

Jesus People, Christ College Lesson Seven: Sojourners in Exile

Mark: His Cross and Ours

Three passion predictions, three illustrations of cross-shaped discipleship

Jesus' cross and self-sacrifice:	8:31-8:33 (cf. 9:9-10)	9:30-32	10:32-34
Our crosses and self-sacrifice:	8:34-38	9:32-35	10:35-45

Jesus and his disciples are also linked by their proclamation of the kingdom of God and the consequence of that proclamation:

John preaches and is delivered up	1:7, 14 [[often translated "arrested"]]
Jesus preaches and is delivered up	1:14, 9:3, 10:33
Christians preach and are delivered up	3:14, 13:9-13

A striking feature of Mark's Gospel is that Jesus very rarely did things alone. Occasionally he went off into the hills to pray, but most of the time he did everything with his disciples. At times it was with the whole group, at other times he took just a few of them along, but he rarely acted alone. The pronoun used most often is 'they', not 'he'.

As Jesus moved . . . [to] Jerusalem . . . this was a communal journey where [almost] everything was done together. They experienced together the elation of the transfiguration when Jesus took Peter, James and John with him on that most extraordinary and personal encounter with his Father (9:2-13). They experienced together the grief and despair of Jairus's daughter (5:35-43). They encountered fear (4:38) and went through failure (9:18). Jesus took them through the whole range of human experience and they went through it together, not alone.

There was a commitment to each other which transcended even commitments to family. In fact this group actually became as close as a family – Jesus ask the rhetorical question, 'Who are my mother and my brothers? He looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, "Here are my mother and my brothers!"' (3.31-5).

Here at the heart of Jesus' practice of church was a willingness to expose his life to theirs and their life to each other's, in the intimate setting of a small community of around a dozen people. Without that depth of companionship, it is unlikely that our churches will get very far with real transformation.

Graham Tomlin, *Spiritual Fitness*, 142-3.

Matthew: Apprenticing with Jesus

A disciple is not above the teacher, nor a slave above the master; it is enough for the disciple to be like the master, and the slave like the master.” (Matt 10:24)

“You will indeed drink my cup...” (Matt 20:23)

He exhorted others to be meek (“Blessed are the meek,” 5:5) and taught that his own character was the paradigm for this trait: “Learn from me, because I am meek and lowly of heart” (11:29; 21:5).

He required mercy and humility (5:7; 9:13; 12:7; 18:4, 23:12), and he was merciful and humble (“Have mercy upon us Son of David,” 9:27, 11:29, 15:22, 18:4, 20:30).

He required his followers to baptize in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit; at his own baptism, Father, Son, and Spirit were present (Matt 3; Matt 28).

Jesus served God alone (4:10); he comes “to serve” through death (20:28); he requires his disciples to take on the role of “servant” (6:24; 10:24-25; 18:23-33; 20:26-28; 24:45-46; 25:14-23).

Jesus celebrated and blessed those who were unjustly oppressed because of their identification with God and his kingdom (“those persecuted for righteousness’ sake,” 5:10), and he himself suffered and died innocently (“And he [Pilate] said . . . ‘what evil has he done?’”, 27:23). In Matthew both Jesus and his followers are linked to the prophets who were persecuted and killed throughout Israel’s history (21:33-46; 23:29-36). The disciples will follow Jesus in being labeled Beelzebul (10:25, 12:24, 9:34).

Jesus demanded faithfulness to the law of Moses (5:17-20; 23:1-2). He faithfully kept and interpreted that law during his ministry (8:4, 12:1-8, 15:1-20).

Jesus required self-denial in the face of evil (“If anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also,” 5:39) and did not resist the evils done to him (“They spat on his face and struck him, and some slapped him,” 26:67, 27:30).

He called for foregoing oaths in favor of simple honesty (“Let your yes be yes, and your no be no,” Matt 5:33-37), and when Caiaphas tries to put him under oath to testify whether he was the Messiah, Jesus simply says, “You said it”

(26:63-64).

He taught his disciples not to give pearls to pigs (Matt 7:6; holy truth was not to be given out indiscriminately), and while Jesus responded to challenges to his identity when necessary during his ministry, he maintained a remarkable silence at his trial and let others describe his royal status.

Jesus required private prayer (“When you pray go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret . . . [and] sees in secret,” 6:6, 7) in contrast to the Pharisees’ ostentatious public prayers (6:1ff, 23:5ff). As if to obey his commands, he prayed alone (“He went up into the hills *by himself* to pray,” 14:23). Jesus taught his followers to prioritize the will of God in their prayers, rather than their own desires (“Your will be done,” 6:10). When faced with the cross, he used those words three times in Gethsemane (26:37-44).

He rejected the service of mammon and the heaping up of earthly wealth (“Do not store up treasure upon earth,” 6:19). Jesus did not store up treasure (“The Son of man has nowhere to lay his head,” 8:20) and denied himself when tempted with the chance to seize ownership of the whole world (4:8).

Jesus teaches that the destiny of his disciples is to bring glory to God (5:13-16); that is the result of his own ministry (9:8; 15:31).

He commanded believers to carry crosses (“If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me,” 16:24), and he carried his cross (Pilate “delivered him to be crucified,” 27:26). Jesus taught that self-sacrifice was greater than life—indeed, greater than gaining the whole world—and that those who followed the Son of Man would be rewarded with rule and authority (Matt 16:24-27; 19:27-30). Therefore, he denied himself the whole world (Matt 4:8) and laid down his life. In so doing he saved himself and the whole world, and received resurrection life and a boundless kingdom as his reward (Matt 25:31, 32; 28:18).

The connections between Jesus’ tasks and those of his disciples in Matthew are frequent and deep; they cannot be considered accidental or incidental. Many of these actions and mindsets are all facets of self-denial and the cross. R. T. France observes that Matthew repeatedly presses the point because the cross-shaped approach to life modeled by Jesus and required of his disciples is such “a radical challenge to natural human valuation that it needs constant repetition.”

Luke-Acts: The Jesus Mirrors

The Immanuel Principle in Luke-Acts

A. Who is at work in the church's work?

Who is Paul persecuting?
Acts 9:4-5; 22:7-8 and 26:14-15

The disciples work and suffer for _____ name.
Luke 24:47, Acts 4:7-10; 5:28; 23:13

Who gets lied to?
Acts 5:3, 4, 9

B. Walking after the pattern of Jesus

1. Like Jesus, Stephen is accused by false witnesses; like Jesus, he is accused of threatening the Temple and Law.
 2. Like Jesus, Stephen cites Daniel 7 (Luke 22:69; Acts 7:55-56), the only difference being that Acts has Jesus *standing* as if to welcome Stephen, rather than Luke *sitting* as if in judgment.
 3. Like Jesus, Stephen asks God to take his spirit and forgives those who are unjustly killing them (Luke 23:34, 46; Acts 7:59-60).
 4. Stephen's unstoppable wisdom (6:10) is proof that by his Spirit, Jesus is fulfilling his promise: "I will give you a mouth and a wisdom, which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict" (21:15).
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1. Like Jesus, the apostles have a healing ministry. Especially striking are involuntarily healings (Luke 8:44-48; Acts 19:12); the fact that Samaritans experience healing (Luke 17:11-16; Acts 8); and the fact that those who are healed turn around and serve Jesus and Paul (Luke 4:38-39, 8:2-3; Acts 28:10).
 2. Witnesses respond to Jesus and the apostles with awe (Luke 5:26; Acts 2:43) and—when the inclusion of the Gentiles is announced—wrath (Luke 4:27-28; Acts 13:47-50, 22:21-22).

3. Jesus and Paul receive the Holy Spirit at baptism (Lk 3:21-22, Acts 9:17-28) and have their movements governed by the Spirit (Luke 4:1, 14; Acts 19:6, 7; 19:21). The church, like Jesus, receives the Holy Spirit and is then sent out on mission.
 4. Both Jesus and the apostles are “chosen” by God for their task (Luke 9:35, 23:35, Acts 9:15).
 5. When rejected by humans, both cite Isaiah 6:9, 10 to describe this aspect of their ministry (Luke 8:10; Acts 28:26-27).
1. Both Jesus and Paul are depicted as law-observant participants in Jewish festivals, firmly ensconced in Jewish heritage (Lk 2:21-24, 41-42; 22:1-8; Acts 16:3-4; 18:18, 21; 20:6, 16; 22:3, 23:6, 26:4-5; 27:9; 28:). Neither violates the Law or Customs (*ta ethe*; Luke 16:17, Acts 6:14 for Jesus; 21:21-24, 28:17), although they are both falsely accused of having done so.
 2. Paul and Jesus both put the Pharisees’ doctrine of the resurrection to use (Luke 14:14; 20:27-40; Acts 17:18, 32, 23:6-8) and affirm that life is lived “in God” (Lk 20:38, Acts 17:28).
 3. Both Jesus and Paul are recognized by demons (Luke 4:34-35, 41; 8:28; Acts 16:17, 19:15), and the link between them is made by a demon (Acts 19:15).
 4. Both make a custom of synagogue attendance/preaching (Luke 4:16, Acts 17:1-2; two of the four NT uses of the word for “custom” are employed here; compare Luke 6:6, 13:10; Acts 13:14-15; 14:1; 17:1, 17).
 5. Their ministry is first revealed/publicly announced by a man who has the Holy Spirit who lays his hands on Jesus/Paul (Acts 9:17, Luke 2:25-26, 28) and the Gentiles are mentioned (Luke 2:30-32; Acts 9:15-16).
 6. Like Jesus, Paul escapes arrest and death at the hands of Jewish opponents at the beginning of his ministry (Acts 9:23-25; Luke 4:29-30).
 7. Like Jesus, Paul willingly goes to Jerusalem to be arrested and (really in Jesus’ case, only apparently in Paul’s) to be put to death, despite resistance from their friends (see Luke 13:33). Jewish leaders “lie in wait” for both (Lk 11:54, Acts 23:21; the verb only appears in those verses in the NT).
 8. Angels minister both to Paul and to Jesus during intense trial (Luke 22:43, Acts 27:23). Jesus promised that “not a hair of your head will perish” (Lk 21:18, and the

- whole of that paragraph is literally fulfilled in Acts; cf 22:7), so Paul extends that promise to others (Acts 27:34). Jesus promises that serpents will not harm the disciples (Luke 10:19), and Paul is unharmed by a viper bite (Acts 28:3-6).
9. Paul and Jesus are charged with four offences: (1) leading the people astray (Luke 23:1, Acts 24:5), (2) opposing Caesar (Luke 23:2 Acts 17:7), (3) stirring up sedition (Luke 23:5, Acts 24:5), and (4) claiming sovereignty for the Christ against Caesar (Luke 23;2; Acts 17:7).
 10. Like Jesus, Paul has four trials (Luke 22-23; Acts 23-26) and is seized by a mob after going to the Temple and being welcomed by the people (Luke 19:37-48, 22:54; Acts 21). Both are exonerated—but not released—by Roman authorities (Luke 23:4, Acts 13:28; Acts 23:29); Pilate and Agrippa both try to release them (Luke 23:16, 20; Acts 26:32); and Roman governors note that neither is worthy of death (Pilate in Luke 23:15; Festus in Acts 25:25).

C. Obeying the commands of Jesus

1. In Luke-Acts, Jesus's ministry and that of the apostles is characterized by the *dei* ("must," or "it is necessary"), implying *divine* compulsion or command. Luke uses this word for "normal" believers in a verse that links the suffering work of Jesus, the apostles, and every other Christian: "through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom" (Acts 14:22).
2. Throughout Acts the church models the hospitality and generosity Jesus commands and models. Both individual and corporate examples are prominent.
3. The church rejoices in suffering (Acts 5:41) just as Jesus commanded (Luke 6:23). The church models joy at repentance and the boundary-breaking power of the gospel, taught by Jesus in Luke 15 (Acts 8:39, 11:23, 13:48, 15:31).
4. Commanded by Jesus to pray without ceasing (Luke 18:1), the disciples model obedience: prayer appears almost once per chapter in Acts. "[T]he place of prayer in the life of the church finds a parallel in the place of prayer in the life of Jesus, just as there is a parallelism between the work of the Spirit in relation to Jesus and in relation to the church." (I. Howard Marshall)

5. The presence of the poor in the early Christian community (Acts 2, 4, 6) suggests that these disciples invited all types to the party just as Jesus commanded (Luke 14:12-14). Jesus' disciples learn from positive and negative examples in the parables in Luke: "The idea of using money to make friends for eternal life is unique to Luke 16:9. It's a perfect ethical complement to the descriptive picture of the church in Acts." In Acts the disciples imitate the divine hospitality that Jesus himself extended in Luke to the hungry, hurting and lost. "Every Lazarus was sharing food in the house of someone better off ([Acts] 2,46)" (D. Seecombe). Table fellowship is modeled and required by Jesus (5:29-30; 14:12-14; 15:1-2; 19:1-10), and enacted by his disciples (Acts 2:42, 46; 10).
6. In Acts the disciples imitate the content of Jesus' proclamation in Luke: the Kingdom, forgiveness of sins, the Scriptures point to him and his death, resurrection, and enthronement; etc. The church's preaching illustrates Jesus' teaching that every corner of the Scriptures (Moses, Prophets, Psalms) testifies to the life, death, resurrection, enthronement, and final victory of the Messiah (Luke 24).

John: the Imitation of Love

"Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you" (13:14-15)

Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him (13:16)

Very truly I tell you, whoever accepts anyone I send accepts me; and whoever accepts me accepts the one who sent me (13:20)

John 20:21 Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father sent me, so I am sending you."

Sojourning in Exile

(1) Adam and Eve

(2) Abraham and Sarah (what they *didn't* have; Hebrews 11:8-10, 13-16)

(3) The children of Israel before Canaan and after (sojourner status in the Law; **1 Peter 1:14-21**; Hebrews 3-4; 1 Corinthians 10:1ff)

(4) During exile in Babylon (Esther, Daniel)

(5) Jesus (Matthew 5:5, 8:20)

Jeremiah 29:1-13 **How to Live in Exile**

(1) Recognize that this is where God has you (Jeremiah 29:1-10)

(2) Recognize that you have a mission where God has you (29:4-10; 1 Peter 2:11-12 and “household code” context)

Linked to the original mission: multiply, fill, dominion, priestly (pray); “seek the peace of the city” (“benefaction”? 1 Peter 2:14; Romans 13)

You hold the bearer bonds of the cosmos, and you get to start redeeming them in the present.

You really are supposed to be around pagans (1 Corinthians 5:9-13).

The Bible does not warn us to flee from politics, art, commerce, etc., but from idolatry (1 Cor 10:14) wherever it arises. (See Daniel, Esther, Proverbs 31, Song of Songs.)

(3) Recognize that you will not be in exile forever (29:11-14)

Colonists and citizens: Philippians 3:20-21

(4) Recognize that your future destination carries implications for who you are and how you act in the present.

Conclusion: The nature of the Kingdom

Epistle to Diognetus 5:1 – 6:1 (mid 2nd century):

For Christians are not distinguished from the rest of humanity by country, language, or custom. For nowhere do they live in cities of their own, nor do they speak some unusual dialect But while they live in both Greek and barbarian cities, as each one's lot was cast, and follow the local customs in dress and food and other aspects of life, at the same time they demonstrate the remarkable and admittedly unusual character of their own citizenship. They live in their own countries, but only as nonresidents; they participate in everything as citizens, and endure everything as foreigners. Every foreign country is their fatherland, and every fatherland is foreign.

They marry like everyone else, and have children, but they do not expose their offspring. They share their food but not their wives. They are in the flesh, but they do not live according to the flesh. They live on earth, but their citizenship is in heaven. They obey the established laws; indeed in their private lives they transcend the laws.

They love everyone, and by everyone they are persecuted. They are unknown, yet they are condemned; they are put to death, yet they are brought to life. They are poor, yet they make many rich; they are in need of everything, yet they abound in everything. They are dishonoured, they are glorified in their dishonour; they are slandered, yet they are vindicated. They are cursed, yet they bless; they are insulted, yet they offer respect. When they do good, they are punished as evildoers; when they are punished they rejoice as though brought to life. By the Jews they are assaulted as foreigners, and by the Greeks they are persecuted, yet those who hate them are unable to give a reason for their hostility.

In a word, what the soul is to the body, Christians are to the world.