

Jesus Was....

Jesus Was a Preacher

Jesus' public life began with His proclamation of the Kingdom of God. His first teaching was to "repent for the Kingdom of God is at hand." He wanted us to return to God, to return to His love and to His plan for our lives.

CCC 541 ; Matthew 4:17

Jesus' proclamations were followed by teachings. He taught in synagogues and public places. He taught us to pray — to ask, seek, and knock — and to trust the Father with our needs. He taught us not to judge or retaliate, and to love our neighbors as ourselves. He also taught us to love our enemies. He spoke with authority and those who listened were amazed. He developed a reputation and crowds began to follow Him.

Matthew 4:23, 7

One day, upon seeing the crowds, Jesus gave His most well known teaching on the Kingdom He came to establish.

Read Matthew 5:1-11.

The Beatitudes communicate Jesus' vision of the Kingdom of God — an extraordinarily upside-down Kingdom. The Kingdom of God does not favor those in power — religious, political, and civil leaders — but rather, favors:

The Poor in Spirit: Those who "just do not get the whole God thing," those who leave Adoration wondering what it was that happened that everyone else got to experience but they were left out of, and those who have yet to consider the existence of a God who loves them.

Those who Mourn: Those who come from a troubled family, those who are going through a break-up, those who have lost loved ones, and those who are suffering from illness.

The Meek: Those who go unnoticed, whose power is not found in conventional strength but in their reliance wholly on God.

If you are questioning the existence of God, if you are broken-hearted or feel overlooked, God sees you. He meets you in your poverty and makes you whole. The Kingdom of God favors you. You belong in the Kingdom.

When God works miracles in our poverty, mess, and ache, our view of others who are in the middle of their own messy and hurting lives changes as well. We begin to judge less and see ourselves in others who are struggling. We extend compassion and lead them to the same grace we received when we were in need. We become more merciful and pure in heart because we seek to lead others to the same refuge amidst the storms that we have come to know. Soon, a new community is formed, a community with God as it is center and king: the Kingdom of God.

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Jesus Was a Healer

Jesus not only taught about the Kingdom of God; He also made it manifest through His miracles. The Scriptures are full of accounts of Jesus healing lepers and paralytics, as well as the woman with the hemorrhage, the man with a withered hand, the crippled woman, the man with dropsy, the man at the pool of Bethzatha, and so many more.

CCC 547-548; Luke 1 7:1 1-1 9;
Matthew 8:1-4, 9:1-8, 9:20-22, 12:9-3, 20:29-34

Read Matthew 9:27-30.

Two blind men followed Jesus as He passed by. It was a crowded, public street that was likely very loud. Yet, they followed Jesus and were healed.

Jesus' words not only speak of peace; they are also accompanied by actions that bring about peace. What was once broken is made whole. What was once tragic is rejoiced over. Panic and discord are brought to peace and restoration.

Jesus Was an Exorcist

Jesus' miracles were not limited to the physical world as He also cured those suffering from spiritual ailments. One day while preaching in a synagogue, an unclean spirit cried out of a man, "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us?" Jesus rebuked the demon and set the man free. Later, Jesus delivered a boy who suffered from a demon who was trying to throw him in the fire. Jesus even cast out several demons from the demoniacs and threw them into a herd of swine.

CCC 549; Mark 1:21-28; Matthew 8:28-32, 17:14-20

Read Matthew 8:28-32.

Jesus not only has the power of the natural world, but also of the supernatural world. This is seen most clearly in the Gospel of Luke when the friends of a paralytic fight to bring him to Jesus and ask for His healing. Jesus then claims and demonstrates the power to forgive sins. ccc 547-549

Read Luke 5:17-26.

Only God can forgive sins. Is Jesus God?

Jesus Is the Christ

As news of Jesus' preaching, healings, deliverances, and forgiveness of sins spread, His reputation grew and more and more people began to look for Him and follow Him. However, not everyone was pleased by His actions. People started questioning where He got His power. Did He deliver demons by the power of Beelzebul, the prince of demons? The Roman authorities thought He was causing unrest and threatening the status quo, and thus needed to be destroyed. The religious leaders were threatened by Jesus because He put their authority and

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security at risk, so they plotted to stop Him as well. There was likely the other extreme as well: people tuning Him out altogether.

Luke 11:14; Mark3:6

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus wonders if the crowds are understanding His teaching on the Kingdom of God. He asks His disciples who people say He is. His disciples inform Him that some think He is a prophet, teacher, or miracle worker. None of these answers are fully correct. Then He asks, "Who do you say that I am?" Peter declares, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Peter is right. Jesus is the Savior: the one who teaches, heals, delivers, and saves us from the greatest evil of all, sin.

Matthew 16:13-20

Who Do You Say Jesus Is?

Jesus asks for a response from each of us to the revelation of His identity as Savior. Who do you say that Jesus is? How would you respond to this question?

Have you tuned Jesus out? Have you heard so many inconsequential facts about Him that you simply pass by the idea that He might be everything you are searching for? That He might be the one you desire to see you, notice you, and make you whole?

Does the idea of Jesus threaten your status quo, security, comfort, and preferences? If Jesus is God, does that mean you will have to change?

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