



THE BRIDGE

What did Jesus Teach



What Did Jesus Teach?

Jesus had a unique way of teaching. He spoke with authority and used object-lessons and storytelling as a way to relate to his audience to get His point across.

Jesus taught his disciples, the general audience, the religious leaders and teachers and it really impacted His listeners. It was encouraging for the general audience as they were used to being taught in complicated and convoluted ways, which made the understanding of who God is and what He requires of us very difficult. Although Jesus taught in parables (story form), He did it in a way that the audience could understand, relating it to their everyday life making it memorable and meaningful to them.

People were fearful of the “*aloof, unseen and most powerful God*” and the leaders perpetuated this fear because it kept people under their control. Yes, Jesus taught about the unseen and powerful God, but he also taught that God was and is an all-loving and merciful God, who understood their needs and circumstances. He taught that God wanted to protect and shelter them, and give them “**everlasting life**”.

Love in action

Jesus wanted them to understand that He didn't come to abolish the old law (The 10 commandments) but to fulfil the law, showing them a heartfelt understanding of what that meant. It was not only about following the strict prohibitive actions of the law, but it was about a change of heart. A development of mind and heart to a real genuine love for God and love for their fellow men. From this type of love (from a changed heart), obedience to the law becomes easier to achieve. For instance, the law said "*thou shalt not murder*" but Jesus took it one stage further to say if you hate your brother/neighbour/anyone then you have already committed murder in your heart.

Jesus not only taught by words but by living example:

- He healed the sick,
- He had compassion for the unfortunate,
- He showed love to and fed the poor,
- He berated:
 - the rich for not giving freely,
 - the judgemental,
 - the compassionless,
 - the haters,
 - the unforgiving, and
 - the wicked

Jesus even berated the leaders who thought more about their status and position than their duty to the poor, or their duty to their people, and most of all their duty to God as leaders of His chosen nation (Israel).

Kingdom living

In the **Sermon on the Mount**, Jesus taught the “*Be Attitudes*”. The attitudes we must have to be Christ-like, to have a full and comprehensive relationship with God (Matthew 5:1-12), and He said that only people who have this nature would inherit the Kingdom of God and gain everlasting life.

The Kingdom of God is present here on Earth now, where believers live under the protection of Christ and strive to follow the “*Be-Attitude*” guidelines. But it is ultimately a place in the future where it will be standard practice for one and all to live the “*Be-attitudes*”. A place to come where believers will actually live with Jesus and with God forever, where the old sinful world will have passed away to usher in the new sinless world where there will be unspeakable joy and glorious peace (Revelation 21:1-4 & 14-21) Shalom.

The ultimate Father-Child relationship

Jesus said that the image we should have of God is as our Father, which in those days was unheard of as God was then considered to be an all-powerful but distant and unapproachable God. The Father image was the one Jesus planted in the hearts of the people and His followers, today, as then, so that we could understand how much God loves and cares for us. Jesus relayed the image of God the Father, as a good parent who is committed to the welfare of His children.

Jesus clearly demonstrated that a believer’s lifestyle includes a clear social dimension involving our fellow humans, other creatures and even with ourselves. It is not just a purely private and spiritual journey, solely about an established relationship with God.

It's about the importance of fellowship (a friendly relationship; companionship) with each other and that includes every human being.

Inclusion

Jesus was all about inclusivity, much to the disgust of many in high society. He was radically inclusive and repeatedly reached out to those rejected and on the fringes of society. He actively tried to affirm their value and worth in the eyes of God. He ministered to lepers (Luke 5:12 &13) and touched them, something that was against the strict cleanliness rules of the Levitical Laws. He ate with tax collectors (Mark 2:13-17), who were known for being corrupt, and associated with the Romans who openly cheated people out of their monies. He allowed a woman who was considered unclean (Mark 5:25-34), due to her flow of blood (she suffered this for 12 years straight), to come into physical contact with Him, which was another breach of Levitical Law.

The religious leaders and teachers referred to Him as 'the friend of republican and sinners' intending it to be an insult; But instead it worked in Jesus's favour in attracting those in need, as it was a positive reminder of His embracing message of love that was available to all.

Discipleship

When Jesus healed people of their diseases, He was described as *'freeing them from the power of Satan'*. You see, when He healed them many responded by thanking and worshipping God, changing their lives, and even becoming disciples themselves.

He welcomed such responses, but never demanded it. Jesus could have chosen to use more drastic measures to secure acceptance of His teachings, (after all he was the Son of God - the creator of the world), but He wanted people to submit to God willingly and of their own freewill.

Jesus taught about the vital importance of getting and remaining close to God by prayer. Although He was and is the Son of God and came from God's heavenly realm, when He was on earth He still felt it was the most important requirement; to remain close to God, to talk to God as we would a parent or a friend, not for God's benefit (as He is all knowing), but for our benefit so that we can constantly feel He is close to us. Jesus prayed all the time, and even repeated an example of a model prayer for our aid; The Lord's Prayer (Luke 11;1-10).

Jesus never viewed (and still does not) anyone as a complete write-off and beyond redemption. Regardless of the mistakes they make in their lives, there is always the chance of repentance and creating a new life. In the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke & John) we see so many examples of people who, through belief in the message of salvation and faith, were able to renew their lives.

Jesus said:

"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man come to the Father (into a full and loving relationship with God) without first going through me" (John 14:6).

This means, we must believe that Jesus came as the Son of God, lived as a man, died on the cross, was resurrected, went back to God, and sent his Holy Spirit to live in us to help us live the life God expects of us.





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