

Monday, August 4, 2008

# All About Jesus

**goingDEEP**

Luke 4:31-37

## Conqueror of Evil

Years ago, when my husband and I went to Israel, we visited Capernaum. When Christ was expelled from Nazareth, He came to Capernaum, another city of Galilee. While we were there, we saw Peter's house—the spot where Jesus healed Peter's mother-in-law (Luke 4:38-39). It was an exciting time, a time to think upon Jesus.

In today's Scripture, we see that Jesus taught the people on the Sabbath days. He astonished the people with His teaching because it had such power. There was weight in every word He spoke; there was a commanding force in His teaching, along with a working power which pierced through to the consciences of men. Do you realize how much of an influence you have on others when you speak the Word of God? Do it with His authority. No one should teach or preach casually.

Jesus then proved that He was a controller and conqueror of Satan when He cast out the demons. The man that was healed "had a spirit of an unclean devil," yet he was in the synagogue. Jesus' compassion was so great that He took the time to heal this man. The demons knew of Jesus Christ, and they were fearful of Him (vv. 33-34). James 2:19 tells us that the devils believe there is one God and tremble. There's comfort in knowing that God is all-powerful.

Jesus rebuked the devil, and this demon threw down the man—but the man was not harmed. Christ showed His power over Satan in that He not only forced him to leave the man, but to leave him without harming him. Satan wants to annihilate; Christ desires to heal our brokenness. He restores us to health—just as He restored this man.

The Lord cares for every single one of us, even those who are in the depths of depravity, as this man was.

News of Jesus' power over evil was spreading (vv. 36-37). His power is still setting people free today.

**dwellingPOINT:** 1 John 2:5-6

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Tuesday, August 5, 2008

# All About Jesus

**goingDEEP**

Matthew 16:13-17

## A Discovery

It was at the coasts of Caesarea Philippi where Peter verbalized his discovery to Jesus Christ saying, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (v. 16).

Jesus did not pronounce a reward upon Peter for the discovery he had made when He said, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona." On the contrary, He was rather describing the condition into which Peter had come by the gain of this new knowledge which he had confessed. Such confession, that He was the Christ, and the Son of the living God, was in itself the result of divine illumination. Not in the confession, but in the consciousness out of which the confession was born was Peter blessed. Probably he spoke for the rest as well as for himself, but one man at least had made contact with the purposes and power of God.

How did Peter learn this fact? Let the Lord continue. "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." Christ said, "That confession you have made is not something that another man told you; you have not discovered it; my Father hath revealed it unto thee." (G. Campbell Morgan, *The Gospel According to Matthew*.)

Peter was bold in answering for the entire group of disciples when Jesus asked, "But whom say ye that I am?" (v. 15). Many of us don't have Peter's boldness, but we should always be mindful of ways to expose the saving grace of the Son of God. Think of some ways you could do this. Don't worry about being thought of as strange or different—you have knowledge that is vital and significant for living.

God revealed the truth about Jesus to Peter. The truths of God are disclosed to us by God's Word. God will reveal so much to you if you dig into the treasures found in the Bible. You will be stronger, bolder, and serene, able to handle all that life throws your way.

**dwellingPOINT:** 1 John 2:5-6

Wednesday, August 6, 2008

# All About Jesus

goingDEEP

Matthew 14:22-33

## Held Up by Water!

When I read this portion of Scripture I thought of the time my husband and I stayed in a hotel on the Sea of Galilee, in Tiberias. It was dreamlike to look out from our hotel window and view the sea; it was so calm and peaceful. We were in awe of the fact that we were in the same area where Jesus had prayed and preached so many years ago.

Outside our hotel window there were a multitude of street vendors that set up their booths with clothing or jewelry. There was a small grocery store nearby, not at all like ours here at home. We tried to imagine how it was in the days of Jesus; we wondered if it might have been quieter. As we viewed the mountains surrounding the sea, it wasn't hard to visualize Jesus as He prayed (v. 23) and as He walked on the ground and the water (v. 25).

Our tour guide explained that even though the sea was placid, there are sudden winds that can cause huge waves, which explained verse 24. We took a boat ride on the sea, and it was a solemn experience: a time to think only about Jesus, His disciples and the miracle of His walking on the water.

We thought of Jesus going alone to the mountain to pray (v. 23) and this instilled in us the desire to make time every single day to get alone with God. What about you? Do you make sure you get some solitude with your Lord?

We admired Peter's boldness, courage, and initial faith in stepping out onto the water. No one else did it! We could identify with Peter who looked at the surrounding troubles and began to sink—losing faith (vv. 28-31). We were thankful that we could depend on our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to hold on to us, to catch us, as he did Peter, when we falter and when our faith is weak (v. 31). You can do the same!

**dwellingPOINT:** 1 John 2:5-6

Thursday, August 7, 2008

# All About Jesus

goingDEEP

Matthew 5:1-12

## The Beatitudes

Today, as I was reading Matthew 5:1-12, I once again thought about our journey to Israel so many years ago. We were at the place where Jesus gave the Beatitudes. The mountains are sandy in color with small touches of green vegetation. They are sprawling so you can see how Jesus could be at one point—high up—addressing the crowd. He could easily see the people, and because this section is shaped as a natural amphitheater, they could hear Him.

The word *blessed* means so much more than just being happy or fortunate; it is more than just a feeling. Jesus was telling His disciples of the divinely given well-being that belongs only to faithful and devoted followers.

I know life gets tough; it can be so difficult that even your sense of well-being can get twisted. Some of the world's best writers had a lot to say about life. In *All's Well That Ends Well*, Shakespeare said, "The web of our life is of a mingled yarn, good and ill together." Robert Louis Stevenson, in "Pan's Pipes" said, "Everyday life is a stimulating mixture of order and haphazardry. The sun rises and sets on schedule but the wind bloweth where it listeth." In "The Gift of the Magi," O. Henry wrote, "Life is made up of sobs, sniffles, and smiles, with sniffles predominating."

No matter what life brings, Jesus Christ is with you.

The beatitudes show that the path to His way of blessedness is the opposite of the world's pathway. While the world lumps happiness and blessings together in the way of riches, fun, and recreation, Jesus describes the qualities of true faith and trust in Him: being poor in spirit (acknowledging spiritual ruin apart from God); mourning over sin; being meek and merciful; hungering and thirsting for righteousness (vv. 1-7). Read the rest of the Scripture for more.

Those that mourn or those that sorrow for their sins and the sins of others "shall be comforted" (v. 4). The meek in the context of verse 5 actually means those that become angry at sin. It is the active attitude of the Christian toward sin in combating it instead of a passive, indifferent attitude. In verse 8, the "pure in heart" refers to a continuous cleansing that the believer experiences as a result of the fulfillment of the previous conditions of blessedness. The more pure a person is, the clearer his sight of God becomes.

**dwellingPOINT:** 1 John 2:5-6

Friday, August 8, 2008

# All About Jesus

goingDEEP

John 6:1-15

## Multiplying Jesus' Way

The feeding of the 5,000 is an incredible miracle. Can you imagine Jesus and the multitudes of people that followed him to the mountainside? Visualize all the lame, the diseased, the sick in heart and mind; all came to be near Him. The temperatures in Israel are sweltering, many times getting up to 100 degrees with scorching sun and no shade. Back then these people might have had the same weather, but they didn't care; they wanted to hear Jesus.

Jesus knew that He was going to miraculously provide food for the crowd. Nevertheless, what did He say to Philip (vv. 5-6)? This was to try the faith of Philip because Philip looked to "pennies" instead of God's unlimited resources. When you are in a devastating financial bind, what do you do? When you are struggling in any area, do you look to the bountiful supplies that God has? Or do you view your own meager circumstances and think that God could not help you even if you prayed about it? He will help you—ask Him—and have faith.

Regarding verses 6-8, we find that

Philip thought the answer was money, but Andrew saw the answer in a lad with a lunch. When you face a seemingly unsolvable problem, claim the promise of verse 6, give what you have to Jesus, and let Him tell you what to do. (Wiersbe, Warren. *With the Word*. Nashville, Tennessee: Oliver Nelson, 1991.)

We might distrust God's power when visible and ordinary means fail, that is, to trust Him no further than we can see Him. When Christ puzzles His people, it is only with a purpose to *prove* them.

Read verses 9-12. Do you recognize the fact that anything you give to Jesus will be multiplied? Don't hold anything back—not your tithe, not your time, not your gifts and abilities. Give it all to Him and He will increase and develop it all.

Think of the little boy who held nothing back from the Lord. He was totally unselfish. I get disappointed with myself when I get selfish and self-absorbed, yet I think we all have moments of complete selfishness. Make it a point to be selfless, generous, and goodhearted.

**dwellingPOINT:** 1 John 2:5-6

Saturday, August 9, 2008

# All About Jesus

goingDEEP

John 1:1-3, 14; Hebrews 1:1-3

## His Great Love

The Apostle tells us, in Hebrews 1:3, that God made the worlds by His Son and that the Son upholds "all things by the word of His power."

John tells us, in the first chapter of his gospel, that "in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made." He is the Master Workman whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, inhabiting eternity (Isaiah 57:15), stretching forth the heavens as a curtain, making mighty systems of sun, moon, and stars, creating worlds and hurling them into the awful abysses of space and causing them to move, not in chaotic confusion, but in more than clock-like harmony, by the silent, resistless energy of all-embracing laws.

He scoops out the bed of the mighty oceans. He tosses aloft hoary mountains and stretches forth vast prairies and sandy deserts. He peoples the world with living creatures...He is maker of the infinitely great and the infinitely small. Oh he is a wondrous workman!

But John tells us "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth." And the Apostle tells that "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same...For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren."

And when He clothed Himself with our flesh, and He hid His dignity under the humble garb of humanity, He did not come as an aristocrat, but He took a lowly place in a peasant's home. (Bregle, S. L. *Heart Talks on Holiness*. New York: The Salvation Army Printing House, n.d.)

Don't ever forget all that Jesus did for you because of His great love for you.

**dwellingPOINT:** 1 John 2:5-6