

Session one
Walking with Christ

“Beauty and the beast”

Welcome to session one of “Walking with Christ”. I so glad you’ve joined us. I’m looking forward to some great times together. You know, most of us have heard that we are “made in the image of God”, but have you ever spent time wondering what that really means? I think for one, that it means we might even be able to learn a little about God by looking at ourselves. For instance, I bet God loves music. I think God likes stories and drama. I see that in mankind, and in Scripture.

I also think we can learn a lot about each other if we know what kind of music and movies we enjoy. So spend a few minutes sharing with each other what is your favorite song or music style. What is your favorite movie?



Fellowship

1. What is your favorite song or music style? What is your favorite movie?



Discipleship

Have you ever seen a movie that reminded you of a biblical truth? I remember when the movie “The Matrix” came out—everyone claimed it was an analogy of the Christian life. And do you remember way back to when the first “Star Wars” movie came out? Back then a lot of Christians didn’t go to movies—so I remember hearing from a lot of people that wouldn’t go to movies—but really wanted to see “Star Wars”, that it was based on the Gospel of Luke—yeah...I never really saw the Gospel in there--but it had great special affects!

I did like the “Narnia” movie that came out recently—and that one actually was written as a way to tell the Gospel story to children (and adults alike) in a way that would really speak to the young at heart.

But recently, someone was telling me about another movie that made some interesting points. It’s called “Beauty and the Beast”. If you have kids or grandkids—you probably have seen it. It is about this handsome prince who falls into a terrible state. Shadows fall on his heart and his castle, and he hid there for a long time surrounded by darkness. Over time, he turned into an ugly, horrible beast.

But that all changed when a beautiful girl came and began to care for him and love him. And basically, as “Beauty” loved the “Beast”, the beast became more beautiful.

Do you have the picture? We see a horrible, ugly beast, and a perfectly wonderful creature called “beauty”. He is so ugly; she is so beautiful. Imagine how his life would end—if he was left alone there. But for some reason that defies explanation—she cares. She loves him, and he is saved.

Does that story remind you of anything? Now let's be honest—some of you ladies in the room are thinking—yeah, it reminds me of me and my husband!

But no, that's not what I'm getting at. Stay with me for a minute more.

Before the fall, we were like the prince—the beautiful member of a rich perfect family. But now...wow. Have we ever fallen! We've turned into the beast. Now, I'll admit that when I'm all dressed up on Sunday—looking my best, I may not want to admit how much trouble I'm in. But, at other times, I have to admit that a shadow has fallen over my kingdom.

I find it easiest to admit this when I'm driving. In fact, I knew a nice Christian lady once who was very nice to everybody and always looked like she had it all together—but when she got behind the wheel—watch out.

One day in particular, she was going to the store, and a taxi driver cut her off. Well, she didn't like that very much—so she stepped on the gas and cut back in front of him. Well, he got angry and when they were stopped in traffic, he got out of his car and started yelling at her. She responded with a hand gesture that suggested to me she probably wasn't witnessing to him—and he responded by hitting her car.

Well, traffic began to move, so the taxi driver got back in his car and drove off—thinking he had the last word. But my friend's 6 year old son was in the back seat of her car, and she wanted to be sure and teach him how to respond correctly in a situation like this—so she told him to give her anything he could find lying in the back seat. Then she caught back up to the taxi driver and rolled down her window and started throwing things. She threw an empty cup, a banana peel, some garbage, a few small broken toys from McDonalds—all the while yelling for her son to find her more things to throw. Finally he said, mommy all that is left is a brick. So she waited for just the right time. She waited until the next light turned green, and she threw the brick through the taxi's back window and then sped off in a different direction.

I'll tell you two good things about that story. #1—she didn't have a fish on her car. #2—the apostle Paul tells us in Romans that he was the same way. No matter how hard he tried to be perfect—he never could. The beast always found a way out.

In fact, all through the Bible, we see that nobody but God could be perfect. Every great hero of the Bible had trouble keeping it all together for more than a few minutes at a time. But God loves us anyway.

Now, as far the movie “The beauty and the beast” goes—this is where our analogy ends. Because in the movie Beauty kisses the Beast and everything is wonderful.

But in reality, Beast killed Beauty. We did that—our sins killed beauty!

Again, we don’t like to think about this too often—and we like to think that we wouldn’t do anything so horrible. But, do you remember the soldiers from the movie “The Passion of the Christ”? Between the time when they were commanded whip Jesus, and the time they were supposed to crucify him—they had some spare time. Do you remember what they did to kill the extra time? Just for fun—they beat him up. They spit on him...and lots of other terrible things to make themselves feel important and powerful.

Have you ever done that? Would you? Do you think you’ve ever come across a person who has been already beaten down by life, they don’t know Christ and they’re condemned to die without hope—and one day, they come across your path.

Maybe we meet them on the road, and we honk at them in anger, maybe we refuse to let them into our lane when they signal they need to move. Maybe we meet them at work and take a fun opportunity to gossip about them or make fun of them to make ourselves feel better.

All the while, we know down deep inside, that how we treat others is how we are treating Jesus. Do you remember what Jesus told us...”if you do it unto the least important of these, you do it unto me”.

We like to tell ourselves we have the beast under control—that we are really looking quite beautiful. But the truth is, we are like one ant looking at the other ants and thinking, “Hey, I look pretty good compared to these other guys!”

But the Bible tells us in Romans 8:7 that the human mind cannot submit to God’s law. And if you don’t believe me, then just try for a few minutes. Try to be perfect. Don’t think any bad thoughts. You know those things you worry about—don’t think about those. Oops—there you went and thought about them. Now, some of you haven’t had any bad thoughts yet, and about now your thinking to yourself...I bet I’m doing better and being perfect than everybody else in this room—ouch! There you went falling into pride. And then, if that weren’t bad enough, Romans 6:23 tells us that the wages for sin is death.

But here is the good news. Remember our fairy tale? Beauty kisses the beast and everything is ok. But in real life, “Beauty becomes the Beast, so the beast could become the beauty. You see it? Jesus changed places with us.

He hung on the cross and took our beating and punishment and sins. He became the beast, and in the process we can take his Beauty.

But like the movie, you ought to ask yourself...what if He hadn't come? Why did he care?

2. In what kind of situations does your "beast" tend to appear?
3. Can you describe a time when you saw someone trying to feel important by making someone else feel small?
4. Do you find it possible to be sinless?
5. Read Romans 3:10, 23-24 and Psalms 51:5. What do these verses say about us?



Ministry

6. How do you think this affects our relationships with each other? How does it affect our ministry?



Evangelism

7. Read Galatians 3:13. Like the beast we have been offered redemption. In what way could the movie affect the way that we see evangelism?

If you know all about Jesus, but cannot actually say that you are his disciple—then you're like the Beast who may have **seen** Beauty, but had not yet been **saved** by Beauty. It takes a committed relationship between you and God to achieve salvation. It isn't about religion, or how much you know—but Who you know. It's about the relationship. Only then will the beast transform.

If you are a believer, you need to know that you still have a little of the beast left in you.

You know what really ruins the name of Christ? Do you know what does the most destruction in the Church? Do you know what keeps most non-believers away from salvation? No, it's not Satan per say. It's Christians who **think** they are beauty.

Christians who think they have it all together. They're the trouble makers in churches; they're the hypocrites that turn people away from God. The beasts visit and hide in the corner and wait for scraps of food to be thrown their way. But the "righteous" people who have forgotten where they came from and think they have already become completely transformed—they are the ones who most need to hear this story.

So let's take three minutes to pray silently. I want you to spend some time in prayer just thinking what Jesus went through for us. Think of the slaps in the face, the beating, the crown of thorns, the mocking, and the cross. How does it make you feel?

And remember, Jesus didn't just do it for the soldiers, or for the person next to you. He had to go through it to redeem *you*.



Worship

8. Spend time in prayer thinking about what happened to turn the curse into a blessing.