

LIFE GROUP LESSON

Just Like Jesus • Week of March 29

Introduction

How would your life be different if you really did become *Just Like Jesus*? Ponder this for a moment. If this desire resonates in your spirit, ask the Lord to open your eyes and envision what you long for. Ask the Lord (Christ in you!) to embolden you to begin the journey of becoming *Just Like Jesus*. Put faith to work and start exercising the hope within you. Pray:

Come Lord Jesus. Fill me with your Holy Spirit and fuel my imagination to see what you see. Lord, I expect your Spirit to work in my heart and help me to become more like Jesus. Strengthen me to live into God's Word. Lord, I understand there will be suffering ahead. But I trust you, and with your help, I will walk with you, my Lord and my Savior, the Shepherd of my soul. Amen.

Background

Read the encounter that directly precedes our primary text.

Read Luke 7:36-50

We are often tempted to write some people off – difficult or dirty people, people who drain us, test us, or ‘gaslight’ us. But Jesus turns no one away. He receives those who are ready to listen and obey. He speaks truth to those whose hearts have grown in-different. Though the truth may sting, we need to hear every word Jesus has to say to us, and he has a word for each of us today. What stands out to you in this story of Jesus at the home of a Simon, a Pharisee, and the ‘certain immoral woman’ who brings the alabaster jar of perfume?

- What word did Jesus have for Simon (vv41-42, 44-47)?
- What word did Jesus have for the woman (v48, 50)?

Today's Primary Text: Read Luke 8:1-18

Jesus is on a preaching tour of towns and villages in the area, having taken along his disciples *and* women who had begun to follow and support his ministry, and he tells a story. The story Jesus tells (vv4-8) is a living word picture of what is happening before their very eyes. Here they are with Jesus, along with the crowds; and Jesus like a farmer, is spreading seed, the *Word of God*. They see it happening. They are part of the scene ... yet, they don't really *see* and understand what is happening.

Jesus explains how when a farmer is planting, some seed falls on a footpath. Some on shallow, rocky soil. Some among thorns. And some on good soil, yielding a huge harvest. And he concludes, “Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand.” But

Jesus' own disciples do not quite understand. How do we know? They come to him, apart from the crowds, and ask him what the parable means. This is the best thing we can do when we don't understand. Get alone with Jesus (or come together) and ask him.

Notice Jesus explains his use of parables is fulfilling Scripture, and thus, patiently explains the meaning. According to Jesus' words in vv11-15:

- What is the seed?
- What do the different soils represent?
- According to vv16-18, how does Jesus further explain such truths as *faith, living in the daylight, spiritual maturity* and one's heart-condition for *understanding*?

Where are you in the story? Using the metaphor of soil, share the condition of your heart:

- Are you receptive to God's Word?
- Is the ground of your heart tender or tough? Let's be honest...
- Is your heart taking in seeds of darkness or seeds of daylight?
- Is temptation causing your heart to become infertile?
- Are the cares of this life filling your heart and choking out the seed?

Perhaps the soil of your heart is good and fertile at this point in your journey. If so, praise the Lord and give him the glory. Consider sharing with Life Group participants a word of encouragement and/or admonition.

- What can we do if we find our hearts hard and non-productive for Christ's Kingdom?
- What does Jesus pray in **John 17:13-19**? How are we made holy?

Jesus Christ is willing to forgive us of *all sin* – every debt cancelled – if we come to him humbly with a broken and contrite heart. We cannot pretend to be broken. The woman in our background story was not pretending. She was truly broken, and Jesus saw the true condition of her heart. He also knew the condition of the soil in Simon's heart. Perhaps there are clods in our hearts that need to be broken and cleared of debris.

- What might tilling, fertilizing, and smoothing out rough places look like?
- Thinking about story of the ‘certain immoral woman’ who comes into Simon's home (Luke 7:36-50) as a precursor to Jesus' preaching the parable of the seed, how is a broken heart prepped for good seed that yields a huge harvest?
- Can you think of other examples in Scripture, when we see this? Share briefly.

In Closing

Ask yourself, Do I love like Jesus?

Do I serve like Jesus?

Do I give and forgive like Jesus?

The Via Dolorosa is *the Way of Suffering*. We may never come to a place of brokenness

and repentance unless we journey with Jesus this week. On the eve of his suffering, after eating Passover with the twelve, Jesus crosses the Kidron Valley and enters a grove of olive trees where he often prayed. He agonizes in prayer until temple guards arrive and take him bound to the high priest's home. Here religious leaders question and falsely accuse him in the middle of the night. Early morning hours Jesus is taken to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, who regretfully comes to a verdict: guilty ... as crowds demand his crucifixion. Jesus is taken away, after being beaten and spat upon, and carries his cross through Jerusalem, to a place called Golgotha. There Jesus is nailed to that cross. On the cross Roman soldiers lift the cross, with Jesus on it, and place it back down into the ground. On public display between two criminals, after six hours of indescribable abandonment, Jesus finally cries out: IT IS FINISHED ... reminding us of his words:

"I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat is planted in the soil and dies, it remains alone. But its death will produce many new kernels—a plentiful harvest of new lives" (John 12:24).

Our only hope is in Jesus Christ. His scars forever prove his love for you and me. After a moment of silence, let us close by reading together:

Who has believed our message? To whom has the LORD revealed his powerful arm? My servant grew up in the LORD's presence like a tender green shoot, like a root in dry ground. There was nothing to attract us to him. He was despised and rejected—a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief. We turned our backs on him and looked the other way. He was despised, and we did not care. Yet it was our weakness he carried; it was our sorrows that weighed him down. And we thought his troubles were a punishment from God, a punishment for his own sins! But he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed. All of us, like sheep, have strayed away. We have left God's paths to follow our own. Yet the LORD laid on him the sins of us all. He was oppressed and treated harshly, yet he never said a word. He was led like a lamb to the slaughter. And as a sheep is silent before the shearers, he did not open his mouth. Unjustly condemned, he was led away ... He had done no wrong and had never deceived anyone. But he was buried like a criminal; he was put in a rich man's grave... (Isaiah 53:1-8a,9).

One Year Bible Reading

- Mar. 29: Deuteronomy 11:1-12:32, Luke 8:22-39, Psalm 70:1-5, Proverbs 12:4
- Mar. 30: Deuteronomy 13:1-15:23, Luke 8:40-9:6, Psalm 71:1-24, Proverbs 12:5-7
- Mar. 31: Deuteronomy 16:1-17:20, Luke 9:7-27, Psalm 72:1-20, Proverbs 12:8-9
- Apr. 1: Deuteronomy 18:1-20:20, Luke 9:28-50, Psalm 73:1-28, Proverbs 12:10
- Apr. 2: Deuteronomy 21:1-22:30, Luke 9:51-10:12, Psalm 74:1-23, Proverbs 12:11
- Apr. 3: Deuteronomy 23:1-25:19, Luke 10:13-37, Psalm 75:1-10, Proverbs 12:12-14
- Apr. 4: Deuteronomy 26:1-27:26, Luke 10:38-11:13, Psalm 76:1-12, Prov.12:15-17



Text: Deut. 11:1, Luke 8:1-11, Matthew 5:43-48

PLAIN TRUTH:

Being Just Like Jesus is about _____,
which is _____ under _____.

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