

Summary

Jesus consistently engaged with all people, including sinners and outcasts, challenging societal norms. He emphasized the importance of being present, speaking out, and witnessing truthfully, without fear.

LET'S OPEN WITH PRAYER:

Lord, again we seek to draw near through worship, and the word. We are seekers, Father, as we time and again attempt to live in the light of your Son, our Lord Jesus. Thank you, Lord, that you have enabled us to be at peace with our own feeble efforts, that in the name of your Son we are renewed time and again as forgiven people.

Bless us now as we gather and seek your will. Amen

SONG (ATN 93): *by David Yantis*

*Pass my love around,
Pick right up, and take my brother's hand,
And pass my love around.*

1. I gave my body and my blood for you;
Now this is all that I ask you to do,
Now this is all that I ask; just –
2. I lived and died to set men free from sin;
Now be my presence to all men,
Now be my presence to all men: and ...
3. My love and joy I leave will never cease;
Now be my instrument of peace,
Now be my instrument of peace: and ...
4. My Word and truth to you I leave behind,
Now be my witness to mankind,
Now be my witness to mankind: and ...

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BIBLE READING

- Luke 15:1—10

Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to him. And the Pharisees and the scribes murmured, saying “This man receives sinners and eats with them.” So he told them this parable: What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost, until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbours, saying to them, “Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost”. Just so, I tell there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

“Just Be There”

Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and seek diligently until she finds it? And when she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbours, saying “Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin which was lost”. Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents.

MESSAGE:

There is no hiding in Jesus - it seems he is always out there, showing up, engaging with people, sharing, teaching, learning, interacting. He is with sinners, and all manner of society. So while the Pharisees and scribes were busy tut-tutting his activities, he is where he is most needed — He is with lovers of money, lovers of self, people with low morals. Is this a place for the Messiah to be? Not according to the leaders of the day! When Jesus heard their opinion he told the parable of the lost sheep and also of the prodigal son. Clearly Jesus knew where he needed to be, not comfy, not convenient (the woman at the well in Samaria), not always pleasant (Lazarus), not always agreeable (Luke 19:45 a messy temple), no matter where he went, or who he met, there were issues.

Even in the Temple there was no hiding, no cringing in the corner. Show up, speak out.

Luke 19:10 “for the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

Have any of us been to such places? Where it is OK for us to be—or show up, as it were? A new Christian asked me to have morning tea with a country road work gang. I was a bit nervous about this, but went along when they had morning smoko. My friend introduced me to his workmates, and some challenging questions followed. I can recall the dozer driver had some colourful points to make. But overall it was a worthwhile time for us all.

I won't pretend it was a comfy experience, but would Jesus turn up there, I asked myself?

Acts 1:8-9 “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. Following this Jesus was lifted up and went from their sight.” So, according to Acts, these were his final earthly messages to his followers. Yes there are two. Firstly v.6-7 “Will you now restore the Kingdom?” The reply “It is not for you to know times or seasons the Father has fixed by his own authority” and secondly, v.8 “But you shall receive power.....and you shall be my witnesses” I.E. show up. I'm often surprised when some Christians try again and again to predict when our Lord will come again. I think the message is clear—it's not our concern, for us it is to believe, and live out our faith, and be prepared (See Matt 25:1—10).

That means showing up and being prepared to be witnesses. Which means:

- A witness has to speak the truth.
- A witness speaks without fear or favour.
- A witness shares an experience to the best of their ability.

We are encouraged in all this by our Lord's reassurance as recorded in John 14: 1-5.

PRAYERS FOR OTHERS

Heavenly Father, we ask your presence now with those in need, be it physical, emotional or spiritual. There are many struggling, Lord, not knowing where to turn. Hear their cry and draw near to them. May your peace be felt in the hour of need, Lord, as the time of most trouble arrives. Thank you that you are always ready to support, encourage, and deliver. And we give

“Just Be There”

thanks for what has happened in the lives of many brick kiln workers in Pakistan.

In Jesus' name, Amen

SONG: *by John Michael Talbot*

*Here I am Lord, it is I Lord
I have heard you calling in the night
I will go Lord, if you lead me,
I will hold your people in my heart.*

1. I, the Lord of sea and sky, I have heard my people cry,
all who dwell in dark and sin, my hand will save.
I have made the stars of night, I will make their darkness bright,
who will bear my light to them? Whom shall I send?
2. I the Lord of wind and flame, I will tend the poor and lame,
I will set a feast for them, my hand will save,
Finest bread I will provide, till their hearts are satisfied,
I will give my life to them, whom shall I send.

BLESSING:

Isaiah 6:8 “And I heard the voice of the Lord saying: whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” Then I said “Here am I. Send me.”

May each of us be open to God's call when it comes. And may his blessing be upon us now and always.

AMEN.

This service was prepared for HopeNet SA by Grant Jewell (0403 412 480)