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God, The Son in Mission

The Son Who Redeems a People

Introduction: It has been well said, that God so loved the world that He sent His only Son to be a missionary.

Point 1: Who is God's message?: The simple answer is 'Jesus'. He is the content of the 'good news': At just the right time (Gals 4:4), John is the dividing line, in his cousin the good news dawned.

Jesus came:

- with miracles (Lk 4:38-39)
- with parables (Mat 13:2, 10)
- with deliverance (Lk 11:20)
- with a cross – and there to win the final victory

Jesus therefore presented a supreme contradiction. Claiming to be Messiah and Son of God, He could not make it down from the cross – therefore He, had to be a liar and a charlatan (Matt 27:41-43; 1 Cors 1:23). Judaism never saw the suffering servant as the Messiah – but that is exactly who Jesus was, and is!

This Messiah was to be light to the Gentiles, bringing salvation to the ends of the earth (Isa 49:6).

He is the servant of the Lord (Isa 53), who came to suffer. Before the Sanhedrin he is unambiguous in his acknowledgment that He is the Messiah (? 14:61-62), at other times he is cautious to be as open about this (Matt 16:16-20). His demeanor, teachings, service and death all clearly reflected Isaiah's Servant of the Lord, as Reginald Fuller has said, "The figure of the Servant gives a unity to all that Jesus said and did from the moment of his baptism to the moment of his death upon the cross. Remove that background, and his life breaks up into a series of unrelated fragments."

Consequently:

- He washed feet (John 13:1-11)
- He emphasized service (John 4:34)

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- He embodied servant hood (Mark 9:45)
- He offered friendship to the outcast (Matt 11:19)
- He rejected the military option (Matt 21:9-13)

Point 2: Who is this Jesus?

- He is the fulfillment of the promise of the kingdom (Luke 4:16-21), the expectation, the crown of revelation.
- He is the One who introduces the New Age of God. (Mark 1:14-15).
- He is the Messiah, the hope of Israel; but of an unexpected kind (Isa 9:2-7).
- He is the king, but His kingdom is heavenly (John 18:36).

- He is the One who breaks the silence, the 'I am' (Mark 14:62).
- He is the bringer of salvation.
- He is the One who expands the vision to the nations as a whole.
- He replaces the Old Covenant with a New One (Gals 3-4, Hebs 7-9, Hebs 7:22), declaring the New to be better.
- He is Divine (Roms 1:3-4, Phils 2:6-8)

- He did not bring a loftier view of God, but introduced the reality of a God who has already acted! A new era begun (Luke 10:23-24).
- He adds grace to law, not to destroy Israel's faith, but to fulfill it (Matt 5:17).
- He comes to suffer and die – and to bring us into persecution too (Zech 9:9). He is the servant who suffers to save Him (Matt 26:53-54). He is the servant who suffers.
- He is not Moses, but He brings something better (Heb 3:1-6, 12:18-24, John 6:48-51). He asks us to be better too – (Matt 5:20). Moses said, but now Jesus "says."

Point 3: Who are God's people? It is the spiritual children of Abraham who are to inherit the Kingdom (Romans 8:4).

They will:

- Take the gospel to the nations, N, S, E and W!
- Look toward to the heavenly banquet with Abraham, who will be the father of all true disciples of the Crucified One.
- Establish His kingdom in the here and now.

Meanwhile the old "sons of the kingdom" (Matt 8:11-12), be they nominal Christians or circumcised Jews would be excluded. The O.T. is like a building but no roof, the N.T. like a roof but no building, hard to hold up!

The rich and influential may think that they have "cornered the market" on truth, but this is far from reality. Jesus came to bring good news to the poor and the

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dispossessed (Luke 4:18-19). The Jerusalem church was rooted in the poorest parts of the city. The Old Testament is unequivocal in announcing that the living God was against a society where poverty was tolerated. "Not one of your people will be poor" (Deut. 15:4, GNT).

Jesus lived in a state of relative poverty, and He had some pretty tough things to say to the rich. Remember that it was when Zacchaeus offered generous compensation to those from whom he had embezzled and extorted money that Jesus could exclaim, "Salvation has come to this house today" (Luke 19:9, GNT).

Jesus pointed out the problems of wealth (Mark 10:25). The fact that "good news is preached to the poor" (Matt 11:5) was sent as a message by Jesus to John the Baptist to convince him, once and for all, that the Messiah had indeed arrived!

Jesus was continually in contact with non-Jews. He actively left Galilee to go into Tyre (Mark 7). Originally he made his disciples concentrate on the Jews-but then he expanded the mandate to make his church the missionary people of the Kingdom of God, the custodian of the good news of the Kingdom.

Point 4: Who is this Missionary God?

Jesus inaugurated a new era when he said that his concern was to "seek and to save" people and to work for their moral and spiritual redemption. When he made this normative in the service of God, he was interjecting something new into the history of Israel. Prior to his day there were those, of course, who were motivated by noble concepts of service for the worthy few. But Jesus made his ministry of personal service as broad as human need. He took the best religious practices of the day and reconstructed them to fit his pattern, no longer passivity in the face of suffering, but eager outgoing love. His unique pattern for ministry in the Kingdom age is seen in the fact that he found no "religious" word capable of expressing his idea of service. As a result, he invested a nonreligious term with new meaning. He called his work a *diakonia* (Mark 10:43-45) from the Greco-Roman word for those whose primary duty was "waiting at tables." This term he made central to the total mission of his disciples in the world.

Jesus the missionary is seen in His service as:

- Evangelist (Acts 26:12-18)
- Apostle (Matt 10:40), because God had sent him.
- Teacher – trainer – equipping others.

So how did He achieve this?

Rather than using force he promised his followers that they did not need to be afraid, "for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom".

The Attitude of Jesus to Others

The Servant

Supremely Jesus came to live as a servant. Rather than keep power exclusively to himself, He came to offer it to others (Mk 10:45).

- In His death Jesus fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy concerning God's suffering servant (Is 52:13-53:12).
- In his life He demonstrated unparalleled humility and gentleness. John the Baptist assumed the position of the second lowest servant in a household by denying his worthiness to even remove the shoes of Jesus (Jn 1:27). But Jesus took for himself the role of the lowest slave in actually washing the feet of his disciples.

The Friend

- Jesus showed affection and felt depths of emotion in his dealings with friends like the family at Bethany (Jn 11:33-38).
- Jesus received gifts with courtesy (Jn 12:7-8)
- Jesus was capable of relaxing when in the company of those whose friendship He appreciated (Jn 12:2).
- Jesus received verbal abuse for being the friend of tax collectors and sinners (Mt 11:19).

To Women

Women were among the social outcasts of the time. Each morning a Pharisee rose to thank God that he was not born "a Gentile, a slave or a woman."

Nevertheless, Jesus gave dignity and significance to women.

- Jesus numbered many women among His friends (Jn 12:1-8), even "fallen women" like Mary Magdalene and others (Mt 26-7: Mk 8:2, Lk 7:39, 8:1-3).
- Jesus healed the diseases of women (Mk 5:25, 8:2; Mt 9:20).
- Jesus told a parable about a woman (Lk 15:8).

- Jesus forgave the woman caught in adultery (Jn 8:3-11).
- Jesus chose an immoral woman to tell her village about him (Jn 4:3-42).
- It was women who mourned his arrest (Lk 23:27).
- A group of women traveled from Galilee to minister to his needs as He died (Mt 27:55).
- Women had provided financial support for Jesus and the disciples (Lk 8:3).
- His first appearance after His Resurrection was to a woman (Jn 20:15).
- Knowing the casual way men were treating divorce – which condemned women to a life of poverty – he spoke out (Mt 5:31-32; Mk 10:2-9).
- He was swift to challenge and rebuke male lust (Mt 5:28).

To Children

Jesus always seemed to have a special place in His heart for children. This was not normal Jewish practice.

- When people brought children to Jesus, He rebuked His disciples for trying to turn them away (Mt 19:13-15; Mk 10:13-16; Lk 18:15-17).
- Jesus used a child as an example (Mt 18:2), and declared that a childlike spirit was essential to enter the Kingdom (Mt 18:3-4).
- Jesus watched children at play (Mt 11:16).
- Jesus commanded that children be well received (Mk 9:37).
- Jesus warned against despising children because they had their angels in heaven (Mt 18:9).
- Jesus warned against doing anything that caused a child to stumble (Lk 17:2).

The Foreigner

Jesus crossed all boundaries of race and class. While he acknowledged the

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special status of Israel as God's chosen people (Mt 10:5-6, 15:24; Jn 4:22) – and made his appeal primarily to them – he was not exclusive in this (Lk 6:17).

- He applauded the faith of a Roman military officer (Mt 8:10; Lk 7:9).
- He was prepared to help a Syro-Phoenician woman (Mt 15:28).

While Jesus was a boy, the Samaritans had desecrated the Jerusalem temple, scattering human bones in it during the Passover. But -

- Jesus was prepared to spend time in Samaria.
- Despite antagonism towards him he refused his disciples' suggestion of retaliation (Lk 9:51-56).

Normally a self-respecting Jew would make a 50-mile detour to avoid traveling through Samaria. John records that Jesus "had to go through Samaria" (Jn 4:4).

This led to a Samaritan woman's life being transformed and her witness attracting the whole village to Jesus. As a result for the first time he was acknowledged as "the Saviour of the world" (Jn 4:42) and not merely the Messiah of the Jews.

To Outcasts

Jesus was concerned for those shunned by the rest of society.

- He saved the life of a woman caught in the act of adultery, but without compromise of his moral standards (Jn 8:1-11).
- To a tax collector (a collaborator with the occupying forces) he brought personal salvation and an imperative to make proper restitution (Lk 19:1-10).
- The thief on the cross was given the assurance of Paradise (Lk 23:43).
- A sinful woman, who anointed his feet, received forgiveness for her sins (Lk 7:48).

To Enemies

The Pharisees and Sadducees were strongly opposed to each other, but they appear to have called a truce in their battle to oppose Jesus (Jn 11:47). Even the occupying forces of the Roman army had failed to achieve this.

As God's servant, Jesus could not tell people what they wanted to hear. This is clearly demonstrated in his dealings with the religious leaders of his day.

Jesus and His Disciples

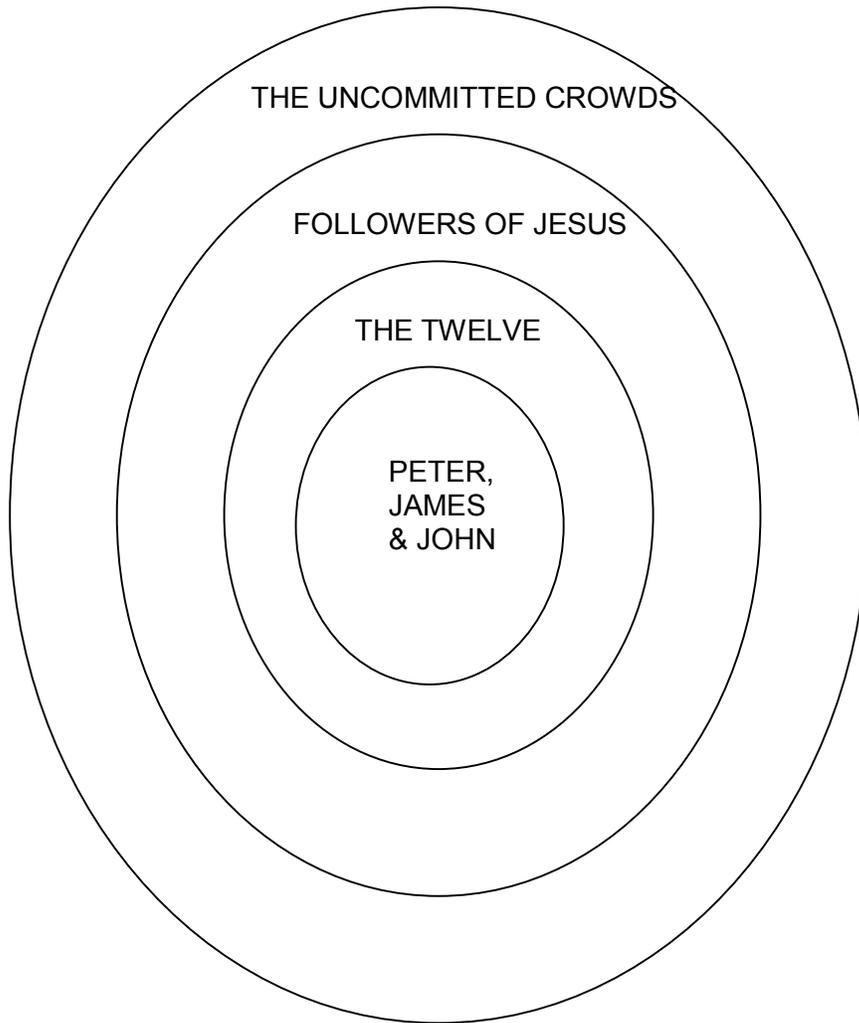
Jesus gave most of his attention to training a small band of committed followers (Mk 1:14, 3:13-19; Lk 4:14, 6:12-16; Jn 1:35-49).

These men left their work, their possessions and their families in order to follow him (Mt 19:27-30; Mk 10:28-31; Lk 18:28-30). Even when his stern message resulted in the crowds deserting him, his 12 disciples remained (Jn 6:66). He chose as disciples those who were -

- Teachable, curious and interested in serving God.
- Spiritually clumsy, foolish and constantly making mistakes.

Jesus did not simply teach his disciples, he lived with them. He called them to –

- Renounce ambition (Mt 20:26-28).
- Avoid self-pity (Lk 18:28-30).
- Serve one another in humility (Jn 13:14-15).
- Have love for one another (Jn 13:34-5).
- Live on the barest essentials (Mt 10:9-10).
- Be prepared to suffer, and warned that “anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple” (Lk 14:27).
- They had to put Jesus before everyone and everything – a priority extending even beyond their own families (Lk 14:26).



And so He gave them His instruction –

1. Proclaim the good news of the Kingdom.
2. Establish a baptized and worshiping community focused on Jesus.
3. Teach them to obey Jesus' instructions (Matt 28: 18-29 Acts 1:2-3).