

I am working on a series entitled: "Sitting at the feet of Jesus: Passion of the Christ" – wherein we just sort of sit with Him and learn as much as we can about Him and try to be like Him in every way.

This series has come together in somewhat of a reverse order. We started a few weeks ago by looking at WHAT JESUS DID at the Samaritan Well. We looked at seven things He did and leveled out a challenge to take our invite cards or 4 lesson study booklets and do likewise with people who aren't yet Christians.

But as I told you two weeks later (last week), I got overwhelmed with all of it and almost did nothing. That is, until I thought of three little words: "Love Your Neighbor." You see, I can't successfully DO WHAT JESUS DID, until I am able to FEEL WHAT JESUS FELT. He loved people. He loved to help people. So we looked at His willingness to love Zaccheus, Levi and others and challenged us to do that same with the parable of the Good Samaritan: expand the definition of neighbor, care about and help other people.

I hope that made your week better, but it probably didn't affect everyone. There were probably some who tried to be more evangelistic, by trying to FEEL love for their neighbor, but it just didn't seem to move the needle and create real change. Fret not – it is my fault. I needed to step back one more step.

You see, you can't DO what Jesus DID unless you can FEEL what Jesus FELT... But you can't FEEL what Jesus FEELS until your first BECOME who Jesus IS. You have to BE like Him, at your core, in heart.

Why did Jesus evangelize to the Lost and wash Brethren's feet – because He loved them all. Why did He love the all? Because of who He is, his core programming, his character. You want to be a Christian, learn who He is and be like Him. Then comes love, then comes service.

So, how would you describe Jesus? Well, there is one particular place in the Gospels where He does that for us. It is a short, 7 word phrases, a rare moment, when Jesus looks at the crowd and says, "This is who I am." **Matthew 28:18-20. -- "I am Meek and Lowly in Heart."**

You can talk about authority and worship and being a Christian and any number of things that make us feel secure in our faith, but none of it, not one piece of it matters, unless we are first like our Savior, from the inside out. He was Meek and Lowly in Heart and everything He felt and did grew out of that, and so it must be for His disciples.

Let's begin with a little word study to try and identify what He is saying about Himself – note from the text it is this condition of heart that causes Him to invite people to Him and to provide rest – love His neighbor and evangelize! I want this heart!

Gentle: *"mildness of disposition, gentleness of spirit, meekness"*

Not to say He did not get upset at times and flip the tables in the temple when God was being dishonored, but outside of that story – how many times was HE done wrong? How many times was He not treated at all like a neighbor? Do you remember the outbursts He had about that? Me neither. Do you remember Him walking away from people and writing them off? Yeah, me neither. Though people sinned against Him, disappointed Him, and maligned Him, he was MILD, GENTLE, CONTROLLED, for their good.

Matt. 23:37-38 – The truth is they would suffer for their sin, but He was not angrily beating them with that judgment. In fact He said little of it, when He entered Jerusalem for the last time. Why not? He was Gentle. From the core of His being He wanted to gather them up and save them – compassion reigned.

I Peter 3:1-4, 15-16 – from a challenging marriage to the rebuke of the world, how do you keep loving your neighbor and doing good and helping those who need to grow – Christ like gentleness. A behavior, growing out of a heart of mildness and control that seeks to HELP and never HURT, no matter whom.

Lowly in Heart: *"not rising far from the ground" "lowly, of low degree, humble"*

Jesus lowered Himself. Jesus took the lower position. Jesus carried no pride or self-justification. Jesus stooped lowly enough to reach sinners like us. Jesus placed other people, sinners, needs above His own. That's who He was. Is it any wonder He loved His neighbor and sought to save them?

Two examples come to mind: One is the washing of the disciples feet. He took the lowest position in the room to SERVE other people. And of course, **Phil. 2:5-8** – He went from the highest place, and took a position lower than you or me, bearing all our sins and suffering and dying. In the room, in the world, in all things, He would take a position of servitude and submission, to SERVE and HELP other people.

Romans 12:10,16 – *Jesus was above us all in glory, but took the position of SERVANT (and still does). If we are going to be devoted to one another, or our neighbor in evangelism, we have to associate with those beneath us in faith, in fortune, in life.... Do you know how? Not by pity. No. By lowering ourselves, taking the position of lowest and debased in the room and looking up to even the poorest, even the most sinful, to SERVE and HELP and LOVE them. That's where my Jesus found me. At the bottom, but He went lower, even to death on the cross to serve my needs. Amen?*

Let's focus back on Jesus a moment – I want to show you 4 comparisons – where we look at How He Was compared with How He Could Have Been! (How most would have been). It will concrete in place what it means to say He is "gentle and lowly in spirit." It will show why He chose to love us. And I pray it will become the template for your week, for your life, as you love your neighbor, your enemy, your brother.

1. Jesus was PATIENT when others would be HARSH

- a. Sure there were times He was direct – flipping tables when they dishonored God
- b. Or when He told the venomous Pharisees they were hypocrites
- c. But that was not His nature – if it were, He would have been harsh with all
- d. When Peter cut off Malchus' ear, Jesus put it back on – "That's now what we are doing here."
- e. When James and John wanted to destroy a village – "That's not why I'm here"
- f. He was patient with them as well! They made so many mistakes, but He kept praying and teaching and staying with them, and seeking to make them better.
- g. *Want to be like Jesus: Even when you have a right to be angry or to get upset or to respond harshly... be patient, constructive, focused on being the calming and holy influence.*

2. Jesus was SAVING when others would CONDEMN

- a. He could have condemned everyone! All are sinners. He is perfect. He is God.
- b. But He didn't, or at least He didn't want to. He came to seek and save, to help.
- c. **John 8:7-11** – She was guilty. He didn't ignore the sin, but He came to save, not condemn.
- d. We can not condone, but also not condemn, we know that right? It's called SAVE, HELP.
- e. **John 12:47-48** – His words did judge the world and will in the judgment, but His focus is upon His core heart's mission, not to strike you down, but lift you up, help and save you.
- f. *Want to be like Jesus: stop measuring other's sins worst than your own and condemning, lecturing, attacking... Jesus didn't do that. Start by seeing your own need for help, and then offer that same guidance, sternly when needed, but purposeful effort to save.*

3. Jesus was APPROACHABLE when others would be ALOOF

- a. He is God. Perfect. Holy. King. We are none of those things. The gap between Him and us, any of us, all of us, is enormous. But, He came here. Not as some ruling One demanding others come to Him. He came to us. He went to Tax Collector's houses, approached a man in a tree. His power went out to heal a woman who touched His cloak. He sat at a well and spoke to a woman who came.
- b. **Matthew 11:28-30** – COME TO ME. I WILL GIVE YOU REST.
- c. *Want to be like Jesus: be approachable. Be someone others can come to, can be comfortable around, can talk to and listen to. Ex) guy on a plane glaring at passers by, with his briefcase in the set next to him. We can be like that in our lives. Stay away from my bubble. Couldn't Jesus have been that way. No, He humbled Himself to help us.*
- d. *Less time staring into our phones and more time being someone others can interact with... and you will, from the very act of being approachable, feel love for others, and be evangelistic.*

4. Jesus was LEADING for the PEOPLE not for HIMSELF

- a. He is not your typical King. 1) He is mightier than anyone who has ever lived. 2) He never, in any way, lorded that power over anyone. Instead, He brought Himself down to the people, beneath them even, and went with them, and accepted their meager efforts to honor Him as the best they had. **Matthew 21:1-9** – He treasured the faith of the people, but He did not need or demand much of them: a donkey, coats and branches.
- b. AND NOW, even now, as He sits in a place of majesty, what is He doing: Serving You. Intercessor, High Priest, Sacrifice, Cleaners, bringing us to God in Holiness. Our King rules to serve, to lift up, He leads to ... lead... people to a better place.
- c. *Want to be like Jesus: be a leader. But be a leader like Him. WITH the people under your influence, FOR them, wanting to see their best and see them excel, and living for it.*

Why did He give His life to lead us to God? Because He loved us. Why does He love us? Because of who He is: a person of gentleness in heart, of lowliness in spirit. Lowering Himself to lift us up. Go and do likewise.