

Transcript

The Jesus Story - Overview

The sole aim of this series of studies is to look very closely at the Life of the Lord Jesus Christ. Not just the things that He said and did, but also, just what the motivation was behind the things He said and did.

We need to look at the circumstances that surrounded Him, the situations that He found Himself in.

We need to look at the people that He came into contact with in His daily life, because the people around us can have a very big influence on how we act.

In this first study, by way of introduction, I would like to take a brief overview of the whole life of Jesus, and then slowly go through the Life of Jesus in more detail, putting things in chronological order, using all four gospels and setting things out in the order that events took place.

And I shall be using Paul's letter to the Philippians' as a springboard. The sentiments that Paul expresses in this letter fit exactly with those that I would like us to look at. Paul, when writing to the saints at Philippi, lists all his qualifications as a religious Jew. Philippians' 3 v4:

4 though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so:

5 circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee;

6 Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

I don't think for one moment that there would be many Jews who would not like to have a CV like that, that is quite an impressive record. But something happened to Paul on the road to Damascus that would completely change his life.

And here we have a demonstration of the change that takes place when a person becomes a true Christian. Paul, going one way, stops, turns around and goes in the opposite direction. Just listen to what we read in the next verses.

7 But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ.

8 Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ,

9 and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith;

10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.

What I would like to do this morning is just take the phrase that Paul uses here, 'that I

may know Him’.

To begin the journey to know Jesus. Before ever we can even begin to understand the life of the Lord Jesus Christ - the things that he did, the impact that he had on those around him, the impact that he had on the world; first of all we need to look at who he is. So where do we begin?

Mark: he begins his account of the life of Jesus when Jesus was about thirty years old, at his baptism in the river Jordan.

Luke: he goes back a little farther, he takes us to just prior to the birth of Jesus. Luke is the one that we have to thank for the fullest account of the birth of Jesus Christ.

Matthew: he goes even further back, he traces the genealogy of Jesus back forty two generations to Abraham.

But, John: he steps out of time; he goes beyond the baptism, he goes beyond the birth. He even goes beyond Abraham. John steps out time and into eternity. The gospel of John stretches from eternity to eternity, it begins in eternity past, John 1 v1, before the creation of all things.

You could take a lifetime, to study to know about Jesus, you could start in John 1 v1, in eternity past. You would need to look at all prophecies made concerning Him, and their fulfilment. His miraculous birth, His childhood, the Temple visit. The silent years as He grew into manhood, as a carpenter in Nazareth.

You would need to look at His relationship with others, the Disciples, Nicodemus, the Woman at the Well, the two Mary’s and Lazarus. His relationship with the crowds.

You would need look at, the Sermon on the Mount, the feeding of the five thousand. You would need to look at, the miracles He performed, His prayer life, His compassion . His suffering, His death, and His resurrection. The great commission to the disciples, and, his promised return. You would then arrive at the same conclusion as John in his gospel.

John tells us at the end of his gospel chapter 21:

25 And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which, if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.

And you would finish by knowing only some of the things about Jesus, and the impact that He had on those around Him.

“To study the Life of the Lord Jesus Christ, Would take a lifetime and still be incomplete.” No matter how intelligent we are, or, how many books we read concerning the life of Jesus.

We still come back to the statement John makes:

And there are also many other things that Jesus did.

Just to begin to know about Jesus is difficult enough.

The text that I want us to look at: ‘That I may know Him, (Php 3v10)’. That is, far much more that knowing about Him, but this should be the greatest priority. The most

important aim of any Christian, the desire To know Christ, to be, be fully acquainted with His nature, His character, His work, and with the salvation which He has wrought.

What I would like to do in this first study, is to begin to look at some of the things that are written about the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the way John begins, the first five verses of John's gospel tell us:

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, And the Word was God.

2 He was in the beginning with God.

3 All things were made through Him, And without Him nothing was made that was made.

4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

5 And the light shines in the darkness, And the darkness did not comprehend it.

The first two verses tell us that 'In the beginning was the word. God the Son.' At the beginning, not only was he with God, but he was also equal with God.

Verse three tells us, 'All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.' He played a part in the creation of all things.

In verse four we read, 'In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.' So from him we have our very being.

Verse five is the verse that I would like to look at a little closer, 'And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.'

When the Old Testament comes to an end there are four hundred years of silence between the end of the Old and the beginning of the New Testaments. Four hundred years and not one recorded word from heaven.

Then with the beginning of the New Testament, we have revealed to us God's New Covenant. God's plan of salvation, the incarnation of his only begotten Son, and with him, the redemption of lost mankind. Something happened when the Son of God came to earth, something that was to shake the very foundation of hell itself.

When we begin to read John's Gospel, in the first four verses of chapter one, John explains who the Son of God is, where he came from, and he records the things that he had achieved.

Then in verse five he makes this statement. 'And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.'

This was not the first light that God had in the world. When you read through the Old Testament you can read time and time again, whenever the light of God began to shine, Satan puts it out.

God had a light in Adam, sinless having daily communion with God. Adam sins, and Satan has put out the light.

God had a light in Abel, his offering was acceptable to God. Cain kills Abel, and Satan had put out the light.

God had a light in Noah, Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord, saved from the flood. But after the ark comes to rest, we read that Noah planted a vineyard, and drank the wine, Noah was drunk, and was uncovered in his tent, and Satan had put out the light.

God had a light in David, he was called a man after God's own heart. David commits adultery with Bathsheba, and then tries to cover his sin by having Uriah murdered, and Satan had again put out the light.

God had a light in Solomon, the wisest man that ever lived, wisdom as a gift from God, and we read that Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord, and again Satan had put out the light.

From Genesis right up to the New Testament, we read the same story over and over again, the light of God shines, and Satan puts it out; until we come to the New Testament and we read in John 1 v5 (and I much prefer the amplified bible's translation of this verse, it puts in the various shades of meaning.

And the light shines on in the darkness, for darkness has never overpowered it, or put it out.

When we look at the life of The Lord Jesus Christ, we can see again the light of God shining, and we can again see the attempts that Satan makes to put it out. But now, it's a different story.

We can read of the time that Herod, when he could not find the baby Jesus, had all the children under two years killed.

Matthew 2 v13:

13 Behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him."

And the light continued to shine.

We read how Satan, in the temptation in the wilderness, tried to cause the Son of God to fall, but Jesus, with the word of God, defeated him. And the light continued to shine.

There are three verses in Luke 4 v 28-30 that are really worth looking at:

28 So all those in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath,

29 And rose up and thrust Him out of the city; and they led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw Him down over the cliff.

30 Then passing through the midst of them, He went His way.

And the light continued to shine.

How about the time out on the lake with his disciples, Luke 8 v23 tells us:

23 And windstorm came down on the lake, and they were filling with water, and were in jeopardy.

Satan was determined that the Son of God would drown that day, but Jesus arose and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water, and there was calm. And the light continued to shine.

In the garden of Gethsemane, when the pressure was so great, we read:

And his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground, and angel appeared to him from heaven strengthening him.

And the light continued to shine.

And that final day, at Calvary, when we read that Jesus cried: 'It is finished', and bowing his head, he gave up his spirit. Even his disciples thought that the light was gone. This was to be the last attempt that Satan was to have at putting out the light. Every attempt that Satan had made at putting out this light had failed. Calvary was the turning point in the battle between darkness and light.

When Jesus died. He descended into Hell. Now the Son of God was taking the battle right into the enemy's territory. What really happened there we just don't know, but if ever there were three days Satan would love to have removed from his visiting book, it would be the three days when the Son of God visited him.

Hebrews 2 v14. tells us:

14 He to shared in their humanity, that through death, he might destroy him who holds the power of death that is the devil.

There we have the Son of God going into battle.

And in Ephesians 4 v8, we have recorded His return from battle:

8 When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men.

It's only when we read Revelation 1 v18, that we can see the full extent of the marvellous victory that Christ wrought.

18 I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of Hell and of death.

Up from the grave He arose, with a mighty triumph over His foes, He arose the victor from the dark domain.

The Lord Jesus Christ had withstood every assault that Satan could throw at him, during his earthly walk; and in his victorious death he broke the powers darkness. When Jesus descended into hell he took the keys of death and hell.

I like the way I heard one preacher once describe this, he said: 'When Jesus rose from the dead, He left death gasping behind him.'

Jesus not only rose from the dead. He ascended back to heaven, back to His Father's side, to receive again the glory that he had so willingly laid aside.

Today there is a man in the glory, one who is interceding on our behalf. The highest place that heaven affords is His by sovereign right. He has a title that is unique to him - 'The King of Kings and the Lord of Lords'.

John begins his gospel by painting a picture to show the fullness of the one that he is about to write. He shows Jesus Christ as the creator and sustainer of all things. He shows Jesus Christ as the source of all life and light.

And in verse five of the first chapter, before ever he begins the life story proper of The Lord Jesus Christ, he reveals in verse five that the victory is already won, and because the battle is already over, now the darkness will never be able to overpower the light.

There is a passage of scripture in Romans, chapter eight, that describes the security of those in Christ - Christians. It starts on a very high note:

1 There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus,

The chapter ends v38, explaining that there is absolutely nothing that shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Now tucked into this chapter is a verse that seems a little difficult to understand, and it is verse thirty-seven. This is what it says:

37 Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

Just how could anyone be more than a conqueror? If you won every battle that you were ever in, if you never experienced defeat, you would still only be a conqueror. How could anyone be more than a conqueror?

Well to be a conqueror you need to win every time that you do battle. To be more than a conqueror, You win every time without doing battle.

The one who opposes us in all things has already been defeated, and while we abide in Christ, we are partakers, we share in his great victory.

That does not mean that we shall never again be tempted, but the promise to those who are in Christ is:

Sin shall no more have dominion over you.

It does not mean that we shall never again know the attack of Satan in our lives, but we have a very precious and powerful promise, and that is that:

If we resist the devil, he will flee from us.

It does not mean that someday this mortal body of ours will not have to die, but the promise to us is because of what the Lord Jesus Christ did for us now:

Death has lost its sting, the grave has lost its victory, and for us to be absent from this body is to be present with the Lord.

It is wonderful to know that the victory is ours in our Christian walk, the victory that we are assured of because of what the Lord Jesus Christ has done on our behalf.

We need to allow the word of God to do its work. We need to allow it to do the work

for which it was intended. This is what we read concerning the word of God in Isaiah 55 v11:

11 So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.

We need to allow the Word of God to have an effect in the way that we live. The aim is not that we might know a few facts from the bible, but to know the joy and victory that can be ours.

When we apply the truth of those Bible facts to our lives, it is not much help to us just to know that for the four thousand years up to the time that Jesus came, that every time that God had a light in the worldm the Devil put it out. In fact that can be pretty depressing.

We have much better news in the New Testament when we see the reverse. Every time we have darkness in opposition to the light, it is the light that has the victory. But, how do we apply these Bible truths to our lives?

The effect of what we read in God's word should first off all be evidenced in our minds. We need to know just where we stand in relation to darkness and light.

A few years ago I heard an amusing and very simplistic description of a Christian's relationships. This man said that as a Christian:

God was now his father, Jesus Christ was his elder brother, the Holy Spirit was his constant companion; and the devil was now no relation at all.

And if there is one thing that we should allow to effect the way that we live as Christians, it's our relationship with our relations.

I don't have need to go into the details of our position in the family of God. As born again believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, we have our title deeds to heaven made very clear. Contracts were signed at Calvary when Jesus became our saviour and substitute.

There is an eternal security that I believe 100% in. I believe that as long as I conform to God's conditions, I am eternally safe, and if you want know just how safe a contract we have, you only have to read what Paul has to say when writing to the Romans, (8 v37-39):

37 Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come,

39 Nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

There is a hymn that we loved to sing some years ago; and I am not knocking it, it was a beautiful hymn, but if you only sang the first verse on its own it was guaranteed send you away depressed:

***Once I thought I walked with Jesus,
Yet such changeful moods I had;
Sometimes trusting,
Sometimes doubting,
Sometimes joyful,
Sometimes sad.***

And if we are honest with ourselves, that can be an accurate picture of the way that many of us see our Christian walk; we are in and out and up and down.

If we really appreciated our position in the family of God, we would be living as God intended us to live; as children of the King.

We need to believe more of what the Bible tells us, and less of what the devil would have us to believe. The Bible has much to say about the devil, and we are not to be ignorant of his devices. Let me tell you just what I believe about the devil. I believe that he is very powerful,

You only have to look at the chaos that he is causing in the world. The Bible tells us that he is the father of lies. He is the accuser of the brethren, he goes around as a roaring lion seeking who he can devour. We could go on about his power.

But I choose my words very, very carefully. I don't have any fear at all of the devil or his power. After Calvary, the only power that he has is the power to deceive. I don't know if this sounds too simple, but I believe that when problems or persecutions come, it is not much use me telling Satan to move.

The bible is very specific on how we are to deal with problems. James 5 v13 tells us:

13 Is any among you afflicted? Let him pray.

We tend to forget the promises that God has given to us. The devil is a defeated foe. We don't always fully appreciate our position in God.

In 1 John 4 v4 we read:

4 You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

If we are to allow the word of God to have an effect in our lives, we need first of all to take these precious promises into our minds, and as we read these promises we need to understand just what they entail.

There is no contract on earth that is as binding as the contract that God has made with mankind.

We have become too complicated today. We need to capture again that simple faith that we had when we were first saved; when we would sing about every promise in the book is mine, every chapter, every verse, every line.

I really believe that we need to take the word of God into our minds. We need to let it filter into our hearts. and enjoy it. We need to let it soak into our minds and our hearts.

Until it becomes so much apart of us that it is seen in the way that we live, when we really grasp what God is saying in his word, our minds will be renewed.

When we fully believe in our hearts the promises of God, our spirits will be revived and our lives will be changed for the better.

We need to understand with our minds to appreciate with all our hearts all the promises of God, then we shall know a change in our lives.

Let me finish by giving you a simple formula for victory over the powers of darkness. First of all we need to understand that the devil is a defeated foe. James is the one who gives us the formula for victory; he gives a wonderful yet very simple message on having a good, sound and victorious relationship with God. James 4 v7-8:

7 First, submit yourselves therefore to God. Second, resist the devil and he will flee from you.

8 Then, draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you.

Sometimes we may find difficulty in submitting ourselves to the will of God, but we can do it. Sometimes we may find it difficult to resist the devil, but when we do he will flee from us.

What a wonderful promise we find in the third step when we draw near to God. The thrill that we experience when we are conscious of God drawing near to us. God wants our minds, our hearts, our lives; he wants us to draw near to him so that he can draw near to us.

If there is one thing that I believe that God would have us to do, it is to come to that place.

Where we understand with our minds, we believe with all our hearts, and live our lives in the light of what he tells that we are. We are children of the King.

Let me finish you with a text, one that I hope will leave you with a blessing in your heart, not a bee in your bonnet, and it is found the first epistle of John and the first three verses of chapter three:

1 Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.

2 Beloved, now we are children of God; and, it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

3 And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

Let this text renew your minds, refresh your heart and revitalize your life. We are children of the King now. This part of the text really thrills me; and when we see Him we shall be like Him.

In the next study we can begin to look at the life of Jesus in detail. We shall begin - God willing - with the things that surrounded the birth of Jesus; His parents, His childhood, and those silent years as Jesus develops from a boy to being a man.

We shall try to cover the events that happened from the birth of Jesus up to the beginning of His public ministry.

Until next time. Numbers 6 v24-26:

24 The Lord bless you and keep you;

25 The Lord make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you;

26 The Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace.