



**Scripture:** Matthew 16:13-20, 1 John 4:9-10, John 3:16, John 13:34-35

**Takeaway:** The way we follow Jesus will be affected by who He is to us. The world will know who Jesus is by how we follow Him.

## INTRO

I want to ask a question that may seem strange at first but will make sense later. What kind of Jesus do you follow? That's weird, right? When I say the name "Jesus" what image pops up? Maybe you think of Jesus with flowing brown hair holding a lamb; everywhere He goes He brings that lamb with Him. For some of you, He might be buff Jesus who looks like he could be a social media influencer. For Ricky Bobby, His Jesus is the 8pound 6 ounces baby Jesus.

If you type Jesus in a Google image search you will get so many different versions of Jesus that pop up that it becomes impossible to figure out which one is the real Jesus. Let's set the physical appearance aside.

What characteristics of the person come to mind? Maybe your Jesus is super loving and would never hurt a fly and only compliments people. Maybe your Jesus is a freedom fighter who is going against the system. Your Jesus might be an extrovert who is the life of the party. And yet, someone else would argue that Jesus is an introvert who would go off on His own and say wise things like a Hebrew Yoda. Everyone in this room has a version of Jesus in their mind. So why does it matter which Jesus we follow?

## TENSION

If we, the church, are carrying the Christianity of Jesus, we need to understand who Jesus is; not a cheap imitation that we created. We need to understand the real Jesus. Anything less than the real Jesus is just an idol that looks attractive when life is good but ignores us when life gets crazy. So, who is Jesus?

The question of "who is Jesus" isn't even new. Jesus' followers were asked this question by Jesus Himself. If anyone would know who Jesus is, it would be the people closest to Him.

*When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?” They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?”*  
**Matthew 16:13-15 NIV**

Can you see the confusion in the disciples? Some say you are John the Baptist 2.0 and others say you are Elijah coming back to finish what you started. They listed off so many different versions of who Jesus could be, and the man was standing right there.

So why does this matter? **It’s because the way we follow Jesus will be affected by who He is to us.** If Jesus is just another spiritual influence, then it is easy to live a life that is filled with insignificant goals. If we follow the wrong version of Jesus, we will always miss the point. But if we can understand who Jesus is and what it looks like to live like Him, we discover God’s best for us.

But then Peter answers the question:

*Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”*

*Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”*

**Matthew 16:16-19 NIV**

Peter declared that Jesus was the anointed one. Jesus was the one that was promised to restore us to a relationship with God. Not only is Jesus the promised one, but He is all-powerful; He is the Son of the living God. Jesus is capable, He is the cure to our sin, and He is the only one that can save us.

Jesus reveals that knowing this truth would be the foundation for the rest of Peter’s life. Knowing who the real Jesus is, is that important. But then Jesus did something confusing.

*Then he ordered his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.*  
**Matthew 16:20 NIV**

Why would Jesus tell His disciples not to tell anyone that He was the Messiah? If His closest followers were confused about who He was, wouldn't the rest of the world be even more confused?

Jesus was not ready to reveal to the world that He was the promised Messiah because He needed to live His life in a way that would prove who He was. For Jesus to be the Messiah, He needed to pay the ultimate price for our sins by surrendering His life for ours. To put it more simply: Jesus needed to die so that you could live. But Jesus needed to go beyond conquering our sins; He had to conquer death. The signs that would be proof that Jesus was Messiah were His death and resurrection.

[You don't have to teach this part. I always like to teach as if this is someone's first time learning about all of this. The example below is simply for time's sake. You can add more details if you want.]

If you're new to this whole Messiah and sin business, let me bring you up to speed. In the book of Genesis God created all of this and all of us. The entirety of creation was made by a Creator. When God made humanity, he called them perfect. Nothing could be added or taken away. It was very good. But humanity disagreed.

We decided we didn't need a relationship with the Creator, and we could live life on our terms. That would be like a phone unplugging itself from a charging cable because it felt restricted by the cord length. The day we "unplugged" from God was the day we started to die. Look around you: war, famine, and sickness. These are the result of a sin-broken world. This is what it looks like to live life on our terms and not God's. That is why we need a Messiah; to save us from our sins and reconnect us back to God's goodness. We needed someone to plug the phone back in.

So why would Jesus want to even save us, to begin with? Where would He even start? In the 90s, we were dealing with this exact question which inspired the trendiest bracelets of all time that posed a question: **"What would Jesus do?"** But recently, a different bracelet has been trending with an answer to this question. The answer not only tells us what Jesus would do in every circumstance, but what motivated Jesus. **He would love first.**



**Scripture:** Matthew 27:15-18, John 13:4-5, John 13:13-17, Luke 22:25-30, Matthew 25:37-40

**Takeaway:** Humility is using your influence to serve others.

## INTRO

Have you ever noticed how messed up this world is? Just look at everything that is happening. We're in a pandemic still and sickness seems to be on everyone's mind. Countries are at war. Economies are collapsing. Everywhere you look, it feels like gloom and doom. Every single country on this planet is struggling.

So, what should we do when the world is on fire? We look for leaders to create change. We look for capable people that are qualified to tackle our world's issues. But not just anyone can create this change; they must have the right qualities to lead.

When you think of the qualities it takes to be a good leader, what do you think of? Let's experiment. When I call out a quality, raise your hand if it's what you think of of a leader. Bold. Gifted. Persuasive. Courageous. Motivated. Powerful. Humble.

That last one seems out of place. It sticks out when you compare it to the other qualities. It's ironic how humble the word, humble, is. Would you want to be famous for your humility? If we are all honest, we would love to be remembered for our talents or the things we accomplish. It would be amazing if when people thought of you, the first thought would be "courageous" or "powerful." But who wants to be remembered for their humility?

## TENSION

If you forgot to list humility as a leadership quality don't feel bad, the Israelites forget it too. The Israelites had all sorts of issues. They had been conquered by the Romans and were subject to harsh Roman law. People died daily for their beliefs and every year new battles would erupt as the Roman government took over their lives.

The people were in desperate need of a rescuer. This is when Jesus entered the picture. But the man was a walking enigma. He healed people,

cast out demons, fed the hungry, and he wouldn't stop talking about how the Kingdom of God had arrived. Was this guy going to lead a revolution and kick the Roman government out? That's what the Israelites wanted.

They wanted a warrior king to destroy their enemies and get vengeance. Just to be clear, Jesus was capable of that. He could have deleted Caesar off the face of the Earth with a sneeze. But He didn't do anything like that. He came with news of peace and sermons about loving your enemies.

Towards the end of His earthly ministry, Jesus was arrested for crimes of treason against the Romans. When the governor, Pontius Pilate, interrogated Jesus, he couldn't find guilt of any crime. So, he let the Israelites decide Jesus's fate. The Romans had a custom at Passover where they would let one prisoner go free and one prisoner would be crucified.

So, the crowd got to decide who would die and who would go free. The two prisoners they got to choose from this year was a man named Jesus and another man named Jesus. You heard me correctly.

*Now it was the governor's custom at the festival to release a prisoner chosen by the crowd. At that time they had a well-known prisoner whose name was Jesus Barabbas. So when the crowd had gathered, Pilate asked them, "Which one do you want me to release to you: Jesus Barabbas, or Jesus who is called the Messiah?" For he knew it was out of self-interest that they had handed Jesus over to him.*

**Matthew 27:15-18 NIV**

Jesus Barabbas was guilty of treason and murder. He was most likely a revolutionary fighter who had killed some Romans to get them to leave Jerusalem. He was the type of leader that the Israelites wanted. If that wasn't bad enough, the religious leaders that hated Jesus went around and convinced people in the crowd to set Barabbas free. The peaceful festival turned into a blood-thirsty riot. The crowd chose which Jesus they wanted.

The crowd cried out for Barabbas's freedom and Jesus the Messiah's blood. They chanted "Crucify him."

Remember, Jesus is all-powerful. At any moment He could have called an army of angels to airstrike His enemies. The very people He came to

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