

POINTS TO KEEP IN MIND

1. Jesus' teaching and way of life confront us in the fundamental moments of our daily existence. It is easy to get swept into the flow of what everyone is saying, doing, and valuing in our families, communities, and our nation. Jesus wants to transform each of these his way.

The easy and broad path symbolizes the tendency we might have to go with the flow. There is no easy life for those who choose to follow Jesus' way – for his own path led to the cross, and he calls all of us to pick up our cross and follow him. That doesn't mean that following Jesus' way will leave you destitute; instead, he goes with us and will be present in all challenging moments.

2. Jesus' teaching continues to be revolutionary today. Everyone thought that God was on the side of those who were rich and well off, but Jesus had his sharpest words for those in power and money. Jesus casts a vision of putting away anger and obsessive desire and living in a non-anxious way. He spoke out against manipulating people with oaths or God-talk that uses insider language or Christian vernacular to woo or manipulate people into getting what you want. Jesus spoke out against performing good deeds to be seen and praised by others. Jesus' clearest teaching was to love one's enemies and to pray for them. When Jesus spoke about enemies, he wasn't talking about someone who just cut you off in traffic, he was saying to a conquered and oppressed people, "love the oppressor." Pray and bless the people who are spitting in your face. These teachings and more are a part of the way of Jesus, the way of the cross.
3. In John 7:16 – 17, Jesus says, "Jesus answered, "My teaching is not my own. It comes from the one who sent me. Anyone who chooses to do the will of God will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own." Jesus is saying a person will only find out if my teaching is from God if they step fully into his teaching and practice it. It's not a matter of weighing it as an outside observer. We might admire Jesus teaching or even try to decide if it's too challenging for us from afar, as some have done. Jesus testifies that his way doesn't work like that. You have to put it into practice and examine it from the inside. Then and only then will you know if he really is from God. Jesus didn't come to give us a philosophy, but a way to be in the world.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

1. Where do you see God at work in your life right now?
2. What next steps do you feel called to take in your faith journey?
3. Have you considered getting baptized? communitychristian.org/baptism/
4. Who have you been able to B.L.E.S.S.? (B-Begin with Prayer, L - Listen, E - Eat, S - Serve, S - Share your story)