



24-7 SPACES

LENT 2012

WALK WITH US

week 5

JESUS: RULE

**use this deeper guide alone, with
family or friends or your
church small group**

40 DAYS. 5 MINUTES. 1 GOSPEL.

CONTENTS

1. **Reflect**: thinking time
2. **React**: Journaling or discussion
3. **Respond**: get practical

MATERIALS NEEDED

- A Bible
- Episode from 'The West Wing' (1999-2006)
- Plasters
- Map of your neighbourhood

REFLECT:

Use the following Bible passages, song lyrics, series episode, Art and quotes for reflection.

Read: John 6:16-25 & 60-70 & John 7

'Sunflower Seeds' sculpture by Ai Weiwei

The sculpture contains approximately eight million individually hand-crafted porcelain sunflower seeds. "Ai remembers the sharing of sunflower seeds as a gesture of human compassion, an opportunity for pleasure, friendship and kindness" - Tate Modern, press release 2011



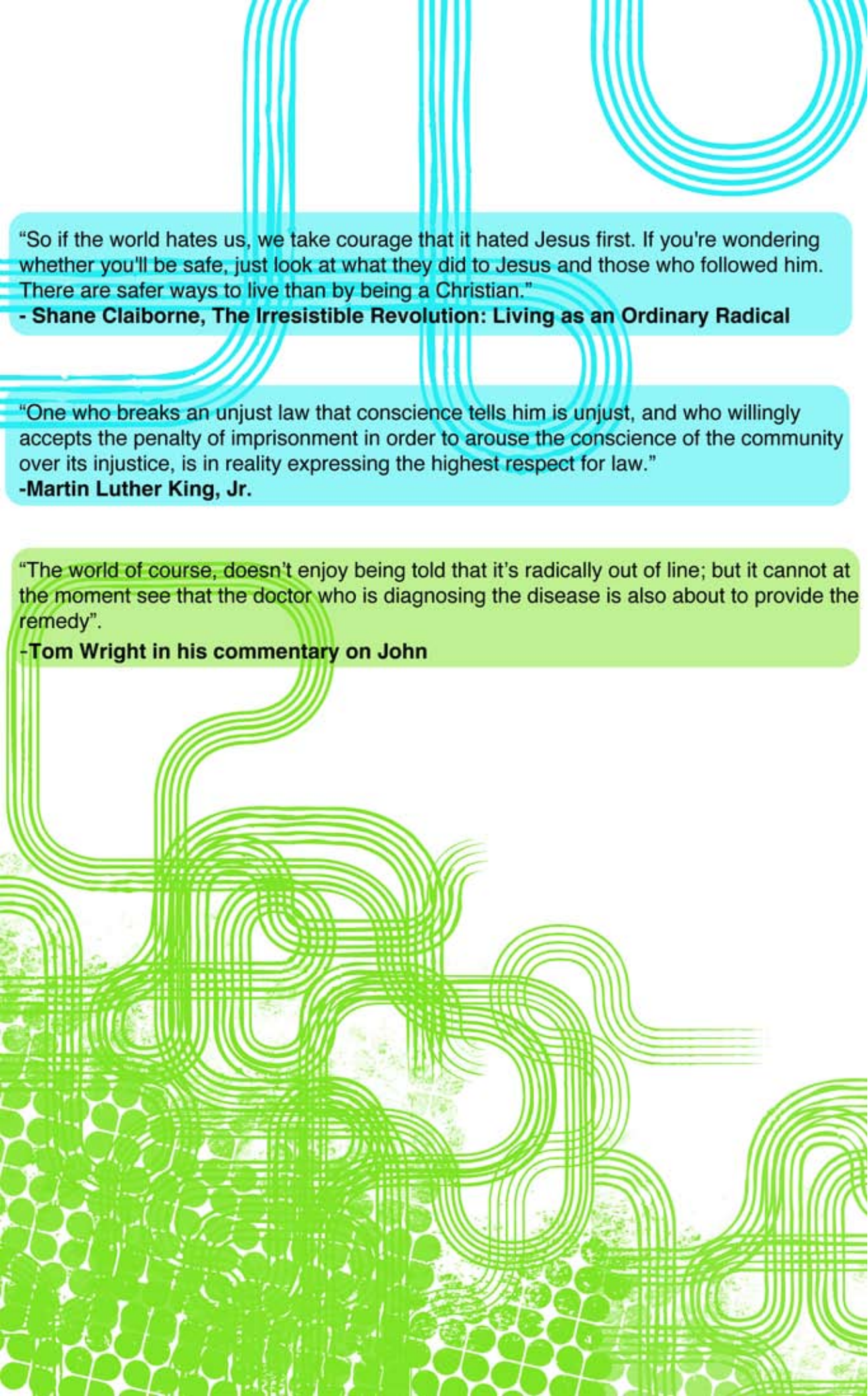
Watch an episode of 'The West Wing'

"Another promise, another seed
Another, packaged lie to keep us trapped in greed

And all the, Green belts wrapped around our minds
And endless, red tape to keep the truth confined
(so come on)

They will not force us
They will stop degrading us
They will not control us
We will be victorious"

- 'Uprising' - MUSE, 'The Resistance'



"So if the world hates us, we take courage that it hated Jesus first. If you're wondering whether you'll be safe, just look at what they did to Jesus and those who followed him. There are safer ways to live than by being a Christian."

- Shane Claiborne, *The Irresistible Revolution: Living as an Ordinary Radical*

"One who breaks an unjust law that conscience tells him is unjust, and who willingly accepts the penalty of imprisonment in order to arouse the conscience of the community over its injustice, is in reality expressing the highest respect for law."

-Martin Luther King, Jr.

"The world of course, doesn't enjoy being told that it's radically out of line; but it cannot at the moment see that the doctor who is diagnosing the disease is also about to provide the remedy".

-Tom Wright in his commentary on John

REACT:

(1) After watching an episode of 'The West Wing', reflect on the models of leadership you see. Compare and contrast with Jesus' leadership style? Consider in what ways Jesus' rule is something radically different. Following Jesus is radical and extreme, it's not 'safe'. How can we follow Jesus' rule in a radical way?

(2) Reflect on the sculpture 'sunflower seeds' by Ai Weiwei, where each of these 8 million porcelain sunflower seeds has been handcrafted representing the value and uniqueness of each individual person. Consider how Jesus' rule valued individual people? Ai Weiwei reminds us of how sunflower seeds were shared as a gesture of human kindness. Reflect on the effect of simple acts of kindness in our world. How can we sow seeds of change into the world around us with acts and gestures of human kindness, however small?

(3) Read John 6:16-25. Reflect on the power Jesus had over the elements which he demonstrated by His walking on water and yet how despite His 'power' He often did things in secret and did not want glory for them. What does this tell us about Jesus' Rule? Consider how He didn't seek centre stage but rather He wanted the glory to be given to the one who sent Him? How can we like Jesus do things that take the spotlight off ourselves but rather point towards the one who sends us?

(4) Reflect on John 6:66, 'Because of what Jesus said, many of his disciples turned their backs on Him and stopped following him.' Consider how many found Jesus' teaching difficult as it challenged their world-views or laws and people resisted change. What issues in today's society do you think Jesus would want to challenge? What rules or world views would he break? Where are we 'black' and 'white' or judgemental in our thinking where Jesus would want to bring change? Where do we resist change or challenge?

In what ways do our actions put people off God or do people damage? How do we misrepresent God to the world around us? How can we be more Christlike?

(5) Reflect on Martin Luther King's quote. Consider how Jesus got into trouble for breaking religious laws. Take the example of Jesus healing a man on the sabbath and how the Jewish leaders would rather have their laws kept than see someone brought life? What do you think Jesus was communicating through His very deliberate acts of law breaking? Where are the unjust laws within our lives, even within our faith, that we will hold to at all costs yet which rob people of life? Consider why we find it difficult to let go of these rules? How can we express 'the highest respect for law' by breaking these unjust laws and not stifling the work of God to bring life and freedom?

(6) Read John 7:7 & Tom Wright's quote. People hated Jesus because He told them that they do evil things; He identified a problem and wasn't afraid to diagnose it. Consider where in your neighbourhood Jesus is diagnosing the problem? What might the remedy be?

RESPOND:

1. Personal:

At the end of John 6 many of Jesus' disciples desert Him because they realise His teaching was too hard. What do you find most difficult when it comes to following Jesus? The culture of this world is very different than the culture God desires for it. In what areas do you need to ask God to challenge you or give you strength?

Take one of the ways that you have misrepresented God to the world around you. Maybe to a particular group of people or to a specific person. Spend time getting to know them and showing them the love and acceptance that Jesus would.

2. Practical:

Write down the areas of your life you hope to live more radically; live more as Jesus did. Perhaps even share this in your small group or with a friend for accountability. Pray for each other.

Sow some seeds of kindness into the world around you. You could write someone a postcard with a word of encouragement or send someone flowers! Go to your local coffee shop and buy someone who looks sad or lonely or stressed a cup of coffee or send someone an anonymous gift.

3. Prayerful:

Take a map of your neighbourhood. Write on plasters the areas of need where Jesus wants to be the remedy and stick them onto the map. As you do ask Jesus to be the remedy and to bring life, hope and healing.

NEXT WEEK...

JESUS: TOUGH

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LENT 2012

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