

# REPRESENTING JESUS

CMBC February 24, 2013

Matthew 8:18 – 34

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If we read the story of Jesus just as events in the life of the Son of God, we miss out on the purpose of his presence here on earth.

Clearly His purpose was to come and die as a sacrifice for our sin, taking the punishment for us, taking down the barrier that kept us eternally separated from God. But that could have happened at any time.

There was another purpose, and that was to prepare the disciples, His followers to represent Him, to be able to tell the story of God coming to earth to rescue us from our curse.

## 1. JESUS READYING HIS DISCIPLES TO REPRESENT HIM

In readying his disciples, Jesus had just 3 years to prepare them to carry on His work.

So Jesus taught the disciples about the Kingdom of God

- a. The Gospel story reveals who Jesus is
  - i. An important part of that preparation was to help them understand who he was
  - ii. This was God the Son
  - iii. And so they saw the amazing miracles Jesus preformed
  
- b. The Gospels reveal what Jesus wants us to be
  - i. But even more important was for their lives to be changed.
  - ii. So he taught them what the character and life of the citizen of God's Kingdom would be like
  - iii. He taught them and he showed them, and spoke into their lives - coached them in how to live
  - iv. Three short years!
  - v. God also has only a short few years to ready all of us to represent him now and in eternity.
  - vi. So Jesus led them in an amazing time of teaching and experiences.

## 2. SEARCHING THE HEART OF HIS FOLLOWERS

It is not surprising that, the response to Jesus teaching and the dramatic miracles, there would be people who would want to follow him – become his disciples.

And so we have the story of some of them.

- a. First came the Teacher Of The Law – A Bible teacher
  - i. The disciples would have been impressed with this new recruit  
**Matthew 8:19** A teacher of the law came to him and said, “Teacher, I will follow you **wherever you go.**” [20] Jesus replied, “**Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.**”
  - ii. Jesus is responding to the teacher as well as teaching something to the disciples
  - iii. The importance of sincere commitment
    1. Understand his background
      - a. Respected, well paid, part of a supportive system, lived in comfort
      - b. Nothing wrong with this but give up everything
    2. Jesus says commitment in following means you give up that security
    3. ILL. Paul Janz gave up a popular music career when he truly met God and just wanted to study the word. Not even a Christian music career. Just in the Word.
    4. Later Jesus said (**Matthew 16:24**) **Then Jesus said to his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. [25] For whoever wants to save his life \* will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it.**
- b. The next lesson was  
Honestly facing the conditions we put on our following.
  - i. It was the Country Boy (**Vs 21**)
  - ii. No problem with comfort and status
  - iii. But he said, “I want to be your disciple  
**BUT “Lord, first let me go and bury my father.”**  
He wanted to wait until his father died.
    1. Attached to his roots and tradition
    2. His condition was, I will follow but within the norms of my tradition.
  - iv. Jesus says, **“Let the dead bury the dead.”**
    1. Tradition, cultural ways of doing things, although not wrong, can get in the way of being open about following Jesus

2. A lesson the disciples struggled with
  3. ILL Thousands of people leaving the church because the church gets in the way of following God
- c. Don't follow God half way
- i. A true disciple of Christ must get going or quit.
  - ii. Don't fake it!!
  - iii. It means total commitment
  - iv. What are the conditions we have held us back from abandoning ourselves to Jesus – or gotten in the way...

### 3. THE LESSON OF THE STORM Vs. 23 - 27

- a. This is a terrifying experience!!
- i. But Jesus says, "O you of little faith, why are you so afraid?"
- b. Faith in God's purposes
- i. They had lost sight of God's purpose in spite of the storm
  - ii. This is not an easy lesson to learn
  - iii. What does God want to teach me, do through me in this storm
- c. Learning trust in the storms
- i. All of a disciple's life will have seasons of storms
  - ii. Can I trust God in the storm?
  - iii. Would God allow me to go through a terrifying storm?

### 4. UNDERSTANDING THE BATTLE

The next lesson is just as terrifying.

This is the lesson of trusting the power of God in another's life, power over evil.

- a. The disciples were confronted with the terrifying brutality of evil
- i. Two raging, wild, naked, uncontrollable men terrorizing the hillsides, the grave yard
- Vs 28** says, **They were so violent that no one could pass that way.**
1. It is worse because the power in control of their lives is unknown to us.
  2. Shivers run down the spines of the disciples
- ii. These demons have more respect for God's power than we do – but they don't submit to it.
1. They said, **Vs. 29** "What do you want with us, Son of God?" **they shouted. "Have you come here to torture us before the appointed time?"**

- 2. Haven't we said that? "If I submit to God he will make life miserable and hard."
- iii. The power of God alone can deal with this torment
  - 1. In your life
  - 2. In another's life – we try to talk sense into their heads
  - 3. Only God can change them
  - 4. And God wants to show us His power, and He wants to do something in our own lives.
- b. A subtle bondage of rejection
  - i. The "sane" men of Gadarene were in as big a bondage as were the two demon possessed.
  - ii. They pleaded with Jesus to leave their region.
  - iii. They were no better off than the two mad men.
- c. Mark tells us that after these men were delivered, one of the wanted to come with Jesus
 

**Mark 5:18** As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him. [19] Jesus did not let him, but said, "Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you." [20] So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis \* how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed.

  - i. Jesus did not turn away this new disciple.
  - ii. He was ready!!
- d. Sometime later Jesus came back to this region and here is what we read, **Mark 6:53 – 56**

(There is some debate about whether this was the same region, but I would love to think that this is was the fruit of that one new disciple. When they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret and anchored there. [54] As soon as they got out of the boat, people recognized Jesus. [55] They ran throughout that whole region and carried the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. [56] And wherever he went—into villages, towns or countryside—they placed the sick in the marketplaces. They begged him to let them touch even the edge of his cloak, and all who touched him were healed.

**Jesus has been preparing you as one of His representatives – even still today.**

**What a privilege it is!**

**He will do His work through you.**