

October 18 Questions For Conversation

1. Justin said, "If at any point these theological disagreements, important though they may be, come to overshadow who Christ is, and God's love for us then we've done something wrong. We need to take a step back and ask 'why have we allowed this argument to become more important (or to seem to those outside the church) more important than Christ?'...For Christians, it's always got to be about Christ first and foremost."

-How can theological disagreements come to overshadow who Christ is? Can you think of any examples?

-What arguments do you think overshadow Jesus inside of the church?

-In what ways do people 'outside of the church' identify arguments within the church which to them overshadow who Jesus is?

2. Justin points out that 'Jesus was known for healing people, (meeting their physical needs), for loving people and befriending people that no one expected him to befriend, (meeting their emotional needs), and also he was known for his wisdom. And so because of these things people came to Jesus.'

Justin then said, 'The church I envision is a church that acts like Jesus. A place where people can come and know that their physical needs will be met and cared for, that their emotional needs will be met and cared for, that people will love them, take an interest in them as people. And also where there is wisdom.'

-How do you feel about Justin's vision of the church (meeting physical needs, meeting emotional needs, offering wisdom)?

-In what ways do you experience the church having those qualities? In what places would you hope to see more of those qualities?

-What is your vision for the church?

3. Rowan Williams writes:

The Christ we both see is the one who instructs us to love our enemies, to love even what may seem the pale shadow of his face in other people's minds, because compared with the light of his glory all our thoughts are shadows. He is the truth we shall never own; we can only hope to be owned by him.

-What do you think Rowan Williams is driving at in this quote? What does it mean that Jesus is the truth that we shall never own?

-How do you approach resolving disagreement or conflict with someone else who disagrees with your understanding of Jesus? Or your understanding of the Bible? Or your theological point of view?

-Do you see it being possible to be a part of a church community with someone who disagrees with some of the things you hold most sacred? How do you work to find common ground with someone who disagrees with things that you hold dear?

4. Justin said, 'I think when we grow as Christians, we become aware more and more of nuance...the gray areas of faith. We become more and more aware of what we don't know. It's tempting to think we know everything. And it's tempting to think that any nuance or any gray areas in life are a result of somebody not having enough faith or not having enough confidence in the truth.'

-Do you agree with Justin's assessment? Why or why not?

-Are there scriptures, teachings or, other elements of your faith experience that have led you to feel like spiritual maturity equals certainty?

-Are there scriptures, teachings, or other elements of your faith experience that have encouraged you to explore nuance as an element of spiritual maturity?

-How do you work at understanding truth (in light of the Bible and Jesus)?

-Do you think it's possible for two people to both be right, even if their views seem to contradict one another?