

# Jesus - the Greatest Preacher

by Keith Malcomson

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*Jesus' preaching is a public proclamation of God's message, calling people to repentance and faith in Him.*

**Scripture:** Genesis 1:5, Genesis 3:9, Mark 1:14, Luke 4:17, Luke 24:47

**Topics:** "Jesus Christ", "Gospel Preaching"

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## Description

Keith Malcomson delves into the significance of Jesus as a preacher, emphasizing the public proclamation and widespread message of the Gospel. He explores the lineage of preachers in the Old Testament, leading to the era heralded by John the Baptist and the apostolic preachers around Christ. Jesus, ordained by God as a Preacher, fulfilled the prophecy of the coming Messiah anointed to preach the gospel to the poor and bring deliverance to the captives.

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## Transcript

### Jesus the Preacher

What exactly does it mean when Scriptures says that Jesus preached? This word 'preached' means to be a herald; to proclaim aloud like a town crier; to publish or make known widely or everywhere. This is no quiet hidden secret polite act! It is a public proclamation; it is broadcasting a message for all to hear.

In the Old Testament the term is used both in reference to God and man. Of course the first use of a word in the Bible is important. The first time the Hebrew word kaw-raw' was used was in Genesis chapter 1 when God called the light 'Day' and the darkness 'Night' and the dry land 'Earth' and so-on.

The word here translated "called" means to accost a person you meet in your travels; to call out to them by name; cry unto; and again of course to preach, proclaim, pronounce or publish.

In Genesis 3:9 we read "And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?" This is the first gospel message ever recorded and the Preacher is God Himself. Is it any wonder then we see Christ in the New Testament coming as a preacher?

We read of a long and distinguished line of preachers in the OT; Noah, Ezra, Nehemiah, the many Prophets, Solomon and Jonah to name a few. When we move to the NT the new era is heralded in by John the Baptist a preacher in every sense of the word. Around Christ are raised up apostolic preachers followed by other gifted ministries who also preach.

In the OT the Prophet Isaiah had prophesied that the coming Messiah would be anointed to preach. Three times the word "preach" was used for the ministry of the coming Messiah. We read in Lk.4, "And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." (17-21)

Christ was ordained of God to be a Preacher. In Mark 1v14 we are told "Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God..." Again in Mat 4v17 "From that time Jesus began to preach," This marked the beginning of His public ministry.

It is worth noting that no matter what the gifted ministry is of Christ's ministers, whether apostle, prophet, teacher, evangelist or pastor, they are all preachers. The manifestation of each gifted ministry comes primarily through preaching.

Christ commissioned each one of His apostles to "go preach." Paul was a preacher, but gifted as both a teacher and later as an apostle. If we were to study the ministry of various NT Prophets, the Evangelist Philip, and the full diversity of ministries in the Book of Acts, we find them preaching.

Christ gave a position of honour to this calling, ministry and gift of preaching. No truly faithful minister of Christ will downplay the act of preaching or throw out the words 'preach, preaching or preacher.' They are God-ordained Scriptural words.

What type of preacher was He?

When Christ first went forth in this ministry of preaching into Capernaum He asked His disciples "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" Their answer is very revealing and gives us some insight into how the crowds viewed His public ministry.

They gave three specific answers. First of all some said that He was John the Baptist. Even King Herod came to believe this, thinking that John had risen from the dead and now was granted a miraculous ministry to confirm His message.

You will remember that Christ in his looks, mannerisms and association with sinners was somewhat different to John yet their preaching and message was identified as being the same. When the people first heard Christ they thought of the previous six months of John's preaching.

Secondly, they identified him with Elijah. Of course we know that none of those who heard Christ preach were old enough to have heard or seen Elijah but when they identified Him with Elijah, it was the type of ministry with which they were identifying Him. When they heard Christ and saw His miracles they thought of the Elijah they had read of in Scripture.

Elijah was confrontational, controversial, clear, distinct, fervent, zealous, separated - so was Christ. He was just as quick to challenge the sin of the religious and secular leaders as Elijah was. Thousands fell upon their faces when Elijah ministered and brought fire from Heaven but the crowds could as soon turn upon Him. Christ found the same response to His ministry.

Thirdly, they identified Him with Jeremiah. Jeremiah wept over Jerusalem, so did Christ. Jerusalem rejected the warnings of both of these great preachers and suffered the promised judgements. In hearing the beseeching, burdened, weeping preaching of Christ they thought of Jeremiah.

Lastly, they said He was like one of the old Prophets. The one thing in common with John, Elijah and Jeremiah was that they were all prophets. This was the distinguishing mark of His preaching ministry. He preached like a Prophet, like an Old Testament Prophet. Of course there were many old false prophets who preached a smooth message, told the people what they wanted to hear, invented a word of their own imagination and who lived for the praise of men.

Christ was not of the line of such false prophets. He was like the old godly prophets who rebuked sin, dealt with the heart of man, warned of coming judgement and called the people to repentance and obedience.

Today in the church there is a call, pressure and trend to return to the pattern of the old false prophets. The call is to a grace that ignores sin, a relationship with God without obedience, and a message that does not mention coming judgement. No fire, no fervency, no zeal, no burning passion, no raised voice, no sweat on the brow, no earnestness of manner is now allowed in our churches.

All such emotion is thought taboo. Such preaching is called old fashioned, fleshly or religious.

Maybe that is because the preachers of our day have lost the fire in their bones; the prophetic vision of God in the secret place; the devotion to God alone in the solitude of divine fellowship and consecration; the willingness to stand alone with a prophet's voice while the so-called people of God en masse follow after games, entertainment and comfort.

#### Four Great Marks of Christ's Preaching

1. Authority. "And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes." Mar 1:22. He spoke as an oracle. He was not giving opinions. He was not playing word games or disputing over doctrines. He spoke with authority.

This marked Him out from "the scribes." There was no apology in His preaching and no claim to human authority and credentials. His authority was from Heaven. There was no fear or stammering in His preaching.

Because He was sent by the Father He could then speak with such authority. In Luke 4v32 we read of the same incident but the same Greek word is translated power. "And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power."

The word exousia can also mean 'with force, with great capacity, competency, freedom, or mastery.' This was the missing mark of the Scribes preaching but was a very evident mark of Christ's. Again we have need of God-sent preachers who speak with great authority, power and force.

2. Boldness. "But, lo, he speaketh boldly, and they say nothing unto him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ?" John 7:26. Christ preached with such boldness that it subdued His enemies.

This term boldness means 'all out-spoken-ness, that is, frankness, bluntness, publicity, openly;' There was nothing hidden, vague, obscure or confusing about His message. He spoke openly and publicly to all.

There was no fear or hesitancy. He did not change His message according to who stood before Him. There was nothing held back. Boldness is the mark of the New Testament preachers. It is the mark of Holy Ghost filled preachers. It is the mark of the anointing of God.

3. Graciousness. "And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth." Luke 4:22. His words and manner were marked by graciousness. This is no contradiction to bold authoritative preaching.

The word literally means to be 'Calmly happy; joyful; and rejoicing.' It also can mean: to benefit, favour, gift, liberality and pleasure. So we see both the manner of His preaching and the words themselves are explained here.

Certain preachers will proclaim boldly with authority but lack this great attribute of gracious-joy. Our preaching ought to sparkle with an evident joy. Amidst much opposition that true preaching brings the preacher must remain calm and gracious.

4. Wisdom. "And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom..." Mat 13:54. Wisdom is an ability of thought and discretion and is closely associated to knowledge and understanding.

"And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers." Luke 2:47. "And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" John 7:15. "...what wisdom is this which is given unto him...?" Mark 6v2.

He knew how to answer His enemies, His friends, seekers after God and authorities. He never used the natural wisdom of man but that wisdom which comes down from God above. Preachers must have wisdom even as Christ did. They must have discretion. They must know what to say, when to say it and to whom to say it.

### What Did Christ Preach?

We are clearly told at the beginning of Christ's preaching ministry that "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent:" Mat 4:17. This was foundational and central to His message.

Paul later tells us in Hebrews 6 that repentance is the first of all foundational doctrines. John the Baptist had preached the same message of repentance in preparing the way, the hearts and a people for Christ as the Lamb of God during his previous six months of preaching.

Please note that it says that Jesus "began to preach...Repent." He did not begin to preach repentance and then quickly move on to something else. He continued to preach repentance throughout His ministry. Some are ashamed of the message of repentance but Christ was not.

A man who is not willing to preach repentance is not ready or suitable for the great task of preaching!

The reason He preached repentance was for the very same reason John did: "for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Such was the hour they lived in that they could almost reach out and touch the kingdom of God.

What is the kingdom of God? It is His dominion, rule and influence. It is that realm that comes under His headship, authority and control. The only way into His kingdom and the blessing it holds is by way of

repentance. Repentance is the pathway to blessing in Christ.

This message of the coming kingdom was also a warning of coming judgement. He said that through His preaching He would have gathered them "as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings", but they would not. And so He warned them of coming judgement both to them and their children.

He preached "repent ye, and believe the gospel." Mar 1:15. He exhorted them to put all of their faith and confidence in the Gospel or the good news he proclaimed. He was the Lamb of God. In Him was redemption, forgiveness of sins and eternal life. Praise God.

Preaching repentance and giving warnings is all in vain if we do not hold forth Christ Himself as a glorious salvation and fullness of life. Christ Himself commanded His followers to preach both sides of the message, "And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." Lk.24:47

The word "remission" means 'freedom, pardon, deliverance, forgiveness and liberty.' What a salvation. This is the fruit of repentance. We must preach repentance and remission until Jesus returns. There is no remission without repentance.

We also see Christ dealing with and preaching concerning the application of the law of God to the heart of sinners. He used the law of God when speaking to the rich young ruler to expose the covetousness in his heart. (Mk.10v17-22)

Again he applied the law, the seventh commandment, to the woman caught in adultery. Why? To expose her heart and to reveal her need of Christ Jesus. (Jn.4v17-18.) Of course the law cannot save any one but it probes and prepares the heart of sinners in bringing them to their conscious need of Christ.

In His preaching Christ laid forth kingdom living. A lifestyle conformed to heaven - not to this world. His message birthed forth a Heavenly people whereas today's message births a worldly people. His message birthed forth a separated people but today's preaching births a compromised people who mix freely in the very sins which will send sinners to Hell.

Christ expected restitution of those who repented and believed in Him. Wherever His message was preached and received restitution followed. When Zacchaeus repented he said, "Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold." Christ responded by saying "This day is salvation come to this house...For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." (Lk.19)

What type of preacher did Christ's enemies think he was?

First, we see the response to His first message preached in the Synagogue of His own hometown of Nazareth. After His baptism in water and anointing of the Holy Ghost he stepped out in a whirlwind ministry in the region of Galilee.

Of course when He came to Nazareth he was asked to read and speak at the local Synagogue. At first the people marvelled and wondered "at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth" and at the fact that this was Joseph's son.

But as He continued to preach and to deal with their hearts they "were filled with wrath, And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong." Lk.4:28-29

So from the beginning he found the listeners fickle and no gauge of what was right and correct to preach. True preaching may hold the people in awe as much as anger them!

In John Chapter 10 we are told, "Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him" because by His preaching they believed He was a "blasphemer" and nothing more than a man like them. They also made it very clear that it was not for His good works that they would do such but it was His message.

When His enemies saw Him heal the sick and deliver those possessed of demons they said that He himself was possessed by Beelzebub and that He had gained this power to cast out demons through this prince of devils.

They could not bear to think good would come from His ministry. Christ warned that if they said such about Him they would say it of us.

The Chief priests set about to persuade the multitudes and turn them against Christ the preacher. This is the leaven or teaching of the Pharisees and hypocrites. They do not care about the people but they do care about destroying this preacher.

The crowds of common people gathered to hear him gladly and willingly realising that this preacher's message exposed their sins and revealed their desperate need, but also revealed the cure for their sin. But others listened with other thoughts and motives.

Amongst these listening sinners there came enemies of truth and righteousness. They had a reputation to preserve sin, to cover and hide motives of the heart that were being disturbed by this new preacher. Religion was a business to them and must be preserved. It was their sacred religious heritage he was attacking, and defend it they must and would.

While the preacher showed great compassion, mercy and grace to confessing sinners, he showed at times anger, roughness and straightness with hypocrites, religious money-makers, the proud and haters of righteousness.

Some of these enemies had a correct message. Christ could say to his own disciples 'do what they say but do not do what they do.' They were able to preach truth but that truth was not real in their own hearts. It was a truth that never penetrated the motives of their own hearts.

The Sadducees and Pharisees although in very different religious camps were of one mind in hating Christ and His message. Political leaders who had no common love or cause united against this Holy Ghost anointed preacher.

Those who hated and opposed Him were usually defending buildings and systems of religion. Men get aggressive in protecting such but few think of protecting God's glory and His vulnerable sheep. The last straw for His enemies was when He entered Jerusalem on the back of a donkey with simple men and woman singing his praise and acknowledging Christ's supreme authority.

So there you have it: they thought that this true Holy Ghost filled preacher of righteousness was a demon possessed man, a sinner, a heretic and a blasphemer. In this context please remember we have already looked at the message He preached which brought this reaction.

#### New Testament Preachers

Although He was the first preacher of the new dispensation of the New Covenant of grace we can readily see that He walked in perfect unity with the straight pathway of the Old Testament Prophets.

Those who try to distinguish between the grace-preachers of today and the message, life and ways of those old prophets are sadly mistaken. Those who contradict those old time preachers have invented a new type of preaching and ministry which is unacceptable to God.

We are still in the New Testament dispensation of grace which means the preachers and prophets of the early church are still the primary example and pattern of God-called preachers in the Church of our own day. Any departure from this is apostasy!

The officers who were sent to arrest Him returned empty handed saying "Never man spake like this man." John 7:46. No fighting would have stopped them from arresting Him but His preaching arrested them. He was incomparable in His preaching and backed it up with an incomparable life which is our example: the greatest preacher of all time - Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

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