

Sermon – Who is Jesus? Preacher Matthew

Pastor Ed Blonski | February 5, 2023

Introduction

Today, we're starting a new message series called "Who is Jesus?"

On the one hand, this may sound a bit weird, to ask this question in a Christian church.

"Of course, everybody here knows who Jesus is!"

And that may be true, for the most part.

On the other hand, and I know it is true for me, that even being a follower of Jesus literally all my life, I'm still learning things about Jesus.

Sometimes it is something I knew but had forgotten.

Sometimes it is something nuanced and deeper about something I've known about Jesus all along.

And sometimes it is actually something new that I never knew before.

I suspect this is your experience as well.

So, "Who is Jesus?"

Who Jesus Is

This will be a shorter message series, so we'll only tackle three answers to this question.

1. Preacher

Jesus is a "preacher." That's what I'll cover today.

2. Teacher

I'll also dig a little deeper into who Jesus is by looking at Jesus as a "teacher."

3. Son of God (Transfiguration)

And finally, we'll explore the answer to "Who is Jesus" with the answer, "The Son of God."

I'm really looking forward to digging deeper into that.

Who Jesus Is: Preacher



Let's turn our focus on Jesus as preacher.

I looked up the definition of preacher and the first one I got was "a person who preaches."

Not terribly helpful, so I looked up "preach" and what I got was to "deliver a sermon or religious address to an assembled group of people."

That gets us closer to helpful.

Finally, I looked up "sermon." And a sermon is a talk on a religious or moral subject.

That certainly sounds like it is in the wheelhouse of Jesus!

Since you are here in church, or online with us, you all have had experiences with a "preacher."

Those experiences cover the spectrum between god-awful to good to great to .. well ... Jesus!

I've heard a lot of preachers in my life, probably more than most of you.

And I've learned a lot from those preachers – true, most of what I learned was how not to preach, but still I learned from them!

There are a handful of preachers that I could listen to all the time – and one or two that I actually do, listening to their sermons on my drives to and from Round Lake.

Jesus is the greatest preacher in history.

But the greatest preacher in history is, hands down, Jesus Christ.

We have two of what could be termed as actual sermons of Jesus recorded in the Gospels.

The Sermon on the Mount in Matthew and the Sermon on the Plain in Luke.

But really, all the red letters in the Gospels could be considered in designating Jesus the greatest preacher.

1. What Made His Preaching Great

As I look at those, I can see three things that made Jesus' preaching great.

a) He Told Stories

First, Jesus told stories.

“A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers.”

“There was a man who had two sons.”

These are some of the most famous stories in history.

b) He Drew People in with His Stories

Second, Jesus drew people in with His stories.

His stories were not about things “a long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away.” He didn't tell stories about characters and situations on exotic and strange planets.

Jesus's stories were easily relatable to the people who heard them.

Jesus' stories could easily have been about the people right in front of him.

They were real, they were about real issues and situations that you and I and all people everywhere go through.

c) His Stories Had Multiple Levels

And third, Jesus' stories had multiple levels. There is a richness and depth to His stories that reach into our souls no matter who we are or how hold we are.

Every kid who ever went to Sunday school knows the story of the Good Samaritan.

But as you get older, get out on your own as an adult, and start to live life, this same story about helping someone in need reveals the depth of other lessons: racism, religiosity, hypocrisy, the cost of caring.

So much of Jesus' preaching had these three things – story telling, drawing people in, and multi-level and multi-faceted lessons.

2. His stories are not only world-renowned, but also literally life-changing.

But more important than Jesus being the greatest preacher was that His preaching is literally life-changing.

a) His Stories Conveyed Great Truth

Jesus' stories changed lives because they conveyed great truth.

The truth that all people are sinners. That people are all lost in their sins.

But also the great truth that God loves them all. That God sends a Savior to save them from their sins.

b) His Stories Changed the Lives of His Hearers

And this changes the lives of those who hear Jesus preach.

And I don't just mean the thousands who heard Jesus for those three years of His earthly ministry.

Yes, their lives were changed. So much so that they "turned the world upside" as it says in the Book of Acts.

But Jesus also changed the lives of the billions who have "heard" Jesus preach through His called and ordained ministers, pastors, missionaries, and teachers ever since.

So much so that the world has been forever changed!

So many people have heard the preaching of Jesus in the last 2000 years.

But today, there are those who say that sermons don't have the same effect they once had.

You've heard "Don't preach to me!"

“Papa, don’t preach!”

What’s a preacher to do?

Have you Ever Noticed that We listen to sermons all the time.

There’s still hope!

Today, in the 21st Century after Jesus, people still listen to sermons pretty much all the time. They just don’t realize they are listening to a sermon.

TED Talks

Who here as listened to a TED Talk? That’s a kind of sermon.

Podcasts

How about a podcast? That, too, is a sermon.

The morals of movies or TV shows

Even the movies and TV shows we watch today preach to us. They preach to us the morals and values that the writers and producers of those movies and TV shows want us to know and put into practice in our lives.

Why Don’t We Notice that They Are Sermons?

Why don’t we notice that these, too, are sermons just as much as what you hear each week here at St. Matthew and in countless churches around the world?

They Impact Us on Levels We Don’t Always Realize

We don’t realize that they are preaching to us because they tend to impact us on levels we don’t always realize or are aware of.

1. We Watch TED Talks, Listen to Podcasts, and Watch our Shows to be Entertained

So many listen to a TED Talk, or podcast, or watch a TV show or movie to be entertained, and to a lesser extent, to learn something.

What we usually do, however, is watch or listen to these in order to escape our everyday life and world.

There is even a word for this: it is called “escapism.”

Certainly no one wants to escape the day-to-day sameness of life by listening to a lecture or a lesson or a sermon!

2. But We Connect to Them Without Our Noticing

But what makes a TED Talk, or a podcast, or a TV show or movie really great is that we connect to them on a deeper level, sometimes without our even noticing.

A good example of this is *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*.

It is a fantasy tale for children, with talking animals and exciting action.

It is a moralistic tale of good versus evil.

And it is an allegory of the story of Jesus Christ and His salvation of sinners.

Almost all of our favorite modes of media story-telling do this kind of preaching.

Jesus Did Something More as a Preacher

What made Jesus the greatest preacher of all was that He did all this and more.

Jesus was brutally honest about us.

Jesus was brutally honest about us.

Jesus never pulled any punches with people. He called out our sin. He called us sinners. He calls out what we are doing wrong and sometimes even points it out to other people!

Now, if Jesus only did that, He would just be cruel.

But Jesus does more than just be brutally honest about us.

Jesus was brazenly in love with us.

Jesus shows that He is brazenly in love with us.

Jesus comes to us right where we are.

He goes to the well with the Samaritan woman.

He goes to the lepers in need of healing.

He takes the hand of a sick woman, touches the eyes of a blind man, cups His hands over the ears of a deaf man.

Jesus comes to each one of us with a deep, abiding, and unconditional love (also called agape love).

Jesus was bodaciously inviting to us into His sermon

On top of all this, Jesus bodaciously invites us into His sermon.

His sermon is actually His life!

And Jesus did this for you and for me, and so he brings us into His sermon!

1. The Sermon of His Life (BLDRA)

That he was born to be our substitute; lived perfectly to be our righteousness by faith; died on the cross to forgive all sin; rose from the grave so that we, too, will rise from the grave one day; and ascended into heaven with the promise to come back and take all believers in him to heaven.

Everything that Jesus did, taught, and preached was always about this – the Gospel of Salvation that God promised He would bring.

2. The Sermon of our Lives (Evangelism)

And when we are brought into His sermon, our very lives become His sermon.

For we become followers of Jesus and begin a life of telling others about Him.

And this is how the church exploded in growth at the beginning.

But something was lost in the 4th Century and throughout the Dark Ages.

Preaching became a lost art when the Church become the dominant politically authority.

That is, until a certain German monk in the 16th Century rediscovered the glorious gift of preaching!

The church – especially the Lutheran church – is built upon preaching.

The Church was originally built on the power of preaching Jesus, preaching the Gospel.

And this has been the mainstay of the Lutheran church since the 1500's.

Whatever else our worship services look like in the Lutheran Church, there will nearly always be preaching involved.

Good sermons are the ones we don't realize are sermons.

Lately I've been learning that some good sermons today are very often ones we don't even realize are sermons.

They are couched in great story telling, engaging multi-media presentations, and just a life well-lived as a follower of Jesus.

The best sermons about Jesus are our lives.

In fact, I think the best sermons about Jesus are not ones you necessarily hear from a pulpit.

The best sermons about Jesus are your lives as a follower of Jesus.

When you live your life giving glory to God in everything you do, that is part of fulfilling the mandate of making disciples of all nations!

As Jesus said, "let your light [that is, your life] shine before others, so that they may see your goodworks and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."

As Luther said, "*If [a person] is a Christian tailor, he will say: I make these clothes because God has bidden me do so, so that I can earn a living, so that I can help and serve my neighbor.*"

As we live our lives as followers of Jesus ...

So I'll conclude by saying that your very life is a "sermon" of sorts. How you live your life can powerfully point people to Jesus.

...we "preach" into the boundless need of our neighbors.

When you see a need in your neighbor – part of the boundless need I'm constantly talking about – you can "preach" by meeting that need by ...

...we "preach" the boundless love of Christ

Helping them, provide resources to them, or just being there to talk and pray with them.

This is how you "preach" the boundless love of Christ that meets all needs!

...we "preach" the boundless hope of eternal life.

So, live your life with boundless hope – and that will spill over into other people's lives.

Who is Jesus? He was the greatest preacher in history.

He is also the best sermon you will ever preach because Jesus is your life.

Jesus – the preacher. He has done so much for you. Live that life and your life will be a “Jesus sermon” for others.