

# More About Jesus, Part 2



## TouchPoint 8

In our last TouchPoint we explored more of the life of Jesus together. He was a master storyteller whose words created vivid images in the minds of the hearers that conveyed the things He was anxious for the people to learn. We also saw Him as a compulsive healer – it seems He could never leave anyone in the same pain in which He found them! It’s almost as if He couldn’t wait to remake people into what He originally wanted them to be like.

In this TouchPoint, we’ll talk about two more facets of Jesus: Jesus the philosopher, and Jesus the submissive.

### Jesus the Philosopher

Even people who don’t accept Jesus as God/man generally agree that Jesus was a philosopher whose ideas have influenced life on this planet for 2000 years. I almost laugh whenever I hear someone talk like this! Because I accept Jesus as God in the flesh, the ideas Jesus expresses are not just the musings of a renowned philosopher – they are the ideas of God!

**“...the ideas Jesus expresses are not just the musings of a renowned philosopher”**

Think of the difference between your standard-issue, every day philosopher and Jesus, assuming along with me that He’s God. It’s like when a few people who drive Buicks get together and wax eloquent on how Buicks work and how they should work and how they should be treated and cared for expound on their ideas about Buicks.

These opinions are not without merit because after all, these Buick drivers have put themselves in a position over the years to really get to know Buicks. What they share is from hard-won, first-person experience and knowledge.

But if the designers of the Buick sit around the lunch table and talk about Buicks, their conversation reaches levels the ordinary Buick user never appreciates. The Buick designers know what went into making the Buick a Buick. They know Buick secrets that no one knows unless they tell them. Because they know the Buick like nobody else can, when they talk, Buick owners should listen.

When Jesus shares his philosophy about life, our place in it, how we should relate to God and each other, it only seems prudent to listen, and listen closely. He knows how He made us. He knows how we tick even better than the brightest of us.

The problem Jesus faces is that so much of the way He thinks we ought to be living runs counter to many ideas that we live and die by in this modern world.

I'm going to select a few places for you to read. As you do, write down the issue, how we behave relevant to the issue, and how Jesus thinks we should live. But I'll warn you. You are about to meet a Genuine Counter-Culturist!

Matthew 5:21-22 \_\_\_\_\_

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Matt 5:27-28 \_\_\_\_\_

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Matt 5:38-42 \_\_\_\_\_

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Matt 5:39-47 \_\_\_\_\_

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Matt 6:19-21 \_\_\_\_\_

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Matt 6:25-34 \_\_\_\_\_

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Matt 22:15-22 \_\_\_\_\_

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Luke 10:25-36 \_\_\_\_\_

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John 13:1-17 \_\_\_\_\_

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Now I know that was a lot of reading, but it was necessary for you to get a large dose of Jesus! There's another section of Matthew 5 that I hope you'll read, too. It's right at the beginning of the chapter and runs 12 or so verses. They are a description of character traits that Jesus admires, and what will come as an ultimate reward for cultivating them.

In all of the passages I gave you to read (and many more like them in the Gospels), Jesus makes one statement or another about His ideas of how we should relate to people around us and to Him.

The remarkable silver strand that runs through them all is that Jesus thinks it best if people live their lives with the interests and needs of others a little higher in our priorities than our own. He says it's just as bad to think bad thoughts as carry them out (that means He's as concerned about our motivations as our behaviors). He says we should love our enemies, go the extra mile, turn the other cheek, stop worrying, watch out for our neighbor, and serve each other rather than searching for ways to make others subservient to ourselves. He also wants us to be good citizens.

And those 12 verses at the very beginning of Matthew 5, wow! How many of the traits listed there are seen in the top CEO's of the day? Hollywood's best and brightest? The heroes of war or politics?

I can sense the uneasiness you are feeling about this. This is a rough world. And you don't get ahead unless you take care of yourself first. So am I saying that we should abandon reason, walk away from taking care of our families, or allow just anyone to come in and run over us?

No, and even Jesus didn't do that. He stood up to some pretty nasty and danger-

ous characters, and He did defend Himself on occasion when it was necessary.

But Jesus is asking for an extreme makeover that starts in the deepest corners of our thinking and motivations. He asks us to begin thinking of others, taking seriously our need to be a part of helping meet their needs. He asks us to look to things other than wealth or success or the number (and value) of our cars and vacation homes as the indicators of real success in this life. He asks us not to depend on them, or become so attached to them that we overlook our responsibility to each other and to Him to use those assets in ways that bless others.

That's a lot to ask of anyone. It's a lot to ask of you, my new friend. But everywhere you hear Jesus teaching in the Gospels, these are the kinds of things He teaches. And like any good teacher, He's not just spewing theory. He asks it of us because, well, He's doing it Himself.

See, some royalty ask their subjects to do all kinds of things they would never consider doing themselves. Royalty are above some things, after all. But not for this King.

### Jesus the Submissive

In a prior TouchPoint, I used a passage from the New Testament book of Philippians that said that though hHe was God, Jesus did not hold on to His "God-ness," but rather emptied Himself of it and took on the human form of a servant, and submitted to a cruel and unjust death.

**“This wasn't a failure in Jesus' plan in coming to earth.”**

This wasn't a failure in Jesus' plan in coming to earth. It was, in fact, following His plan to the letter. I'm going to print some startling words from Scripture. They come from the pen of a prophet named Isaiah who wrote a book included in the Old Testament. He predicted what Jesus would be like about 700 years before he came along:

He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered

him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. Isaiah 53:2-7 (NIV)

These words are hard to understand in light of Jesus' position as God! When He came, his eternal beauty was hidden – otherwise we'd only be attracted to Him because of His good looks!), and there was nothing in His bearing that would have made Him especially attractive.

And if you read the account of Jesus' treatment at the hands of the Jews and the Romans on the last day of His life, you'll see that every word of Isaiah's somber prediction came true. Matthew 26:47 through Matthew chapter 27 tells the story. I hope you'll open your Bible right now and read this before going on. You will be amazed at how accurately Jesus' treatment was predicted. And you'll be amazed at the willing submission of Jesus, who could have killed everyone present with a single word!



### Why Would He Do All That?

Three reasons. As we have said already, in this He demonstrates His unmatched love for us. And He atones for our sin so that we can be reconnected to God. As if either of those were not enough, His life here, and His submission to death provide a bonus. It's an important one, too.

Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. Hebrews 4:14-16.

Jesus somehow lived after all that you read about in Matthew 26 & 27! That story is our next TouchPoint. The Hebrews verses tell us that Jesus is our repre-

tentative before God the Father with some compelling and excellent qualifications.

First, He remained pure. He didn't sin. At all. Not once. He lived a perfect life, yet died a sinner's death.

But don't think for a moment He wasn't tempted! The Hebrews text says it flat out. And Matthew 4 tells the story of temptations that He had that you and I will never have! (Reading that story is an extra-credit assignment!)

But in every case He passed the test. Instead of using His superior success at facing evil as a reason to put us down, He uses it for an entirely different purpose. When we pray and tell Jesus about our difficulties, He truly understands them because He submitted Himself to the very same kinds of things that we face. It's His direct point of connection to our everyday lives! When you're hurting, it's so much better talking to someone whose been hurt like you have!

Been abused? So was He. Been betrayed? You read what happened in Matthew 26 and 27. Lost everything you ever had? I don't know how much more you can lose when you hang naked on a Roman cross, famous for killing its victims in the most unimaginably painful way. And about the worst thing someone can experience: the loss of a child. Talk to God. He'll tell you that He once lost a child to death, too.

When you come to Jesus, you are coming to someone who really understands. And when you do, somehow, in the middle of all that you are going through, you'll sense that you aren't facing whatever it is you face alone.

This is one of those things that followers of Jesus figure out at some point, and when they do, it changes their lives in ways that leaves those who don't have Jesus in their lives scratching their heads.

Because right there in the middle of pain, suffering, difficulty, betrayal, and loss, there's this inexplicable peace and sense of trust, and sometimes even hope in the bearing of a person who's figured out that Jesus really, truly, understands.

If you need to, you can talk to him now. He'll listen. You'll be surprised how much He understands. •

# More About Jesus

## Questions

Why would Jesus wade into telling humans how to live their lives? (He made us, He knows best how we should function)

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Jesus expanded our understanding about being responsible not just for our actions, but also our thoughts and attitudes. What did He say about...

Hating your fellow man (or woman!)?

Lust?

Retribution?

Your enemies?

Your money?

Worry?

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The essence of Jesus' philosophy of life is that we should always think of others a little higher than ourselves. Read Romans 12.9-21. What are some of the counter-intuitive ways of treating each other are listed there?

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What are the three reasons that Jesus came in humility, and allowed Himself to be killed on a cross that we deserved, so that we might have the life that He deserves? (show His love, atone for our sin, help us know that He is safe to approach)

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Please send this answer sheet, either by e-mail or land mail

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