

Welcome back! Pastor Gerber here again! Last time we did a brief overview of the four Gospels. Do you remember the names of the four books? Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. And do you remember what the main focus of the Gospels is? Gospel means good news and these books teach of the good news of Jesus Christ. What was that good news? Jesus lived a perfect life, died for your sins and mine, and then rose to life to defeat sin, death, and the devil! Since these books are all about Jesus, we couldn't just spend one session on Him. Actually the next 4 sessions will be all about Jesus!

Today, we're going to focus on the life of Jesus. In upcoming sessions, we will look at the miracles, parables, and teachings of Jesus as well.

So, who was Jesus? Or, better yet, who is Jesus? Was he just a good teacher? Many people, including close friends, called him teacher. Throughout the Gospels, Jesus would teach the crowds. He would teach His disciples. He teaches us still today. Was he a good teacher? Yes. Was he **just** a good teacher? No.

Was he another prophet? Many religions claim that Jesus was another prophet. Islam and Mormonism are two of them. Remember, we said that a prophet was one who spoke on behalf of God. Like Isaiah or Obadiah or Malachi. Did Jesus speak on behalf of God? Well, yes. Was he a prophet? Yes. Was he **just** another prophet? No.

Was Jesus a crazy man? It might seem like it's easy to cross this one of the list. But let's take a closer look at this. C. S. Lewis wrote that Jesus had to be the Lord or he was either a liar or a lunatic. There aren't any other options. He can't be just a good teacher. He can't be just another prophet. He claimed to be God. And someone who claims to be God had better be God. If not, he's a liar. Unless he really thinks that he is God. Then he's just crazy.

Jesus wasn't just a good teacher. He wasn't just another prophet. He wasn't a crazy person. He was our savior. No. He is our savior. Jesus lived a perfect life, died for your sins and mine, and then rose to life to defeat sin, death, and the devil! His name even teaches us that he is a savior. The name Jesus is the Greek form of Joshua, 'Yeshuah,' which means "The Lord Saves."

Jesus claims that he can forgive sins, that he's all knowing (omniscient), all powerful, all everywhere (omnipresent), and one with God. Take a few minutes to look up those scripture references.

And why did he come to earth? To serve and to die as a perfect sacrifice. Look up those scripture references too, please.

So, let's quickly run through his entire life. We'll start with his birth.

Jesus was born when the time had fully come. Galatians 4:4-5 says: "But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship." The Nicene Creed tells us that Jesus was begotten, not made. What does that mean? Basically, it means that he was fathered. He wasn't created from nothing. He was put into Mary by the Holy Spirit.

We don't know much about Jesus during his childhood years. A couple of the 'other' gospels, the ones that didn't make it into the Bible, have some interesting stories about Jesus. But, we can't take them as historical. We do know that these years weren't as important to his purpose here on earth as the last 3 years of His life would be. We actually only get one story of Jesus during his childhood years. It was the

story of when Jesus was a boy. His parents accidentally left him at the Temple in Jerusalem and walked partway home before they realized it. Now, you might be thinking that Jesus had some horrible parents to just leave him behind. But Jesus and his parents were probably traveling in a big group of people. The men would travel together and the women would travel together. The kids would go back and forth between their parents and with other friends. So, this was probably an instance of each parent thinking that Jesus was with the other one.

At His baptism the Holy Spirit descends on Jesus like a dove. This event happens when he is about 30 and begins Jesus' 3 year ministry on earth. Take a look at the four gospels and their accounts of Jesus' baptism. What's the same? What's different? Remember just because things are different doesn't prove the gospels are wrong. It reminds us that these writers are writing with a purpose. Remember the last session, we saw that each writer had a different purpose? Matthew focused on showing the Jewish people that Jesus really was the Messiah, which means anointed one. Mark's gospel account focused on sharing with the Roman people and how Jesus was a servant. Luke's focus was more on Jesus' humanity than his Godliness. John's gospel account focused more on Jesus' Godliness than his humanity. The references for Jesus' baptism are: Matthew 3:13-17, Mark 1:9-11, Luke 3:21-22, and John 1:31-34. Take some time now to read those.

Once Jesus receives the Spirit, Jesus goes into the desert and fasts for 40 days. No food for 40 days. How would you do? Oh, and don't forget that it's really hot out... Satan thinks that this will be a perfect time to test Jesus. Satan tests Jesus 3 times. Each time, Jesus passes his test by quoting from Deuteronomy. Now, this test wasn't a math test or anything like that. Satan was tempting Jesus, trying to trick Jesus to sin. Jesus won.

We talked last session that many people called Jesus good teacher. The word Rabbi means teacher. Most Rabbis had their own disciples or followers who would study under the Rabbi. Usually, after much study, these disciples would ask to follow the rabbi of their choice. It was kind of like a job application, or better yet, an internship application. Only the best qualified students would even be considered for the internship. Jesus did things differently. Instead, Jesus asks his disciples to follow him, even though they were very unqualified. They were probably the Jewish school dropouts. But Jesus chose them.

In his ministry, Jesus went around teaching about the Kingdom of God. We'll talk more about his teaching in a later session. He also healed the sick, deaf, mute, blind, and lame. He came to serve people and point them to God.

Jesus was executed on a Roman torture device, the cross. This was reserved for the worst criminals. Think of the death penalty today. Many think that the death penalty is so inhumane that it's illegal in many states. Michigan abolished the death penalty in 1846. So, many people believe that, no matter what you do, you shouldn't be killed for it. The Romans believed, that if you were bad enough, you would die a horrendously painful, very public death. Jesus was crucified on the cross, even though most officials found that Jesus had done nothing wrong. But this was a good thing for you and me. His death is the payment for the sins of the world. Another great benefit is that now we have direct access to the Father. When Jesus died, the curtain in the temple ripped in two from top to bottom. This curtain separated the 'normal' people from the Holy of holies. The Holy of Holies is the place in the Temple where God resided. Only special priests could enter the Holy of Holies and they would offer sacrifices on your behalf. With Jesus' death on the cross, animal sacrifices became unnecessary and we no longer need anyone to be a middle man between us and God.

But, as you know, Jesus didn't stay dead. He rose from the dead 3 days later. He appeared first to a few, then to the disciples, then to over 500 people. It was important that he appeared to so many so that people couldn't just say that the disciples were making it up.

40 days after his resurrection, Jesus went back up to Heaven. The Apostles' Creed states that he ascended into Heaven. And He promised that the Holy Spirit would come down to them once He left.

Jesus will return! He's coming back. That's one of my favorite things to say in the whole wide world. Jesus is coming back. No one knows the day or the hour when Jesus will return, so be ready!

Today, we learned a lot about the life of Jesus. The main point that I want you to hold onto is that Jesus came to save the world by His sacrifice.

That's all for today. As always, let me know if you have any questions. See you next time!