or not sit right?
5. What follow up question would you like to ask?