

Are You Doing “Jesus Stuff”?

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Do you ever wonder what Jesus would be doing if He were walking the earth today? I do. I wonder where He would feel comfortable, who He'd want to hang out with... what would make Him smile, what would make Him cry. I think these are important questions because what we're doing should be the things He would be doing if He walking the earth today.

Would He be sitting next to me in church on Sunday? Would He be watching TV with me, or rushing from place to place...obviously when He was here on earth, times were different, people were different, things were different...or were they?

Nothing New

Sometimes I think things are so much worse today than when people from the Bible lived...but were they really? In Ecclesiastes 1:9, it is written “that which has been is what will be, that which is done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun.” Then it stresses the point even further in verse 10, as it says, “Is there anything of which it may be said, 'See, this is new?' It has already been in ancient times before us.”

We don't have to look far from the "Garden" to realize that man's heart was wicked from the day he ate the forbidden fruit. Look at Adam and Eve's son, Cain. One would think that since Cain's own parents KNEW God, I mean really SAW God and WALKED WITH GOD, that he would be different, that it would be easier for him to have faith, love God, and love others... but that wasn't the case. As we all know, Cain murdered his own brother! The second generation of man and we're already killing each other.

In Genesis 19, God has angels visit Lot to determine if there are ten righteous people in Sodom so that the city can be saved from complete destruction. As the story continues, Sodom's men, both young and old, gather outside of Lot's home and ask Lot to hand over the angels so they can have sex with them! It gets worse... Lot, not wanting to expose his guests to such behavior, offers the men his virgin daughters instead! I mean, come on, imagine hearing that on the 6 o'clock news! Is our world really any more evil or sinful today?

The problems of sin remain and are evident, but for those who would follow God things have changed. God in His mercy and grace allowed His only Son, pure and

blameless, to come to earth and die for us, conquering the power of sin and death so we can be holy as He is holy. Which brings me back to my original question. Where would Jesus be hanging out today -- and are we hanging out there?

Jesus was Radical with a Capital R

I think it's easy to read the Bible and lose sight of the amazing and radical things that Jesus said and did! So much of what He did was contrary to the religious beliefs and laws that the Jewish leaders had lived and preached for many years. He challenged many of the religious practices of the day. Jesus healed on the Sabbath. He ate and drank with sinners. He mingled with non-Jews and even healed them! He challenged the Jewish traditions and tried to help the religious leaders understand the heart of God.

And Jesus loved the outcast... the lepers, the demon possessed, the crippled, the adulterers, those of lower stature... He offered them hope, the truth, and a way out of their misery.

Great Moves of God

History can be our best teacher. If we look at just a couple of historical moves of God, we see a pattern of how He moves. The first one that comes to mind is the early days of the Salvation Army. Many of us think of them as a thrift store, or a way to donate unwanted items for a tax write-off... but the story of its' roots is amazing! In the mid 1800's, William Booth had a heart for the poor and downtrodden of England. He saw the poverty and despair and he went out and ministered to them. He fed them, clothed them and preached to them. He fought against inhumane factory conditions and under-age brothels. A Salvation movement began that swept England and beyond.

Another great move of God I think of is the Jesus Movement of the late 1960's in America. This movement still impacts our nation today. It changed the way we worship and relate to God. It brought tens of thousands into relationship with Christ. The term being "Born Again" became real... and it brought pure love to a generation seeking "free love."

Pastor Chuck Smith, founder of Calvary Chapel, reached out to hippies in a way that the traditional church wouldn't. It's easy to forget what that meant. Today we see our kids dressing like the 60's and we think it's funny. I laugh as I see a \$100 pair of jeans with rips and embroidery on them. As I recall they weren't bought that way back then! In fact, parents back then, did not think the hippy clothes were cool. Hippies were dirty, rebellious, angry and frustrated. They smelled, they wore torn clothes, they lived on the streets, they believed in "tuning in and dropping out," taking drugs and experiencing "free love."

Pastor Chuck reached them where they were at... much like Jesus did in His time. He didn't try to fix their lifestyle, he shared the Good News with them and let Jesus fix them on the inside.

Who are the Hippies of Today?

I have asked myself this question many times. If Christ walked the earth today, whom would He be reaching out to? Who are the outcasts, the lost, the so called condemned of today? I think that's a question for each of us to ask Jesus. He knows whom He wants each of us to reach out to with His love.

Look inside your heart. Ask yourself if there are people, or a group, that you really have a problem with. Then ask yourself, "How can I love them with Christ's love?" Jesus said, "Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you." (Matt 5:44) That's the kind of Love the world needs. That's the kind of Love that went to the cross ...the kind of Love that starts a movement.

Our Challenge

God's love changes lives -- and then those people reach out to others with God's love -- and more lives are changed. And so it goes until the whole world is reached with the message of the Gospel.

I just returned from my 3rd Mission Outreach to Sayulita, Mexico. What a blessing to go to an area where no Christian church exists. Sharing God's love is an amazing experience that each one of us needs to understand firsthand. I especially love this outreach because we bring Eye Doctors (giving sight to the blind), Dentists and Doctors (to heal the infirmities) -- and we minister to the children and share the Gospel of Jesus everywhere we go.

Do we have to go all the way to Mexico to do this? No, the need for His love is all around us.

And so, here's our challenge...and I speak to myself more than anyone. Am I willing to listen to Jesus and obey?

Several weeks ago I was driving through my middle class neighborhood and I saw a homeless man sitting by the road with his shopping cart. I thought, "Maybe the Lord wants me to speak to him and offer him a meal." I didn't do it. Instead I

thought, "Well, I'm really busy now, but next time I will do that..." I tell you this because I think I'm just like all of us... busy, afraid and uncertain of what might happen when we reach out.

But I think reaching out is the challenge from the Lord.

Follow His prompting and do something for someone. Win them by love. Step out of your comfort zone and Jesus will be there. He can make a difference through us. If we will follow His example, we can change our world for Jesus...

"You can do all things through Christ who strengthens you." Phil. 4:13

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." Matt 5:16