

# ***THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST***

SPREADING THE SOUL-SAVING MESSAGE OF JESUS

## **MORE ABOUT JESUS LESSONS** **“The Convictions of Christ”**

### **Introduction by narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:**

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

The Lord Jesus Christ was a Man of great conviction. He was not a Man Who was wishy-washy in His beliefs, nor did He base what He taught on opinion or a majority poll. Rather, Jesus was a Man of great conviction in everything that He said and stood for. In fact, it is the convictions that Jesus possessed that eventually led Him to the cross. Today, we are going to examine the convictions of Christ, notice how they apply to our lives, and examine how they can make each one of us a stronger Christian for the Cause of Christ.

As you think about the convictions of Christ, there are so many things about which Jesus felt passionately. There are so many things that He stood for and taught that motivate each and every one of us. Today we are going to be examining some of those. We begin by noticing that Jesus was convicted on how to be great in the kingdom. A lot of people in this world want to know how to be great. “What can I do to be great in the kingdom of God?” “What can I do to be great in the service of my Lord in the church today?” Jesus provides us the answer about how to be great. In Matthew 5:19, Jesus said, “Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.” How is greatness measured in the kingdom of Christ today? It is measured by our doing the will of God. What makes a person “great” in Jesus’ mind? It is a person’s willingness to follow and obey Christ’s will. If we are going to be great, we need to do what the Lord teaches us to do. In Luke 6:46, Jesus said, “Why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do the things which I say?” We know that Jesus was obedient to God. Philippians 2:8 tells us that He was obedient even to the point of death. He was obedient to God’s will. Jesus teaches us that if we are going to go to Heaven, and if we are going to do what He wants us to do, then we must obey Him. Jesus said that it is not just everyone who goes out and mouths the name “Christ” who will be saved. Rather, it is those who **do** the will of the Father (Mt. 7:21). We therefore must do God’s will, and Jesus said that in order to be great, we must teach others to do the will of God as well. We need to let people know how God wants us to live and how God wants us to conduct our lives.

Another way in which Jesus was convicted on being great in the kingdom is found in Matthew 20:26. Jesus said that if we wanted to be great, we should be the servant of all. This is a paradox to us. If we want to be great, then we should make ourselves servants? Jesus said that it is the servant who eventually will be exalted. Luke 14:11 says, “Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.” Our greatness is measured by our ability to obey God and by our ability to be a servant in the kingdom. Jesus was a Servant. He came not to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many. To be great, you need to ask yourself, “What can I do to better obey God’s will, and what can I be doing to serve others better? How can I help in the kingdom of Christ? Can I serve others in my own community by taking the Gospel to them? Are there

widows or orphans who are in need in my home congregation, and whom I could help by being a better servant?" Sometimes we think that after we have been a Christian a while, we need people to serve us. We need to be looked up to. But that is not the way Jesus felt. He was a Servant right up to the end—doing God's will. He was convicted about this teaching.

Jesus also was convicted regarding our need to confess Him via our lifestyle. One of the things about which Jesus was convicted was that we need to follow Him and confess Him every day of our lives. This is not just an initial confession such as, "I believe that Jesus is the Son of God." That is not what Jesus wants. Jesus wants a confession not only by our mouths, but also by the way we live. In Matthew 10:32-33, Jesus said, "Whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven." Jesus is teaching us that if we claim to be Christians, and if we claim to follow His will, but we do not do what He says, then we are not confessing Him properly. How do we confess Jesus today? We do it in our lives by following His will. In Luke 9:23, Jesus said, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me." Confessing Christ means that we need to live every day for Jesus. In Romans 12:1-2, we see that we are a living sacrifice for God. Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 that the love of Christ ought to compel us. Why? Because "if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again." We need to sacrifice by giving ourselves to God on a regular basis. The text of 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 teaches us that our bodies are not our own, but that we have been bought with a price. Paul said, "Therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." Paul had learned this lesson. He said in Galatians 2:20, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." I think that a perfect example of our confession of Christ through our lifestyles is seen in Acts 4:13. The Bible says that after Peter and John had spoken boldly about Jesus, and after they had convicted the Jews regarding the fact that Jesus was the only Way to salvation, the Jews realized that Peter and John were untrained and uneducated fisherman. Then the Jews realized that "they had been with Jesus." That is what it means to confess Jesus by our lifestyles. People know by what we say, by the way we live our lives, and by our morals and conduct that we are followers of Christ—and that our lifestyles show that we are! Thus, Jesus was convicted on the need for us to confess Him each and every day of our lives by the way that we live.

Jesus also was convicted that, as His followers, we need to be a part of the family of God. We need to know what that family is. Jesus was convinced that the blood lineage or blood connection was not what was important. Jesus knew how to be a part of God's family. We know this is true, because in Matthew 12:50 Jesus said, "Whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother." Who is the **real** family of a Christian? Oftentimes we place emphasis on our blood kin or those to whom we are close in our own households. But to the child of God, that is not what our real family is all about. Ephesians 2:19 says that we are part of the household of God. God is our Father. Jesus, His Son, died for us, and we are all brothers and sisters in the kingdom of Christ. We need to understand that family begins with Christ and those who have obeyed the will of God.

Jesus also was convicted regarding how we should save our lives. One of the things about which Jesus was certain was how to make sure that we save our lives. It really is another paradox. Jesus said in Matthew 16:25, "Whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it." Think about that. Whoever desires to save his

life in a physical sense will be the one who loses it. He loses his life in the sense that he gives up himself, his desires, and his wants—and gives his life to Christ. That is the person who will end up saving his life. So, how do we make sure that we save our lives? We do that by giving ourselves to Jesus Christ and by making sure that we live faithfully before Him each and every day. In Revelation 2:10, the Bible teaches us, “Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.” The Book of Revelation is a prime example of how people really **did** give their lives to Jesus and how they saved their lives by sometimes dying for the Cause of Christ. Revelation 14:13 says, “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on. ‘Yes,’ says the Spirit, ‘that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them.’” We are not talking about how we can ensure that we live to be 100 years old. We are talking about making sure that our lives are saved in the sense that we live the best life in the here and now, and, most important, that we go to Heaven. Jesus knew that the way to do that was for us to dedicate our lives to the will of God. We must love the Lord our God with all our hearts, souls, minds, and strength (Mk. 12:30). But we also must follow that up by giving our lives to God on a daily basis.

Jesus also was convicted regarding how to never thirst or hunger again. I am reminded of the words of Jesus in John 4 where He was speaking to the woman at the well. Jesus asked the woman for a drink of water. In the context of John 4:13-14, He ends up telling this woman, “Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.” We learn that Jesus also is the Bread of Life (Jn. 6:35), and that he who takes Jesus’ life into his own will never hunger again. Jesus knew that we would always be hungry and thirsty in a physical sense. But He knew that in a spiritual sense, if we became Christians, then we would truly be satisfied. How is that we can never be hungry again as a Christian? If we are always striving to grow and to learn from the Word of God, we can be truly satisfied as we grow spiritually. Jesus said in Matthew 5:6, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.” That is the kind of appetite that we need to have so that we can grow daily and make sure that we live according to the will of God. The text of 2 Peter 3:18 says that we must “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” Peter said in 1 Peter 2:2, “As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby.” Is your life lacking satisfaction? Do you feel like you are always doing things but never really accomplishing anything? If that is the case, the only way in which you will be really satisfied is by putting Jesus Christ first in your life. Jesus came to give us the best life. In John 10:10, He said, “I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.” Jesus also teaches us that He is the only Way to have real satisfaction and joy in this life. Paul could say in Philippians 4:4, “Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!” because his joy was not in earthly treasures. Rather, his joy was in doing the will of God.

Another conviction Jesus had was that Jesus knew how we could live in such a way that we would never really die. This may seem odd, but we are not talking about physical death. Jesus knew how to live in such a way that we would never die spiritually. Listen to what Jesus had to say in John 11:25-26 at the resurrection of Lazarus. Jesus said to Lazarus’ sister, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?” Jesus said, “If you believe in Me, and if you follow My teaching, although you may perish in this life, you are never really going to die.” Why? It is because Jesus gives us life after this one. After we die here, we have the promise of eternal life. John 5:28-29 teaches that “the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done

evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.” Thus, we once again learn that we can live in such a way that eternal life can be ours. We can have the hope that we will never perish again. Heaven is described as a place of no more sorrow, no more death, no more pain, and no more sin. All those former things will have passed away (Rev. 21:3-4). If you really want to have a life that will be lasting, and if you really want to have a life that will make it worth living, dedicate your life to Jesus. Be convicted. The only way to really live is in such a way that death cannot hurt you—by living for Jesus. The psalmist said in Psalm 116:15, “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.” Yes, we are all going to face physical death, but Jesus brings us eternal life. Jesus said in John 14:6, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”

One of the things that Jesus also was convicted about was the need to hear God’s Word. Jesus was convinced that people would not be saved unless they listened to the Word of God. In Mark 4:23-24, Jesus illustrated that we need to take heed what we hear and that we hear the Word of God. In Mark 9, at the Mount of Transfiguration, Jesus was present with Peter, James, and John, and was transfigured before them—with Elijah and Moses being there as well. We know that in that context Peter said, “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” But almost before Peter could get the words out of his mouth, a voice boomed from Heaven saying, “This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!” Thus, we learn that Christ’s words are what we need to listen to today. Why do we need to listen to the Word of God today? It is because that is what will judge us in the last day. Think about John 12:48, where Jesus said, “He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.” Thus, it is important that we hear God’s Word. In Revelation 2:3, there is an important statement that Jesus used to get the attention of the Christians to whom He was speaking. He said, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.” Jesus’ point is: “You have ears, so use your ears to hear My words.” We need to be like the people of Berea in Acts 17:11 who “searched the Scriptures daily” to see if what they were being taught was true. We need to be good students of the Bible and make sure that we are following God’s will. This is why Paul told Timothy, “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15). This is why Christians are told in 1 Peter 3:15, “Be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.” We must come to the Word of God and realize that it is God’s inspired Word. Paul wrote, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Peter said that “holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit” (2 Pet. 1:21). We therefore know that the Bible is the Word of God, and that it is the only voice that we should ever hear on matters of salvation. We do not need to listen to what religious leaders say. We do not need to follow what men say today—unless they are backing it up by book, chapter, and verse from the Bible. We must be very careful, and be sure that we hear attentively.

Jesus also was convicted about God’s protective care for His children. In John 10:28, Jesus said, “I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.” Jesus was convinced that if we became Christians, and if we remained faithful to God, that we would be cared for in this life. This is a principle that we need to impress upon our minds—that God is going to care for and protect those who are His children. The psalmist said in Psalm 37:25, “I have been young, and now am old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his descendants begging bread.” God has promised that He is going to take care of us, and that He is going to give us the things we

need to survive in life. In Matthew 6, Jesus was teaching people not to worry about food, shelter, clothing, and things of this life. Jesus said that if we would put our treasures in the right place, they would bring us great benefit. He then said, “Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you” (vs. 33). Paul said in Philippians 4:19, “My God shall supply all your needs in Christ Jesus.” Paul did not say that God would supply all the wants, desires, or wishes that we had, but that God would supply our **needs**. Thus, we need to be convicted of the fact that God is going to provide for us and care for us, and that He is not going to leave us or forsake us. I cannot help but think of the words of Hebrews 13:5-6, “Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’ So we may boldly say: ‘The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?’” If God has promised to always care for us and to always be with us, then we can feel safe. God will never forsake us, so what can man do to harm us if God is for us?

Another principle of which Jesus was convicted was the power of prayer—not just the **need for** prayer, but for the **power of** prayer. Jesus said in Matthew 7:8, “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.” Jesus taught us that if ask according to the Word of God (1 Jn. 5:13-18), then our requests will be granted (Mt. 21:22). We need to be people today who are convinced of the power of prayer. God does hear our prayers if we are righteous. We know that is the case. God does **not** the prayer of alien sinners. In Psalm 66:18, the psalmist said, “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear.” But God does hear the prayers of the righteous, and He is willing to answer those prayers as they are offered according to His will. We know that Jesus was convinced of the need to ask—with the attitude that what we request will be given to us. Sometimes, maybe we do not receive the blessings in life, or the help that we need, because we fail to ask. It is true that God knows what we need before we even ask. But **we** have to do the asking. We need to petition God’s throne for help in times of need so that we might find grace and comfort in those times.

Another principle of which Jesus was convicted was the all-inclusive nature of eternal life. Listen to the words of Jesus in John 10:9—“I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.” In Matthew 11:28, Jesus repeated similar sentiments when He said, “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” In 1 Timothy 2:4, the Bible says that “God wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.” Salvation is all inclusive. Jesus did not die just for the Jews. He tasted of death “for all men” (Heb. 2:9). God wants us all to be saved (1 Tim. 2:4), and so salvation is all inclusive. Jesus died so that anyone anywhere could have the hope of eternal life. That hope is the joy we have of knowing that after this life, we can be with God for all eternity. As we think about the all-inclusive nature of salvation, we need to know that salvation has been offered through Jesus so that we can be saved from sin. Romans 6:23 says that “the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” The salary of sin is spiritual death. In Genesis 3, we see that both physical and spiritual death came upon Adam and Eve. The Bible says in Ezekiel 18:4 that “the soul who sins shall die.” Jesus gives us life after sin if we are willing to obey Him and follow His will. Paul made it abundantly clear in Romans 1:16 that it is the Gospel of Christ that is “the power of God unto salvation.” If we are willing to contact the blood of Jesus through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ and our enactment in that in our dying to sin by being buried with Christ in baptism, rising to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:1-4), then we can have the same hope of salvation.

Jesus was convicted of the things we have mentioned here. He was willing to go to the cross and give His life so that we could have the hope of going to Heaven. Today, let me ask if **you** are convinced of God's will and of His desire for you to go to Heaven. Are you convinced enough that you will obey God's will? Remember that it is not just everybody who says, "Lord, Lord," who is going to Heaven. Rather, it is those who **do** the will of the Father. So what does Jesus teach that we must do to be saved? Salvation is something that we can read and understand. Paul said in Ephesians 4:3 that when we read, we can understand God's will. Paul said in Ephesians 5:17 that we should not be ignorant, but "understand the will of the Lord." Jesus taught us that we could know the truth and that the truth would make us free (Jn. 8:32). What must a person do to be saved? In Acts 16:30, that very question was asked when the Philippian jailer asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" The answer is very clear. A person first must hear the Word of God. We must hear what God says on the matter of salvation. As we think about hearing God's Word, we need to remember passages like Romans 10:17—"Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." We must listen to the voice of God, which is found today in the Bible. Once we hear the Word of God, we must be so convinced that it **is** the Word of God, and that it is true, that we are willing to believe the message of Jesus." In Acts 8, Philip and the Ethiopian nobleman were going along the road in a chariot. They came to a certain water, and the nobleman said, "See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?" (vs. 36). Do you remember the response that Philip gave him? "If you believe with all your heart, you may." (vs. 37). A person must believe with all his heart that Jesus is the Son of God and the Savior.

Then that person must be willing to make changes in his life. If we are going to be saved, we must repent of our past sins and turn our lives over to God. In Acts 3:19, Peter said, "Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord." We learn from Joel 2:12-13 that repentance is not necessarily a "rending of garments." Joel said, "rend your hearts, not your garments." Repentance is a change of the mind and a change of will that leads to a changed way of life. We must be willing to say that the way we have been living has not been right, that it has not been pleasing to God, and that we are willing to stop doing that which is wrong and start doing that which is right. Then we must have the faith to confess Jesus before men as the Son of God. Matthew 10:32-33 and Romans 10:10 both teach that we, with our mouths, must "make confession unto salvation." Then a person must obey God by being baptized in water for the forgiveness of sins. In every account of salvation that you see in the Book of Acts, people hear God's Word, believe in Jesus as the Son of God, repent of their past sins, confess Christ as their Savior, and are baptized for the remission of their sins. Think about the example found in Acts 2:38. Here, Peter responds to the question, "What shall we do?," by saying, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Peter made it clear that baptism was for the remission of sins. In John 3:5, Jesus said, "Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." Jesus made it clear that if we do not obey God in baptism, then we will not be in His church and we will not go to Heaven. Today I hope that the convictions of Christ will help you be convicted that God's way is the only way to live.

**Narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:**

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## STUDY QUESTIONS FOR “THE CONVICTIONS OF JESUS”

1. According to Jesus' statement in Matthew 5:19, who is considered “great in the kingdom of God”?
2. What important point does Luke 6:46 teach us?
3. What does Philippians 2:8 tell us about Christ's obedience?
4. According to Christ's teaching in Matthew 7:21, who will enter Heaven?
5. What is the message of Luke 14:11 for all Christians of every generation?
6. What did Jesus teach in Luke 9:23 that we must do if we plan to follow Him?
7. What did Paul have to say in Romans 12:1-2 about how we should present ourselves to God?
8. What characteristic, according to Paul's statement in 2 Corinthians 5:14, should compel us to live for God every day?
9. According to Paul's remarks in Galatians 2:20, who should be living in us and through us?
10. In Acts 4:13, what important point was evident to the Jews as a result of Peter and John's behavior?
11. According to Jesus' teaching in Matthew 12:50, who is Christ's family?
12. Of what are Christians members, according to Paul's teaching in Ephesians 2:19?
13. According to Jesus' teaching in Matthew 5:6, who will be “blessed”?
14. What, according to Jesus' statements in John 10:10, did He come to give us?
15. What is Jesus, according to John 6:35?
16. What is Jesus, according to John 11:25-26?
17. What is Jesus, according to John 14:6?
18. What is Jesus, according to John 10:9?
19. According to Philippians 4:19, what will God provide for us if we are “in Christ”?
20. In Matthew 11:28, what did Jesus promise to those who follow Him?
21. According to 1 Timothy 2:4, what does God want for all people?
22. According to Romans 6:23, what is God's gift to Christians?