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| Shape  Description automatically generated with low confidence |  | Pastor Chris BrownApril 16-17, 2022Message #15 / 1 Samuel 1-4 |
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**When God Becomes A Joke**

**Let’s take it from the beginning:**

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, 1 Samuel

***First 5***: There is **ONE TRUE** God who desires a **RELATIONSHIP** with us.

***Joshua***: Faithfulness brings **RELATIONSHIP**,

disobedience brings **BROKENNESS**.

***Judges***: People need a **KING** and a **SAVIOR**.

***1 Samuel 1***: Homes are **HURTING**

***1 Samuel 2***: Culture is **A MESS**

***1 Samuel 3***: God is **STILL WORKING**

***1 Samuel 4***: Religion is **DEAD**

**The last straw:**

1 Samuel 4 & 7

We want to **CONTROL** and **USE** God for our victories,

while God wants us to **SURRENDER** to Him.

Instead of getting **RELIGIOUS**,

we need to **GET RIGHT** with God.

**Easter started the exact same way:**

Mark 11:1-11, Matthew 16:24-27, Romans 10:9-13

Jesus died and rose again to become our **LORD**, not just **SAVIOR**.

The best way to connect with us is the Connection Card in the bulletin. For the Digital Bulletin, visit [myncc.info](https://myncc.info/).

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***Joshua***: Faithfulness brings \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_,

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***Judges***: People need a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

***1 Samuel 1***: Homes are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

***1 Samuel 2***: Culture is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

***1 Samuel 3***: God is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**Life Group Study Questions**

**For the week of April 17, 2022**

 **quick review**

Looking back at your notes from this week’s teaching, was there anything you heard for the first time or something that caught your attention, challenged or confused you?

 **MY STORY**

1. There are two types of people at Easter: those who eat marshmallow Peeps candy and those who don’t. Identify your position and then defend why your position is correct to the group.

2. This weekend Chris talked about religion being “dead.” When you hear the word “religion,” what comes to mind? What was your experience of “religion” growing up?

 **DIGGING DEEPER**

1. In the Easter message this weekend, we saw a history of people using God for their own glory and victory. While it may be easy to look at stories of people in the Bible and see their folly, sometimes we make the same mistake. With this past weekend being Easter, take a look at Luke 23:32-43 and write down any observations you make about the two criminals hanging next to Jesus on the cross and their responses.

***Luke 23:32-43*** ***New International Version (NIV)***

***32****Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed.****33****When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left.****34****Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.”And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.*

***35****The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, “He saved others; let him save himself if he is God’s Messiah, the Chosen One.”*

***36****The soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him wine vinegar****37****and said, “If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself.”*

***38****There was a written notice above him, which read: this is the king of the jews.*

***39****One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: “Aren’t you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!”*

***40****But the other criminal rebuked him. “Don’t you fear God,” he said, “since you are under the same sentence?****41****We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.”*

***42****Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”*

***43****Jesus answered him, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.”*

The two thieves can easily represent two responses we may have when going through tough times. One is to be angry with God because He isn’t protecting us and/or bailing us out. The other is trust and submission to God’s will. Can you think of a time in your life when you responded more like the first thief?

When someone you know is in a tough situation, what encouragement might you give to that person as they ask God for help?

We all struggle at times with how to surrender well like the second criminal. What would it look like to respond well to a tough situation?

2. This weekend Chris encouraged us to get right with God instead of getting religious. It is sometimes easy to focus on the good things we do and think that it is those things that get us right with God. Take a look at one of Jesus’ parables in Luke 18:10-14. You may remember this passage from last quarter, but this time we will look at it from a different angle. Make a note of any observations you have about how the Pharisee (religious leader) and the tax collector (often hated by many) looked upon themselves.

***Luke 18:10-14*** ***New International Version (NIV)***

***10****“Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.****11****The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector.****12****I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’*

***13****“But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’*

***14****“I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”*

Just as the Pharisee reflected on the good things he has done out of obedience (i.e., fast and give a tenth), are there any good things you do that help bring you close to God? (i.e., serving others, showing kindness, reading your Bible, prayer, church/life group attendance, generosity, abstaining from a sinful behavior)

The point of this parable is not to stop doing the good acts of obedience, but to approach them with a heart of humility. How might you know if you are approaching the things you listed above with a right heart or out of religion?

Just as the Pharisee compared himself to the tax collector to make himself look or feel better, do you ever struggle with comparing yourself to others?

When is comparison bad? Can you think of a time when comparing yourself to others may be helpful or motivating to you?

 **taking it home**

Which point from this weekend’s message or Life Group study is most important for you to remember?

 **prayer requests**

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