

Life of Jesus

Session 6: Messiah of the Marginalized

Here in the West, Jesus is a familiar figure to Christians, dominating Sunday School lessons and sermons since our earliest memories. Yet, removed as we are by 2,000 years since he walked the earth, He remains somewhat mysterious. Why did He come? What did He teach? What was He really like?

Let's take an adventure to know more of this person about whom we assume so much familiarity. We will be exploring the Life of Jesus in 21 sessions; the first 14 will focus on Jesus' life and ministry in the 1st Century and will end around Easter. The last 7 will focus on Jesus' life and ministry in our own century and will take us through the month of May. Let's experience the Life of Jesus together!

Deep Hope: May we, together, (re-) fall in Love with the Messiah as we understand, imitate, and experience the Life of Jesus.

PART I: Review

1. 1st Century Jews were living in the Promised Land, but under Roman Rule.
2. Many believed that Messiah would free Israel and reinstate God's kingdom on earth.
3. Jesus announced (and proved with miracles!) that the Kingdom was at hand—not an after-death reality, but rather God's rule breaking into our reality.
4. Jesus' miracles **show** what God's kingdom looks like, and the Sermon on the Mount **tells** what it is like! Jesus defines the kingdom as those who seek to become people of mature love (even for enemies) who trust God as Father, with singular focus.
5. Jesus' Sermon on the Mount charts a course for Christian community—life in the Kingdom of God—for all Christians everywhere.
6. The parables of Jesus both hide a revolutionary message from the hard-hearted, and reveal it to anyone interested.
7. The Kingdom of God is wherever God's will is done.

PART II: Messiah of the Marginalized

1. How did Jesus treat each of the following marginalized groups:
 - a. Poor/beggars
 - b. Women/kids
 - c. Sick and Unclean
 - d. Demoniacs
 - e. Gentiles
 - f. Sinners
 - g. Samaritans
 - h. Oppressors

2. Jesus identified with the poor and outcast and marginalized. This displays God the Father's heart.

Part III: Small Group Discussion Questions:

1. As you heard about the different groups of Jesus' day, what thoughts went through your mind?
2. Both the Roman society and the Jewish society had a hierarchy, which Jesus ignored. What does this say about Him? About God?
3. What is the Kingdom of God? And why does it belong to the poor?
4. Jesus surprised everyone by who He chose to hang around. Which people that Jesus loved stands out to you the most?
5. Jesus' behavior toward the outcast included:
 - Touch, welcome, meals, feelings of compassion, close relationship, friendship, acknowledgment, conversation, and outreach.
 - What sort of person is He?
6. What sorts of people are marginalized in our society today? How can we show the same sort of compassion Jesus did?
7. Read one of the following parables and discuss Jesus' interaction with the outcast in the story. Talk together through observations, questions, and potential applications of this text.

The Canaanite Woman Matthew 15:21-28

Bartimaeus Mark 10:46-52

The Sinful Woman Luke 7:36-50

Part IV: Gospel Reading: Read Luke 9 and 10

Jesus sends His disciples on two different "mission trips." The first, recorded in Luke 9, recounts how the 12 Apostles went out; the second, in Luke 10, records how a group of 70 was sent out to prepare the way for Jesus. We'll dive into these expeditions next week.

Prayer: *"Father God, please hold the cross of Jesus before our eyes and reveal to us that Your Son loves us. All of us. The weak, the wounded, the cast-aside, the forgotten, the miserable. Those who no one else can love. Those who need love most. Father, let us glimpse Your heart this week and may we share the compassion you have by moving toward the marginalized in our own sphere of influence with the very love of Jesus, alive and active in us by Your Spirit. Amen."*