

“Jesus Shaped Life - The Mission of Jesus”

Scripture: Luke 19:28-40; Matthew 28:16-20; Luke 19:10; Acts 1:8

Graphics: cross, boxes, courage, lion

Big Truth: Followers of Jesus at the Panama UMC are called to take on a Jesus-Shaped life. During Lent, we spend time understanding what that means. A Jesus-shaped life is a holy life. A Jesus-shaped life is an obedient life. A Jesus-shaped life is a life of healthy relationships. A Jesus-shaped life is a life of courage. A Jesus-shaped life is a life of justice. A Jesus-shaped life is a life of mission. Many things shape our lives, but the life of Jesus must be the primary life-shaper.

Focus Phrase: The mission of Jesus is to transform the world into God’s kingdom.

1. Introduction

- A. (dramatic) Jesus’ earthly life began in Bethlehem, outside Jerusalem, Israel in the first century. It’s what we celebrated a few months ago at Christmas time - the incarnation of Jesus in human form...born from a virgin, Mary, who conceived Jesus when the Holy Spirit came upon her (it says in Luke 1:35).
- B. It was a birth in a stable - most likely attached to the house of one of their family members - but a stable nonetheless. Humble. Maybe with a donkey standing nearby chewing hay, unfazed by the events going on a few feet away.
- C. That event was the birth of God’s only Son, Jesus. Matthew’s gospel tells us that an angel appeared to Mary’s fiancé Joseph before Jesus was born saying that Jesus would, “...save people from their sins...” - that He would be the long-awaited Messiah of the Jewish people.
- D. Jesus had a **mission to save people from their sin**.
- E. Fast-forward 33 years. Jesus was a man. Jesus revealed himself as that Messiah. Jesus healed and taught and forgave and ate with sinners during his 3 year ministry in Israel. Jesus also predicted his own death on a cross and then told everyone he’d rise again after three days.
- F. But then, there was the last week of his earthly life...a week that would end early one morning at an empty tomb just outside of Jerusalem.
- G. Today is Palm Sunday...when the Church celebrates the Triumphal Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. Here’s how that last week of Jesus’ life began...on that first Palm Sunday...

2. Scripture

A. READ Luke 19:28-40

- i. Sometimes, I wonder why this day isn’t called Cloak Sunday since the people put cloaks in the road as a sign of respect and honor to Jesus.
- ii. It could’ve been called Donkey or Colt Sunday since it was on a colt that Jesus rode into Jerusalem. Not a white war horse or stallion...a colt.

Maybe it was an offspring of the donkey that was maybe standing nearby Jesus' feeding trough crib.

- iii. Yet, we call it Palm Sunday because tradition has it that when someone important rode into the city - like a king or war hero - people would wave palm branches in the air as the parade went by. In Matthew's gospel, palm branches were waved along with cloaks being laid down. It was like throwing confetti or waving when we see a parade go by.
- iv. So, there was a colt, and crowds, and cloaks, and cut branches...
- v. But then there were the ROCKS. (pause)
 - a. "...if these were silent, yore stones would shout out."
 - b. The rocks...too numerous to count or really even notice. They were just laying around them...maybe some were large and attached to the bedrock...outcroppings of boulders that sank deep into the dry desert ground. Maybe some were still there from when Jesus saved an adulterous woman from religious leaders ready to stone her.
 - c. Those same religious leaders demanded that Jesus silence the threatening crowds...the sound of joyous hopeful freedom crying out to be rescued by the, "Blessed king who comes in the name of the Lord."
 - d. (loudly) "Tell them to shut up, Jesus!" "Now!"
 - e. Jesus' answer was, calmly, "I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out."
 - f. What he meant was, "Even IF these disciples and followers were somehow silenced, these stones - Creation itself - would shout out praise for what God was doing."
 - g. From the birth narrative of Jesus, we know that Jesus came to save us from our sin. We know that He is the only Son of God and savior of the world.
 - h. But what would the stones say, if it fell to them to tell the story?!
 - i. What WAS and IS the mission of Jesus? And what are we called to do in response to the Good News in OUR lives?
- B. We've been on a journey this Lent...taking on a Jesus Shaped Life. I'll give us a summary and recap of that later.
 - i. But a Jesus Shaped life is holy, obedient, has healthy relationships, is courageous, and confronts injustice.
 - ii. It takes on the characteristics of everything that Jesus was and did while he was alive.

- iii. And when he rode into Jerusalem that final time...on a borrowed colt...surrounded by people with cloaks and palm branches...and rocks ready to shout out the mission...he did that for you and for me.
- iv. Write this down: ***The mission of Jesus is to transform the world into God's kingdom.***
- v. The mission of Jesus is to tell the world about a God who loves them and wants to save them for everlasting life with Him. Jesus rode into Jerusalem at the beginning of his final week so that an EXCLAMATION POINT could be etched into history!
- vi. In Luke 19:10, just before this account of Jesus riding into Jerusalem, Jesus told the world his mission. Luke 19:10 says, "For the Son of Man came to seek out and save the lost."
- vii. Jesus' mission - to save people from their sin - is accomplished by seeking out and saving the lost.
- viii. But before we can get to how Jesus and the early church did that - and then how WE are supposed to do that - we need to understand what it means to be lost.
- ix. If the mission is to seek and save the lost, who is lost and how?

C. Luke 15 - parables of lost things

- i. Luke 15 contains three of Jesus' most famous parables about lost and found things. Remember, parables are made up stories that give us some profound and important truth to teach us about the Kingdom of God.
- ii. ***The mission of Jesus is to transform the world into God's kingdom.***
- iii. Being lost, in a biblical sense, is the state of human existence apart from God. A spiritually lost person says, "I can do this on my own for there is no God who loves me." A lost person has walked away from God and doesn't know how to come back to Him on their own. This state of lostness is caused by our sins of pride and rejection and selfishness and arrogance. Even the Pharisees, who had religion but no relationship with God, were lost, according to Jesus.
- iv. BUT (BUT!) (Listen, now) **God loves to find the lost things!** God loves to search and recover those who are lost...and will keep looking until they are found.
- v. You can read these in more detail later today in Luke 15, but the first parable is the parable of the Lost Sheep.
 - a. Jesus asked who, finding out that one sheep of 99 was missing, wouldn't go after that ONE lost sheep? Of course you would!
 - b. And when you find that ONE lost sheep, you rejoice!

- c. When one is lost and then found, heaven rejoices because the kingdom mission is all about seeking out and saving the lost...a sinner who repents and is found.
- vi. The second parable is the Parable of the Lost Coin.
 - a. A widow lost one small coin out of 10. She lit a lamp and swept the floors to find it, because it was very valuable to her...she didn't have much.
 - b. When she found it, she rejoiced!
 - c. In the mission of the Kingdom, when ONE sinner turns back to God and is found, the angels rejoice!
- vii. Finally, the last of the three parables is the Return of the Prodigal Son.
 - a. Basically, a son walked away from His Father and family...wishing they were dead.
 - b. He turned up lost, in sin and embarrassing circumstances for a Jewish man...with pigs and mud and eating scraps.
 - c. He decided to humble himself and go back to the father...who welcomed him with open arms and rejoiced!
 - d. The kingdom mission of Jesus is to welcome back those who have wandered away and become lost.
- viii. The mission of Jesus is to transform the world into God's kingdom...one lost person at a time.
- D. What was once lost is found and God rejoices...heaven rejoices...Creation rejoices. The people cry out in praise. The rocks even shout out!
- E. In the early church, after Jesus was raised from the dead and left the Holy Spirit to start the church - as we read in Acts - the mission was to seek out and save the lost...one lost sinner at a time.
 - i. At his ascension, Jesus said this, in Acts 1:8 "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my **witnesses** in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."
 - ii. Before that in Matthew 28:19-20, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and **teaching them** to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."
 - iii. The mission was clear: go out there, into the world filled with spiritually lost people, and tell people about Jesus...use everything you know about Jesus and the kingdom he has begun to usher into this world...and TELL PEOPLE ABOUT HIM USING WORDS AND ACTIONS...courageously, obediently, in relationship, with the justice and holiness of God!

- iv. To be a witness...to teach...to make disciples...and baptize...the church had to use words. The church had to speak the name of Jesus. The disciples who went out from Jerusalem talked to others about Jesus. They listened to people's stories and then met needs and cared for others, ABSOLUTELY, but then they told people WHY they were doing it...and who Jesus was.
- v. The early church KNEW that there were people around them who were lost and in danger of dying apart from a relationship with God - to be forever separated from Him.
- vi. They urgently and obediently responded to Jesus' command to "Go" into the world for His kingdom mission.

3. Application

- A. Church, We KNOW there are lost in our lives, and in our zip code, and in our workplaces and families. Maybe someone has already come to your mind.
- B. We have we lost the urgency of Jesus...and of the early church to tell people of the fact they are in danger of dying apart from a saving relationship with Jesus?
- C. YET, GOD IS STILL SEARCHING FOR THEM AND HE WANTS US TO HELP HIM HELP THEM FIND THEIR WAY TO HIM!
- D. You've all seen the lost dog or cat or person posters stapled up to telephone poles. Steve Cordle wrote this: "If God created a poster, it might have a picture of people and read: 'My prize creation. Looks something like me; they wandered off and may be beaten up and hungry.' Many people do not have a relationship with God - living as if He doesn't exist. Jesus is looking for his people, and we get to be part of the search party."
- E. If the mission of Jesus is to transform the world into the kingdom of God...and that kingdom can only be inhabited by people who once were lost but now are found, as the hymn goes, then **our mission is to help people find God and be part of His kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.**
- F. Our mission statement here at Panama UMC is *To make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.* Our vision is that *we will lovingly give every person in our community the opportunity to believe and follow Jesus for life.*
- G. To do that, we invite everyone we connect with to be growing in worship, community, openness, obeying, serving, and sharing. That's our intentional discipleship pathway...and it's for ALL of us!
- H. But what about that one person that the Holy Spirit has hopefully put on your mind right now who is lost? That person you know that is living as though God doesn't exist? Maybe a brother or sister...or child...or coworker...or parent.
- I. **God is searching for them...always has been and always will.**

- J. What can YOU do, this week, today even, to help pull them into the Kingdom of God?
- K. Steve Cordle wrote, “God loves people so deeply, and we’re the ones positioned to throw them a lifeline.”
- L. We all know people without a relationship with Christ who are drowning in aimlessness, selfishness, and sin.
- M. Here’s a simple acronym to help you. One of the ways to be intentional about this is to “BLESS” people where you live, work, play, and learn.
- N. Using the letters of the word BLESS (B-L-E-S-S), in his book by that same name, Bless, Dave Ferguson explains that BLESS is an acronym for five rhythms that help us share our faith - to be part of the search party - to work with Jesus to transform the world into the Kingdom of God:
 - i. (1) B = **B**egin with prayer. Before talking to people about God, talk to God about people. Pray by name for the people around you at work and home.
 - ii. (2) L = **L**isten. Get to know what’s happening in their lives.
 - iii. (3) E = **E**at with them. Bond through shared activity, especially meals.
 - iv. (4) S = **S**erve them as they have needs.
 - v. (5) S = **S**hare your story of how Jesus has impacted your life.
- O. BLESS the people around you this week...maybe start with one person in your neighborhood or work or family...pray, listen, share a meal, serve them, and then share your story about Jesus.
- P. The mission of Jesus is to transform the world into God’s kingdom.

4. Conclusion

- A. Jesus is looking for his people, and we get to be part of the search party.
- B. We must tell them about HIM.
- C. As we finish this series and begin to enter into Holy Week, let me challenge you to BE in Holy Week. Don’t DO Holy Week, but spend time praying and seeking Jesus this week as you begin to BLESS others.
- D. (Cross) The final piece for this series is the Mission of Jesus...a completed cross...filled and shaped by the life of Jesus.
- E. The Jesus-Shaped Life is not a life of DOING, but a life of BEING like Jesus... holy...obedient...relatable...courageous...just...and missional. There are some ways to serve Him in that, but He’s calling us to stop thinking that we have this Christian life all figured out...and start growing more and more into the image of Jesus.
- F. What will that take in your life? Will it take the humility of Jesus to admit that you have work to do? Will it take a willingness to deny yourself and take up

your cross? Will it take repentance for the idols in our lives? What will it take for you to be more holy, obedient, connected, courageous, just, and missional?

- G. Holy Week is a wonderful time to lay it all on the line for Jesus. Why? Because in one week, we'll be celebrating the most incredible and powerful day in the history of the world.
- H. Between now and then, we go to the cross on Good Friday... We'll worship right here at 7p. And, this is your invitation and encouragement to come worship that night...the cross has the final word.
- I. We'll Walk to the Crosses for worship on Holy Saturday at 6p just north of town. Again, if you've not been to that worship service, it's really cool!
- J. Church, let's pray and then we'll go from here, ready to tell the world about Jesus!
- K. PRAY!**