

Monday Week 36 The Preaching of Jesus

Bible Reading: Matthew 4:12-17

Q 141 What did Jesus preach to the people?

A. Jesus preached that people should repent.

There is an old story about a dark and stormy night. A bridge was washed away by the high waters of a river. A man found out about the bridge and began stopping people. "Stop!" He shouted, as people came close to the river. "Turn around! The bridge is out!" The man was able to save many people from falling into the river.

When Jesus started preaching, he told people to repent. He knew that all are on their way to destruction. They need to stop and turn around. That's what it means to repent. All of us are born without God in our hearts. We all have sinned. Sin leads to death. Jesus doesn't want anybody to be destroyed. He came to turn people from their sins. He came to make us righteous. Jesus preached that people should repent so they would be saved. If you repent of your sins and believe in Jesus, you will be saved.

Thinking Deeper

Repentance is not a very popular subject, even among Christians. One widely read conservative author had this to say about repentance as part of the Gospel presentation: "Since the Bible doesn't specify repentance as part of the Gospel whereby sinners are saved, I dare not do so either."* The weakness in this statement is that Jesus began his Gospel preaching with repentance. He has been our model for preaching for two thousand years. "Repent and believe" has been the standard message of many evangelists. Yet in our day repentance has come to be viewed as an unnecessary distraction from the Gospel.

However, as one wrote years ago, the Gospel is not good news to people who don't know they are lost. Preaching repentance shows the need of a Savior. Preaching repentance gives an opportunity for the listener to respond in humility. That is important. The Bible says that God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble. Jesus preached repentance. People must repent so that they are in a place to truly believe the Gospel.

*Dave Hunt, "Q&A," *The Berean Call* (January 2000): 4.

Tuesday Week 36 The Preaching of Jesus

Bible Reading: Matthew 4:18-25

Q 142 What Gospel was Jesus preaching?

A. Jesus was preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom.

In 1980 the tiny African country of Swaziland had a celebration. King Sabuza had been the ruler for 60 years. When you crossed the border into Swaziland you were greeted by a banner stretched across the road that said “Welcome to King Sabuza’s Diamond Jubilee.” Even the Coke cans in Swaziland had a special message written on them giving honor to the king’s sixty-year celebration. The celebration was only in Swaziland, though, because that was Sabuza’s kingdom.

When Jesus preached the Gospel of the Kingdom he was preaching about God’s Kingdom. God’s Kingdom does not have boundaries like other countries. God rules in the hearts of people who believe in Him. The Kingdom Jesus preached about is in the hearts of men. Does Jesus rule in your heart? If He does, you are part of His Kingdom.

Thinking Deeper

Is it possible to have Jesus as Savior and not as Lord? This question was asked by John MacArthur in his book *The Gospel According to Jesus*. After studying the preaching of Jesus MacArthur concluded that it is **not** possible. For a person to be part of the Kingdom of God, God must rule in that person’s heart.

There is a story about D. L. Moody walking on a city street and being stopped by an alcoholic. “Mr. Moody, I’m one of your converts,” slurred the man. “I believe you are, Mister,” answered Moody, “For it is obvious that you are not one of the Lord’s converts.” How many false converts are there? Jesus said many will call him Lord who do not do God’s will but work iniquity.

How many will be truly in God’s Kingdom? All those who have been washed in Christ’s blood and who do God’s will. One day these will come from the north and the south and the east and the west from every kindred, tribe, tongue and nation and enter the joys of the Lord. No wonder Jesus preached the Gospel (good news) of the Kingdom. It is wonderful what God has prepared for those in His Kingdom.

Wednesday Week 37 The Preaching of Jesus

Bible Reading: Matthew 11:1-6

Q 143 Who did Jesus preach to that fulfilled prophecy?

A. Jesus preached to the poor.

A family that didn't have a lot of money listened to their preacher ask the congregation to give money for the poor. That family worked hard to save money, and when the Sunday came they were happy to put \$70 in the offering for the poor. Later that day the preacher came by their house with an envelope. He told them that the church wanted to help a poor family. He gave them the envelope and then left. The children were somewhat upset. "We're not a poor family! We gave to help a poor family." But they opened the envelope. And then they were even more upset. The offering for the poor was \$75. They had given \$70 of that! It seemed that others in the church didn't really care about the poor.

Jesus cared about the poor. He preached the Gospel to poor people. He was concerned about helping people who could not help others. He wanted them to know that even if nobody else cared, God did. Jesus gave hope and help to the poor. Jesus still cares about poor people. He wants us to care about those who are poor. He wants us to help them. Jesus wants the poor to get saved so that they will have treasures in heaven.

Thinking Deeper

There has been a divide in Christian thinking about ministering to the poor. Some see it as a "social gospel" which is a compromise of the Good News that Jesus saves from sin. What good does feeding the poor do if they eventually die and go to hell? They need the Gospel of Salvation. Others see it as the mandate for Christians to lift up the poor and fight for justice. If we allow injustice and poverty to go unaddressed, how are we fulfilling God's requirement to "do justly and to love mercy?" Some Christians seem to have a balance between the two. While some relief groups seldom, if ever, preach Jesus, others do good works of providing food, water and clothing as well as proclaim the Gospel. The early Methodists seemed to have had the two issues balanced.

The poor need to be fed and clothed – that is basic human compassion. But a poor man, fed and clothed and still a sinner needs the Gospel. Otherwise he will lose his soul, and Jesus asked, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" Jesus fed the hungry and preached the Gospel. We should follow his example and do both.

Thursday Week 37 The Preaching of Jesus

Bible Reading: Luke 4:14-42

Q 144 What did Jesus preach that brought hope?

A. Jesus preached that there was deliverance, freedom, and acceptance for sinners who repent.

In 1986, in the town of Midland, Texas, a little girl named Jessica fell into a well and was trapped. Rescue workers tried to get her out but she was hard to reach. For hours and hours they kept trying. While they were working, news reporters told people all over the United States and around the world about eighteen-month-old Jessica. Finally, after 58 hours, the team finally got her out. A great cheer went up as she was brought out of the well. People all over the nation and the world were happy that Jessica was saved. While Jessica was trapped, the rescuers kept calling to her, letting her know that help was on its way. They wanted to give her hope that things would get better.

Jesus preached to people who were slaves to sin. He gave them hope. They could be delivered. God would accept them if they would repent and believe. The Gospel is a message of hope.

Thinking Deeper

The young college professor was in bondage. He was not an alcoholic or a drug abuser. He had actually done quite well for himself—coming from a poor background but excelling academically and rising into the ranks of an honored profession. But he was in bondage to a sense of worthlessness. He said that he felt like a parasite on society. Was there deliverance from his inner dreariness? One day he heard the message of Jesus. It called him. If he could only meet Jesus! That day he did. In a moment of time he found Jesus as Lord and Savior. He was filled with hope. He was delivered from dreariness. He said that even the tree leaves looked greener and the sky looked brighter. From then on his life was marked by a special exuberance. Jesus gave him a bright hope and a cheerful witness to anyone who would listen.

The Gospel is like that. Jesus' message is one of deliverance and freedom. Jesus came preaching the Gospel that people can be delivered from sin and have hope in this life and also in the life to come. It really is good news.

Friday Week 37 The Preaching of Jesus

Review the Week's Questions

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A. Jesus preached that people should repent.

Q 142 What Gospel was Jesus preaching?

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Q 143 Who did Jesus preach to that fulfilled prophecy?

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Q 144 What did Jesus preach that brought hope?

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Three young boys were hiking in the Pennsylvania mountains. Their hike took them beside a highway with a cliff on one side. The older boys began climbing the cliff but the youngest didn't want to. He was scared. But he didn't want to be left behind so he tried to climb. He got part way up the cliff, but before he reached the top he stopped. He just couldn't make it any farther. He was clinging to the rocks and wondering how long he could hold on. Just then he felt a hand on his. He looked up into the face of his older brother. "I'll help you up." How relieved he was when his big brother helped him get to the top.

Jesus came to give help to people who were too weak to make it on their own. "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly" (Romans 5:6). Jesus preached that he would help those who could not be righteous on their own. If we call him, he will answer us. He is a wonderful savior.

Thinking Deeper

Jesus did not preach condemnation. He said he didn't come to condemn the world. He came to save it. Yet he preached repentance. He preached about heaven and hell. These are convicting themes. How is it that Jesus preached in such a way that people would be convicted, yet he didn't come to condemn the world? Jesus gave the answer when he said that unbelievers "are condemned already."

Without God's forgiveness men already stand condemned. Even if Jesus had never come into the world, the world would have stood condemned. Man is condemned as a lawbreaker, for all have sinned. Jesus' message convicted people because it showed them as sinners before a holy God. A conscience awakened by truth and convinced of lawbreaking will send out a guilty signal. That awakened sinner is in need of good news. He is in need of the Gospel. Jesus came into the world to save sinners. Christ died for our sins. There is hope. That is good news indeed.