

Life of Jesus

Session 7: Take No Staff?

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? 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. The parables of Jesus both hide a revolutionary message from the hard-hearted, and reveal it to anyone interested.
6. Jesus loved those at the margins of His society—spending time with the sick and the sinners.
7. The Kingdom of God is wherever God's will is done—*everything* Jesus did fits under this message.

PART II: Take No Staff?

1. Jesus had disciples, called _____, just like many rabbis of his day.
2. Disciples would be young men, probably younger than _____.
3. Jesus sends 12 of them out on a mission trip as _____.
 - a. They don't take _____, _____, _____, _____, _____.
 - b. They stay with _____.
 - c. Preach the message of the _____ and back it up with _____.
4. These 12 echo the invasion under _____. They are a new Israel.
5. Enemy is not _____, but _____, _____, and _____.
6. Second wave of _____ echo a new _____--sent out with the same mission.
7. Disciples have Jesus' _____ to wage war with _____ by _____.

Part III: Small Group Discussion Questions:

1. How have you thought of the disciples in the past?
2. Rabbis had disciples who would be apprentices to them all day, every day—the goal was to become like the Rabbi in all things. How is this similar or different from your goal in following Jesus?
3. What is the Kingdom of God? What do these two mission trips have to do with it? How is this “invasion” much different than most Jewish people were expecting when they thought about the Messiah bringing God’s Kingdom?
4. What do you make of Jesus’ special instructions to bring no gear and stay with others? What seems to be His goal in sending His students out this way?
5. The disciples, with Jesus’ authority, do exactly what Jesus did! How do you think they felt about this? How would you feel to do these things?
6. Jesus sends out a second wave of 70 disciples to proclaim and demonstrate the kingdom. Why doesn’t Jesus just do this work Himself?
7. Read again Jesus’ response when the 70 return in (Luke 10:1-24). Why does Jesus seem so happy?

Part IV: Gospel Reading: The Transfiguration

On top of a mountain, 3 of Jesus’ friends witness Jesus undergo a startling transformation. Read about it in Matthew 17:1-13, Mark 9:1-13, and Luke 9:28-36. This strange episode from Jesus’ life connects Him to the bigger Story God has been telling for thousands of years. We’ll explore these connections in the next session.

Part V: Spiritual Discipline #1 (Prayer and Fasting)

Choose a day to fast 1, 2, or 3 meals. During the time you would normally be eating, choose a specific person, situation, or challenge to pray for. Consider praying the prayer Jesus told His disciples to pray in Luke 10:2 about workers being sent to do God’s work in a specific area/with a specific person.

Prayer: *“Father, we would be your faithful disciples, your students who imitate you in everything. Please, by the power of your Spirit, give us hearts that long for all of you in all our ways, through all our day. Send workers into your harvest field! Send us out to advance your kingdom right where we are. Amen.”*