

True Followers: Show Up Like Jesus

Something we need to understand about following Jesus, about our goal and desire to be a true follower of Him has to do with aligning words and actions.

Jesus not only taught us, he modeled what He was teaching. So in that light -

We know we are following Jesus not just when we learn what He taught but when we begin to also do what he did, when we begin to live like He did.

Because living like He did shows we have learned what He taught.

My dad was a builder. He could talk to me about building. But until I smashed my thumb with a hammer a few times, I couldn't drive a nail like him.

We drove nails together. When I drive a nail, you know I learned from a nail driver. Knowing isn't doing. But doing demonstrates knowing.

And I can do what my dad did, because He modeled what he was teaching me about building and construction.

So I have three big questions to help us become intentional about not just knowing what Jesus taught,
But doing what Jesus did.

Big Questions for today

1. What did Jesus do?
2. What can we do that Jesus did?
3. What does that look like?

Luke 19:1-10 NIV

1Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. **2**A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. **3**He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see over the crowd. **4**So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way. **5**When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, **“Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.”** **6**So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly. **7**All the people saw this and began to mutter, **“He has gone to be the guest of a sinner.”** **8**But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, **“Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.”** **9**Jesus said to him, **“Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham.”** **10**For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

Let's look at a few things from this account that answer our questions for today.

- What did Jesus do?

Answer #1 - He lived for the lost not for the Church.

Please understand. I am not throwing the church under the bus here. I want us to realize that if the church looks only inward and cherishes itself for all the great things we represent, but we lose sight of our mission to go into the world and make disciples, then we have missed the point of our existence as the church, the hope of the world today.

And if we look closely and if we follow Jesus through the gospel accounts. We will see consistently that every where Jesus went he was attempting to liberate both people who were trying to use religion to get an advantage as well as those people who were disadvantaged and bound by religion and religious leaders of the day.

Jesus was and is always after reclaiming the lost and inviting all of us into restored relationship with Him.

The text we just looked at said Zacchaeus was up in a fig tree. The fig tree throughout scripture was a type of Israel as a nation. And in another account in the Bible Jesus cursed the fig tree because it wasn't bearing fruit. He didn't do that because he was hungry and having a bad day. He did that as a prophetic statement against what the nation had become under the worst version of the Old Covenant Law.

Because the loudest voices in leadership in his day had become religious oppressors instead of fruit bearers for the kingdom. Like Zacchaeus - we often try to get a glimpse of Jesus and try to get to him through religion. But Jesus says to us - get out of the tree and have a relationship with me.

Mark 2:17 NIV

On hearing this, Jesus said to them, **"It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."**

- What can we do that Jesus did?

Answer #2 - We can live for the lost not for the Church.

2 Corinthians 5:18 NIV And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him.

The reason we are free is to help free others. Free people free people!

If we remember how lost we were and still are at times - maybe we can regain a passion to help people find the answers a relationship with Jesus as Lord and Savior has to offer.

The definition of lost.

I would define lost as - anyone or anything that isn't experiencing freedom in Christ Jesus.

Luke 4:18 NIV

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, . . ."

We need to be reminded that the worst outcome of religion often manifests as oppression. Religion can be an oppressor. And it can make you an oppressor.

Because religious rules without relationship produces rebellion against the real. Against the authentic. It doesn't lead people to relationship it actually drives them away from it.

We have an epidemic of second generation Christ followers who for some reason didn't get enough of the reality of a relationship in their Christian upbringing. Because an authentic relationship with Jesus doesn't deny doubts - it faces them and welcomes the hard questions. And invites grace and help to be a part of our faith journey. It invites Jesus to be present and at the center of our lives even in the questioning.

It's unfortunate but religion often times represses doubt as sin. Instead of realizing it as an invitation to go deeper.

As a result the un-answered or denied questions have left a generation ship-wrecked and questioning the legitimacy of the founders faith.

And that generation is part of this idea of lost that we should be living for, just like Jesus did.

Let's try and answer our final question.

- What does that look like? (to live for the lost and not the church)

How do we identify the lost? - Well it's not what we might think. It isn't about putting people in buckets of who is more sinful than us or grading someone on behavior.

It's about being a real representative of Jesus and when we do that then something wonderful happens.

- The lost will show up when Jesus shows up.

In other words, they will find you as long as you are visible and available. Have you ever heard the phrase when the student is ready the teacher appears? People are supposed to see a change in you.

They are supposed to see that you are on a journey. Not that you are perfect. But that your trajectory is different.

They are supposed to sense grace, forgiveness, compassion, character, and they are supposed to see some spiritual fruit and many other evidences of your relationship with Jesus. And all that - because of the presence of Jesus in your life - should draw a crowd.

Example of People Looking to me For Help

For some reason the way I have dressed at times or the way I carry myself in public will make people think I am an employee at a store.

I don't know if that's good or bad. Lol.

But I will be minding my business at Kohls or Macy's and someone will either ask, "Do you work here,?" or they will just ask me, "Where are the appliances located?"

And to be honest there are times where I just tell them where it is and never mention I don't work there.

Other times I say, "I don't know, but let's find it together, let's go get you some help."

See - When you're around people who are lost - and they notice something different in you and about you - you're going to get all kinds of questions. Your life example will start to answer some of those questions.

But if you don't have the answer, that's fine - you just have to say, "I don't know, but I know who has the answer. Let's go find out together." Let's follow Jesus together.

Luke 5:15 NIV

Yet the news about him spread all the more, so that crowds of people came to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses.

How do we show up like Jesus?

In other words, how will people know when Jesus shows up through us? Again this isn't that complicated. It's very simple.

You can show up like Jesus when you:

- Let people into your life. (Like Jesus did with Zacchaeus)

When I become a part of the lives of my neighbors - salvation has come to their house. Jesus in me is their path to salvation.

Be the best you that you can be - full of grace with all your imperfections. Be humble and transparent.

The Holy Spirit will help you share what needs to be shared when it needs to be shared.

You can show up like Jesus if you:

- Show them your relationship with Jesus not religion , rituals or routine.

They don't need to know your rules **they don't need to care about what you know.** They need to **know that you care about them.**

They don't need to know **what you think about them** they need to know **what Jesus thinks about them.**

If you have just started following Jesus or if you have been following Him for a long long time this concept never changes.

It's simple but not easy.

I want to invite you to just start showing up like Jesus and let Him do what He wants to do.

If you aren't already there would you head on over to graceandpeace.org and check out the next steps page and see about taking some steps towards a relationship with Jesus today.

Here's what you can do to take some possible next steps in your faith journey towards the Lord Jesus Christ.

Next Steps:

Give your life to Jesus for the first time, or give it to Him again today.
Plan to interact with a co-worker or neighbor in a relational seeking way.

Memorize

Luke 19:10

10For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

Confession: The mission of Jesus was to seek and save the lost, so I will be intentional about seeking and saving the lost in His name and for His glory.