

LESSONS FROM THE LIFE OF CHRIST

Forging Faith, Following Jesus

Session #2 Jesus the Effective Evangelist

Luke Chapter 5 Verses 27-32

“Come, follow me, Jesus said...” – Mark 1v 17

Sladebrook Evangelical Church

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Introduction and Aim of this Teaching Series:

We are followers of “*The Way*” (Acts 9v 2; 22v 4; 24v 14). Being Christian is not about adhering to strict rules or attaining some kind of spiritual superiority, nor is it about anything particularly religious. Following Jesus means exactly that. He simply says, “*Follow me*” (Mark 1v 17) offering us an invitation to go God’s way instead of our own. In order to do this, we look to the Lord and, by faith, seek to walk in the Way marked out by Christ Himself. However, Jesus never expected anyone to attempt what He would not do. So, as we trust His lead and look to His example, we can begin to make spiritual strides on the roads to maturity.

By following in the footsteps of Jesus, we discover more about who He is and what He would have us do. *How did Jesus act? What motivated Him? What are the priorities He wants us focus on?* One thing is for sure, there can be no standing still in the Christian life! If someone seeks to walk with you and you lag behind, steam on ahead, or even attempt an alternative route, you no longer walk together!

In this short series, we will attempt to look at some lessons from the life of Christ: Each week studying Christ’s own example to see how He exemplified what He now calls us to do. For us to grow as a church, we will need to go beyond the sermon, seeking to apply these principles in our own lives. To help in this, there are some discussion questions and practical opportunities to explore further in these notes.

The only evidence of Christian growth in our lives is how much we are becoming like Jesus. This challenge should be one that continues to inspire our Christian walk through life until, in a coming day, we present all that we have done before Christ Himself. So may these life lessons from Jesus help us to forge faith, by following Christ.

Lessons from the Life of Christ #2: Jesus the Effective Evangelist

Jesus never followed a programme. He rarely made use of any building, relied on any structures or routines. He didn't set targets, use literature, convene flashy meetings, or have any large media backing or entourage. Jesus didn't manipulate the emotions, or go overboard with strict doctrinal treatise. But despite all this, Jesus remains the most effective evangelist of all time! Over 2,000 years have past since His voice first called people to follow, yet He still draws people to Himself as devoted disciples of the living Christ. What then, can we learn from the life of Christ about effective evangelism?

The well-worn evangelistic grooves of modern evangelicals seem a long way from how the Lord reached out to the lost. Jesus witnessed powerfully to people in an authentic and compelling way. His was a life perfectly balanced; in step with the heartbeat of His Father, whilst, at the same time, attuned to the heartbreak of the people. As a result, a wonderful, spiritual spontaneity characterised His life and witness. Jesus walked within His world, immersing Himself within its needs, yet always prepared to confront its sinfulness and offer hope. As we read the Gospels, Jesus, the "friend of sinners" presents to us important lessons in how to reach out with the message of God's gospel grace, as we watch His Divine quest to save His people from His sins unfold.

Read: Luke Chapter 5 verses 27-32

- Jesus stepped out
- Jesus saw a tax collector
- Jesus spoke to Levi
- Jesus stayed for a banquet

As we examine our evangelistic hearts (for it is always a more a matter of motivation over method,) we need to look again at the structures, services, and events we tend to invest in and realise that Jesus only ever sought opportunities with real people, often in one-to-one situations. Do we care enough to start reinventing our personal witness for Christ? Only by investing time and energy with real people for the good of the Gospel can we ever expect to be effective evangelists.

Jesus: The Effective Evangelist

One of the great lessons we can learn from the life of Christ is how He reached out to people. The church can often appear to contradict her Master, waiting within her walls, wondering why no one comes in! The radical Redeemer at the heart of the Gospel sacrificially stepped out, in search of real people, real friends, real connections that led real blessing and salvation.

Effective Evangelism requires:

- **Contact:** with actual people.
- **Connection:** through common interest.
- **Conversation:** listen as well as speak.
- **Consecration:** remain pure, prayerful and passionate.
- **Commitment:** No pit stops, just perseverance.
- **Christ:** the focus, aim and end of it all.

Forging Faith by Following Christ:

- *In your own words, why do you think Jesus was an effective evangelist? (Try to avoid truisms like "He was God's Son!")*
- *How effective an evangelist do you think you are?*
- *What are the most important things that characterise an effective evangelist?*
- *If someone asked you, (for instance God on judgement day) "Are you a friend of sinners?" What would you say? How would you prove it?*
- *List some of the classic excuses Christians make for not committing to a life of personal witness. Challenge each one and try to come up with a positive remedy that counters them.*
- *Think of some non-Christian people you know and are prepared to invest in these ways. If necessary, ask God to put someone in your life! Commit to praying for their salvation. Ask God to give you an increasing burden for this.*
- *Think of some ways that you personally can commit to such people and witness authentically and effectively to them. Try to commit to doing so!*