

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST

SPREADING THE SOUL-SAVING MESSAGE OF JESUS

MORE ABOUT JESUS LESSONS **“What Was Jesus Really Like?”**

Introduction by narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST. Spreading the soul-saving message of Jesus. And now, Ben Bailey.

Do you know Jesus? From the outset, that may sound like a rather odd question. Most people probably would say, “Why, sure, I know Jesus. I know that He came to Earth and that He died for me. And I know that He suffered on the cross at Calvary and gave His life for all mankind.” But that is not what I am asking about today. When I ask, “Do you know Jesus?,” I am asking, “Do you know what made Jesus Who He was—what made Him, from day to day, in the face of pain, in the face of agony, and in the face of defeat, keep going? What made Jesus the powerful Man that He was? What could permit Him to go for basically three years and preach the Gospel to people who, at many times, did not accept it? What really ‘made Jesus tick’ as a Person?” That is what I will be asking in today’s study, “What Was Jesus Really Like?”

Society in general holds four views of Jesus. Some people think that Jesus was simply a liar. He did false miracles. He was **not** God—although He **claimed** to be. He really did not live a perfect life, since no one can do that. And, **everything** that Jesus said was not true. He may have fabricated a few things and made some claims that were not right. When you come right down to it, He was just a liar.

Then there are those who believe that Jesus was a great leader who, like Moses, was a great leader of God’s people. Or, just as David was a great king, Jesus was that kind of a political leader. In fact, we know that this is the view that some of the Jews of Jesus’ time (and even some of His own disciples) held. In John 6:15, Jesus had to leave because He perceived that the people were about to take Him and make Him a king by force. The disciples—after Jesus had been resurrected and was about to ascend to Heaven—said, “Lord, will you now deliver the kingdom to Israel?” (Acts 1:6). They thought that Jesus Himself was going to be a great leader and a physical king. But that is not who Jesus was.

Some people think that Jesus is neither a liar nor the Lord, but a lunatic. When Jesus said things like He said in John 6:53 (“Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you”), He was talking about consuming His whole person (figuratively) into our own being. But some take that statement and make Jesus out to be a lunatic. When Jesus said in John 3:3, “Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God,” Jesus must have been crazy because no one can re-enter his mother’s womb and be born again. When Jesus made statements as He did in Mark 3:34-35 when His mother and brothers were calling to Him, and He turned around and said, “**Here** are My mother and My brothers, for whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and mother,” He was “a little bit off,” and thus a lunatic.

But then there is a fourth view of Jesus, and this is the view that falls in line with what the New Testament teaches. This view suggests that Jesus is not a liar. He is not a lunatic. He is not just “a great leader.” Rather, He is **the Lord of our lives**. This is the view that the Bible presents for us. In Acts 2:36, when Peter came to the climax of his sermon, he

said, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." The word "Lord" carries with it the idea of "master" or "owner." When we come to know Jesus, we recognize Him as the Master and Owner of our lives. He is the One to Whom we give ourselves. Saul (who later became the apostle Paul) came to an awakening realization of this in Acts 9:1-6. He was headed to Damascus, and the Lord blinded him with a bright light along the road. Paul cried out, "Who are You, Lord?" Christ answered by saying, "I am Jesus, Whom you are persecuting." Saul said in Acts 9:6, "Lord, what would You have me to do?" So, today we are going to look at several passages in the Gospel accounts—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—that teach us about the nature of Christ. What made Him the great Lord that He was? As we study this lesson, the practical application for us is this: As we think about the nature of Jesus, and about what made Him such a great Man of God, we should take those same characteristics that Jesus had, put them into our lives, and know that by doing so it will help us to be better Christians and better followers of the will of God.

So what was Jesus like? He was a Man Who believed in the power of prayer. When I think about my Lord and Savior, I think about someone Who knew the value of talking to the Father on a daily basis. He was a Man Who knew the value of asking for God's help each and every day. In Luke 22:44, we see an example of this. The Bible tells us that when Jesus was in great agony in the garden, "He prayed more earnestly; then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground." Then He prayed, "Not My will, but Yours, be done" (vs. 42). In John 17:21, Jesus prayed for Himself, He prayed for His followers at that time, and He prayed for all of us—so that we would all "be one." Probably one of the best examples of Jesus' prayer life is found in Mark 1:35. Notice what Mark said about the life of Christ. He wrote, "Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed." Think about how Jesus started His day. Jesus got up early in the morning—a long while before daylight. He made an effort to get up early so that He could depart from the rat race of life and so that He could get away from the hustle and bustle to a solitary place—a place where there was quiet, a place where He could rest, be at peace, and be in communication with God. He did this so that He could be strengthened each and every day. If you think about some of the days in Jesus' life, you have to wonder how He was able to keep on going. When people laughed at Him and mocked Him, or when He performed miracles and people said it was the work of Beelzebub, how did Jesus continue to do the will of God? Jesus had to start His day with prayer, and He had to ask for help in dealing with the difficult situations of life.

Our lives are no different. If Jesus, Who is our example (1 Cor. 11:1), started every day with prayer and knew the value of prayer, that teaches us that we, too, need to realize the value of prayer. There are other examples in the Bible regarding the power of prayer. In Daniel 6, we see that Daniel was told not to pray to God, but instead to pray to an image. When a certain sound was made, he was to bow down and pray to the image. What did Daniel do? Daniel 6:10 says, "And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since his early days." Daniel knew about the power of prayer, and he used it to overcome his challenges. Did you ever wonder why Daniel had the faith, the power, and the strength to go into the lions' den? Part of it was because he had communication with God. He asked for God's help, and knew that God would hear his prayers. Think about Paul and Silas in Acts 16. They had been put in prison because they had cast a demon out of a woman who had been making a lot of money for certain people. The people who were in charge had them thrown into the innermost part of the prison

and had them bound. In situations like these, you might wonder if Paul and Silas got discouraged. Perhaps they were “down and out,” and “ready to throw in the towel.” But when we read Acts 16:25 we can see that this was not the case. Paul and Silas were in prison; they were singing and praying, and the prisoners were listening to them. How did Paul and Silas get through difficult times like these? What made the apostle Paul stay faithful during the journeys he took? Surely, a lot of Paul’s strength was gained from prayer. Our source of strength should be the same today. If we think that, in and of ourselves, we are going to make it as a Christian, then the devil has us right where he wants us and we are doomed to fail. But if we realize that God, through the power of prayer, is able to help us, then we will be able to do more than we could ever have imagined. Jesus said in Luke 18:1, “Men always ought to pray and not lose heart.” When we get discouraged, what should we do? When we get “down” and things happen that throw us off track and make us sad or cause us to be downhearted, what should we do? Jesus said that we should “pray, and never lose heart.” In 1 Thessalonians 5:17, Paul said, “Pray without ceasing.” James taught us about the power of prayer in James 5:16 when he said, “The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.” The idea is of a prayer that is continual, ongoing, and heartfelt—knowing that God will help us. That is what helps us overcome obstacles in this life. In Matthew 21:22, we find that if we ask, and it is according to God’s will (1 Jn. 5:14-15), then God will hear us. Philippians 4:6-7 puts it this way: “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” So, like Christ, we need to realize the value of prayer. Jesus understood it. And if we are going to conquer life’s daily battles, we need to ask for the help of God. We need to ask for God to give us the strength and courage to face the troubles that we have in life.

When we think about what Jesus was really like, we also can know that Jesus was a Man Who was a very logical thinker. Jesus was not bent on emotion, necessarily. He did not live His life by the majority poll of the day. He did not do what made others happy. Jesus lived a life that was based in the logic found within God’s Word. Logic refers to critical reasoning—reasoning that is based on facts that are correct. So, today we need to be people who are logical thinkers. Think about the example of Jesus in Matthew 9:12-13. Here, some people had accused Jesus of eating with sinners like tax collectors. They wondered why, if Jesus was the Lord, He was not associating with religious people. When Jesus heard that, He said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. But go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy and not sacrifice.’ For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.” Think about the logic that Jesus used on the “religious elite” of his day. They were thinking, “Jesus claims to be the Savior of the world—the Messiah—but we know that **we** are the most religious, so why isn’t He over here associating with **us**?” Jesus, as He often did, used great wit by asking, “Do you go to the doctor when you are well?” Of course a person would not do that. Jesus then said, “I did not come to help those who are well. I came to help the sick. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” Jesus very logically showed the people something with which they could not help but agree. You do not go to a doctor when you are well. Jesus wanted them to know that He had come to help people who were sick in sin. Throughout His life, Jesus taught that we, too, must be people who know how to reason from the Scriptures, and that we can use logic as we examine God’s Word. This is what the Bible teaches us to do. Our decisions must not be based on emotion. They must not be influenced by polls or majority opinion. Instead, we must make good decisions based on the facts provided within the Scriptures. In 1 Thessalonians 5:21, the apostle Paul said, “Prove all things; hold fast to that which is good.” God said in Isaiah 1:18, “Come, let us

reason together.” That is the idea. We “prove all things” by reasoning together with God through His Word. Thus, we must search the Scriptures daily to see if what we are being taught is in accord with the Word and the will of God.

As we think about the life of Christ, we see that Jesus was a very powerful Man. What made Jesus such a great person? It was the power that He exhibited—some of which was due to the miracles that He could perform. In Mark 4:40-41, we learn that after Jesus had calmed a storm the disciples asked, “Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!” The disciples were in the boat, and a fierce storm arose. Jesus was asleep, and appeared not to even be concerned about it. He arose from His sleep and said, “Peace. Be still!” The sea then looked like a plate of glass. Everything was calm and serene. There was nothing to worry about. The boat was not going to flip over. And the disciples were amazed. They therefore asked, “Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!” This is the same Jesus about which we are talking today. Jesus was a very powerful individual. The seven signs that Jesus did in the Book of John teach us this. He turned water into wine. He raised Lazarus from the dead. He healed those who were sick. What did those signs exhibit? They show us the power of Jesus Christ. But more than just showing us His power, Christ’s miracles were intended to confirm His teaching. When we think about the power of Jesus, we can get all caught up in the fact that Jesus calmed the sea or that He raised a dead man. But then we can miss the point of the miracles. When Jesus calmed the storm, do you know what that taught the disciples? It said to them, “You are about to have some storms in your life, but I will calm them, too.” When Jesus raised Lazarus from the grave, what did that teach? “You are going to die, but I will raise you from the grave, too, if you will be faithful to Me.” When Jesus healed people who were sick, what did that do? It showed them, “I am the Son of God, and I have God’s authority and approval because I can do these miracles.” This is what the New Testament teaches.

In Mark 16:20, Jesus promised His disciples that certain “signs” would follow them. What was the purpose of those signs? They were intended to confirm the word (the teaching) of the disciples. Hebrews 2:3-4 teaches that this was the purpose of such miracles—to confirm that what a person was saying was from God. Think of it this way. If you have two teachers, and both teachers say, “I am from God, and here is His message,” how would you know, if you did not have a Bible (as the people in those times did not) which speaker was correct? Suppose that “Teacher A” could raise people from the dead. Suppose further that “Teacher B” could say a lot of good things, but he could not perform miracles. Which teacher would you believe? Why, you would be compelled to believe in the one who had the power from God to perform miracles. Thus, we see again that Jesus was a great Man of power. He was a Man Who performed miracles, but it is not just the miracles that we need to notice. It is the teaching behind them as well. For example, when Jesus fed the 5,000 with just a few fish and a few loaves of bread, what lesson what He trying to get across? Was it, “Come to Me and you will get a free meal!”? No, that was not what Jesus was trying to teach. A lot of people might have seen Jesus as a free meal, but Jesus was trying to teach them, “I am the Bread of life, and unless you come to Me you will never really be filled. I am the living water; unless you come to Me you will always be thirsty. Take My person and being into your life, and then you will have real satisfaction.” When Jesus cursed the withered fig tree—even though the tree had beautiful green leaves and was budding—it was because He had come to the tree expecting fruit, but it yielded none. What did that teach His disciples? The message was this: “If you **claim** to be a Christian, and you **look like** a Christian, but you do not **do** the things that Christians are **supposed to do**, then you will be cursed as well. Do not claim to be something that you are not.” Jesus’ power and miracles showed that He was a Man Who was approved by God.

When we think of Jesus, we also can see Him not just as a Man of power, but also as a sinless, perfect Man. The words of Mark 7 teach us about the sinless nature of our Lord and Savior. Mark 7:37 records, "He has done all things well. He makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak." Everything Jesus did in His life, He did well. He was the perfect Son of God. That is still true of Him today as well. The Bible makes it abundantly clear that Jesus was a sinless individual. In 2 Corinthians 5:21, Paul said that God "made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." Hebrews 4:15 teaches us that Jesus "was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin." The text of 1 Peter 1:19 shows us that Christ was "a lamb without blemish and without spot." Jesus did all things well in accomplishing the will of God. He was perfect in every way that a person could be perfect. Luke 2:52 teaches us that He grew "in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men." Jesus was perfect in every way. Here, then, is the lesson that fact teaches us today. Are you and I going to be perfect? No. All of us sin and fall short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23). Here is what is encouraging, however. If we will follow closely the life of Christ, and if we will ask ourselves during difficult times in our lives, "In this situation, what would Jesus—the perfect Son of God—do?," we will be able to find the answers to all situations in life that we might face. If we are going to be right and whole in God's sight, then we need to follow Christ's example. This is what Paul said in 1 Corinthians 11:1 when he said, "Imitate me as I imitate Christ." We know from 1 Peter 2:21 that we are to walk in the footsteps of our Lord and Savior. Thus, Jesus encourages us through His example.

Do you know what made Jesus a great person? He was a great person because He had the right priorities in life. Jesus was a Man of the right priorities in this life. A lot of times, our priorities can be skewed if we are not careful. We can put the focus on money, on worldly things, on our families, or on our jobs, but in two rhetorical questions that Jesus asked, He taught us the right priorities. Notice what Jesus asked in Mark 8:36-37—"For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" Do you know what Jesus is teaching us in this context? Jesus teaches us that there is one thing that is of utmost value. There is one thing that is **really** important in this life—**our souls**. Our home is not the most important thing that we have. Our cars are not our most prized possessions. Our children—although we may love them dearly—are not our most prized possessions. The most important thing we have in this life is our soul. Jesus is teaching us that we cannot give **anything** for our soul. What good will it be if we gain everything, and amass the wealth of the richest people, but go to Hell doing so? What good have we done? If you get to the gates of Heaven, but you have not lived correctly, and you say, "God, I know that I have not lived properly, but look at all the gold I have," what good will that do you? God is not concerned about things like that. Jesus teaches us that we need to have the right priorities in this life. What should some of those priorities be? We find the answer from Jesus as well. In Matthew 6:33, Jesus said, "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you." We should not get upset about food, shelter, and clothing. Jesus said, "You put the kingdom first, and I will take care of the rest." If we will be faithful to God, and make sure that the church and the kingdom of God are first in our lives, then we will have our priorities in the right order. We need to make Heaven our priority. Paul said in Colossians 3:1, "If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God." We are not to set our minds on earthly things. Paul said that we should instead focus on Heaven. Here is a good way to be sure that we stay focused on godly things. Let's tell ourselves every day, "Today I am going to do everything I can to ensure that if I die, I will go to Heaven. My goal today is not to be rich, powerful, or popular. My goal today is to do what I can to be sure that I get to Heaven."

Another priority of ours should be to live as a sacrifice to Jesus every day. Paul said in Romans 12:1-2,

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

What should our priorities be? Every day we need to remind ourselves that the day is not about **us** or about what **we** want. When we became a Christian, we told the Lord that we would sacrifice our lives in order to live for Christ. We must do what we can for the Cause of Christ to glorify God, to exalt His Son, and to help bring others into the kingdom. In the New Testament, we see some people who had really bad priorities. For example, in Luke 10:38-42 we find an example where a woman did not have quite the right priority. It is the example of Martha. Jesus came to the house of Mary and Martha, and Martha was in the kitchen working and cooking while Mary was sitting at the Master's feet studying. Jesus said, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.” Martha was in the kitchen working, serving, and doing something good. But there was something better to be done—sitting at the Master's feet learning about Him. Another example of false priorities is found in Luke 12:15-21—the story of the rich fool. Here was a man who had grown many crops. He said to himself, “‘What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?’ So he said, ‘I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.”’” The rich man was going to rest because he felt like he had everything financially secured. But God said, “Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?” This man thought about himself physically, and made sure that he had taken care of himself and his family because they had money and food. But he left out the important thing of all. He left out his own soul's salvation. If you work in this life, and you provide for your family and you do good things, but you leave out the salvation of your soul, then you have left out the most important thing. Jonah had some false priorities. He was a great patriot who wanted his people to do right, but Jonah got on a boat and went the other way when it came to doing the will of God.

As we think about Christ, there is one last point we should notice. Jesus also was a great Servant. What made the Lord such a wonderful Man? It was not because He acted like the Lord by expecting people to serve Him. It was because He was a great servant. Think about this for a moment. Here is God in the flesh. He comes to the Earth to give Himself for His creation. God becomes a Man (Mt. 1:19-21). And what does He do? He comes to serve. Notice the words of Mark 10:44-45, where Jesus said, “Whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” Jesus came as a servant to mankind. He gave His life as a sacrifice. No greater service could He render. Jesus was a great Man because of His service to others.

I want you to know today that Jesus, in serving man, gave His life for us. Jesus' death on the cross was the greatest act of service that you could ever imagine. It was the greatest sacrifice. He died so that we could have the hope of Heaven. Today, if you want to begin your life according to the pattern of Jesus, you can do so by obeying the will of God. Jesus was “obedient unto death” (Heb. 5:8-9). You can obey God by believing that Jesus is the Son of God, by repenting of things in your life that are not right, by confessing Him as the Son of God, and by being baptized in water. Jesus said, “He who believes and is

baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (Mk. 16:16). If you have never obeyed the Gospel, but you want to follow the pattern of Christ, you can do so by obeying Jesus Christ. We are praying and hoping that you will live your life by the pattern of Christ.

Narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:

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STUDY QUESTIONS FOR “WHAT WAS JESUS REALLY LIKE?”

1. Society as a whole generally has four different views of Jesus Christ. What are those four views?
2. In John 6:15, we find a situation brewing where Jesus had to leave a certain crowd for a specific reason. Why did He abandon them on this particular occasion?
3. What question did Christ’s disciples ask in Acts 1:6 which showed that even they did not understand (at that point in time) the correct nature of Christ’s kingdom?
4. In Acts 2:36, who did Peter tell the Jews assembled on the Day of Pentecost that Jesus was?
5. What is the meaning of the word “lord”?
6. What amazing statement did Jesus make in Luke 22:42?
7. For what did Jesus pray in John 17:21?
8. In 1 Corinthians 11:1, what did the apostle Paul tell first-century Christians in Corinth to do?
9. What characteristic of Christ’s life do we find in Mark 1:35?
10. What characteristic of Daniel’s life do we find in Daniel 6:10?
11. What does Philippians 4:6-7 urge us to do?
12. According to 1 John 5:14-15, when we pray, **how** are we to pray?
13. According to 1 Thessalonians 5:17, how **frequently** should we pray?
14. What does 1 Thessalonians 5:21 command us to do?
15. What event took place in Mark 4:40-41 which showed the people that Christ was the Son of God?
16. What were Christ’s miracles intend to confirm for the people who witnessed them or heard about them?
17. In Mark 16:20, Jesus promised His disciples that certain “signs” would follow them. What was the purpose of those signs?
18. What characteristic of Christ’s life do we find mentioned in 2 Corinthians 5:21?
19. What two important points are contained in Hebrews 4:15?
20. What does Matthew 6:33 urge us to do?