

# Jesus Came

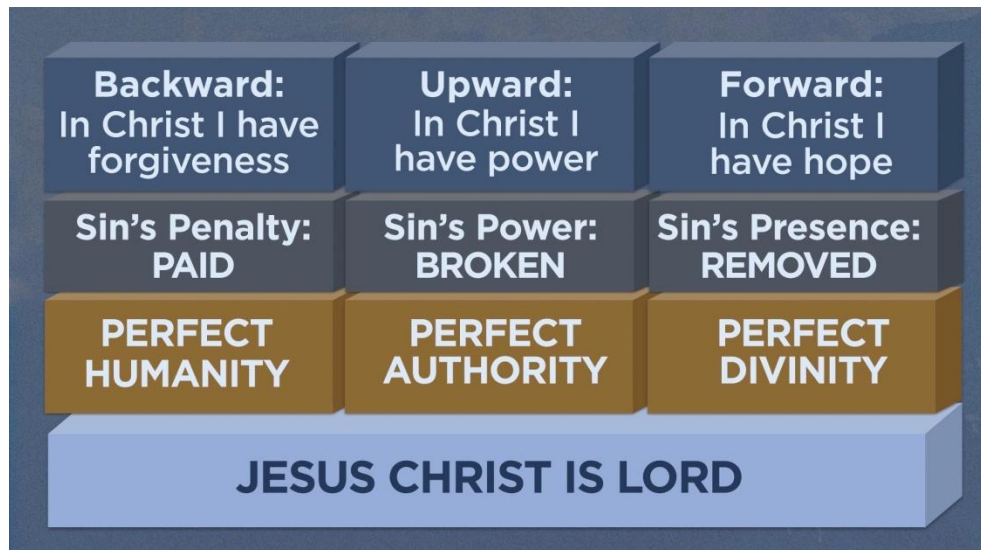
Mark 1:32-45

By the end of Mark 1 Jesus' ministry has kicked into high gear. He is travelling all over Galilee in Northern Israel, preaching the gospel, healing people and casting out demons. Word about him is spreading like wildfire as rumors of a powerful healer and teacher travels from one village to the next – and people are coming to find him in droves. Simon found him in v. 37 and said, **“Everyone is looking for you.”**

Jesus ministered to the crowds, but he would not be held captive by them. He had a mission and was committed to his game plan.

“Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for **that is why I came out.**” Mark 1:38

**Jesus came to preach the good news.** He came to announce the kingdom of God and to reveal that He was the long awaited Messiah and King. We have just started a new sermon series called **The Gospel**. We are walking through *the 10 Saving Acts of Jesus* – all of which are based on the first one that Jesus Christ is LORD. If you missed last week, watch listen or read that sermon since it is the foundational one for this series.



When you think of the Gospel think **“Jesus is LORD.”** And think of His Lordship in three dimensions. He is Lord in His perfect humanity, perfect authority and perfect divinity.

We look back on His **perfect humanity** and trust in His sacrifice to pay for our sins. We look up on His **perfect authority** and trust in His power and His Spirit for our strength every day. And we look forward to His **perfect divinity**, for we will enjoy the fullness of His glory forever in heaven, so we can trust Him with our struggles today, knowing that He will make all things new one day.

That is the foundational truth of the Gospel – Jesus is Lord. This is wonderfully good news for our past, present and future. Today we cover the second and third saving acts of Jesus – that he came and lived the perfect life so he could become the perfect sacrifice for sinners.

One of the most helpful stories to teach us what the Gospel is and what it is not is **the parable of the prodigal son**. A class on this has just started and will continue for the next six weeks – so check it out!

Jesus told this story about a man who had two sons. The younger one came to his dad and demanded his half of the inheritance. Basically he was telling his father, “I wish you were dead. I don’t care about you. I just want your money. Sell half of the family land, give me the cash and I’m leaving.” As insulting and disrespectful as that sounds to our ears, it was even more so in Jesus’ day.

Shockingly, the father agreed! He sold off half of his property and gave the young man his inheritance early. The young man traveled to a distant country and before long wasted all the money on wine, women and song. Once the money was gone, the friends disappeared and he found himself miserable and desperate, working the only job he could find – feeding slop to pigs. He was so poor he can’t even afford to buy the meal he is giving the pigs. This guy had hit an all time low.

But in that desperation and brokenness, he thought about his father and hatched a plan to go back home. He thought, “Dad won’t take me back the way it used to be, but he is a reasonable guy, maybe he’ll hire me as a farm hand – whatever happens I’ll be better off than where I am in this pig sty!”

So the boy set out for home, rehearsing his speech. Listen to Luke 15 –

“But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ Luke 15:20-21

But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ And they began to celebrate.” Luke 15:22-24

This story beautifully illustrates **the Gospel** – that ***God forgives rebels who repent***. His grace is big enough for all of us. No matter what you’ve done, no matter how far you’ve gone, God is the perfectly loving, all-gracious father. He didn’t even let the son finish his speech and get to the proposal about being a hired servant. **The gospel is not about working off your debt** – none of us could ever pay back the amount we owe. The gospel is about the amazing grace of God to forgive sinful wretches like you and me.

But the story doesn’t end there. Remember, there were two brothers in this story. At this point, ***the older brother*** was out in the field and he started to hear music and dancing. He asked a servant what was going on and was told, “your brother has come home and your father has thrown a party for him.”

***Now, put yourself in big brother’s shoes.*** You weren’t the one to run off to a distant country. You didn’t insult your father and demand your half of the inheritance. You didn’t waste half of the family wealth on sinful living. You have been right here at home, working hard every day on

the family farm. And this miscreant of a little brother has the audacity to come home and Dad throws him a party? What?

Consider what the older brother is thinking: **who is paying for this party?** Little bro already got his share – what’s left here is... all mine! Right?

The Father understood the challenge and just as he went running to the younger brother, so Dad went out to the older brother and pleaded with him to come in and join in the party. The older son protested – but he wasted everything! He doesn’t deserve this! And the father said to his older son,

**“It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost and is found.” Luke 15:32**

Do you hear what the father is saying? YOUR BROTHER.

Tim Keller, in his insightful book, *Prodigal God*, shows how this parable invites us to **think about a true older brother.** What would a good older brother have done in this situation? Would he have stayed home? Would he be all angry and resentful when his little brother came back? Or would he have left home, tracked down his foolish, rebellious little brother and brought him home at his own expense?

“Your brother was dead and is alive.” Your brother – that you didn’t lift a finger to go find. Your brother that you didn’t pay a cent for his foolish choices. Your brother.

Think about that. If your little brother ran off with half of the family money, what would you do? Would you sit at home and be bitter and resentful? Or would you pack a bag, collect your savings and go find the fool? Would it cost you? Time? Money? Effort? Sacrifice? You better believe it.

Do you see the point? The prodigal son had a terrible older brother. But we don’t. **Jesus is the true older brother.** He did not stay in heaven, when every one of us had gone astray. He left his father’s home and came to seek and save the lost. He found us, called us by name and paid the price to bring us home! That is a true older brother. That is our Lord and Savior, Jesus.

**Jesus is our true older brother.**

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

He came for us. We were all dead but are alive because of Jesus. We were all lost but are found because of Jesus. We were all in a distant country, far from God, but because of Jesus we are on our way home! Isn’t that wonderfully good news?

He had every right to stay in heaven with the Father and leave us with the consequences of our sins. But he gave up His rights, He stepped down from His throne, He cloaked his eternally divine glory in a fully human body and then laid down his life for you and for me. He came. ***He paid the price to bring us home.***

## **Jesus is our true older brother.**

*“The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.” Mark 10:45*

- **He paid the price to bring us home.**

***The fact that Jesus came for us proves that God is love.*** We know from creation that God is almighty and creative – since He made all of this. We know from Scripture that God is in charge. He is the glorious, sovereign ruler over all things. But because of Jesus we know that God is love. He is gracious and compassionate. He sent His Son to save us.

So whatever you are going through, whatever hardship or suffering, the life and death of Jesus prove that God has not given up on you and that He DOES care about you. For God IS Love. It is essential to His very nature. If you ever think God doesn't care – consider the cross. If you ever think Jesus doesn't know – think about Christmas. Jesus came. He experienced everything we do in his life on earth. He knows what you are going through. He went through it all himself, and more.

So let's look this morning at **four expressions of God's love**, four ways Jesus shows us the love of God.

First, as the parable of the prodigal son illustrates, true love ***shows up***. Turn back with me to Mark Chapter one.

### **Jesus proves that God is love**

#### **1. True love shows up.**

*“And he healed many who were sick... ‘Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out.’” Mark 1:34,38*

**Jesus came**. And people flocked to him. Christmas is so familiar to us the truth of it doesn't always sink in. Jesus came. The eternally divine, infinitely glorious Son of God showed up on earth. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and carried for nine months as an embryo that grew into a fetus. And by that I don't mean less than human but I mean a fully human baby from the moment of conception. The miracle of Christmas was not the birth – that was quite ordinary. The miracle of Christmas was the conception.

Consider that. Think about the fact that the God of the universe through whom all things were made was, for a few days, confined to the space of a microscopic embryo. That's what it meant for Him to show up. Sure, Jesus was a weak and helpless human baby just like you and I were. But before that He was a totally dependent baby in Mary's uterus, slurping life from her through his umbilical cord just like every other human baby ever.

That's what love does. It shows up. It comes close. ***Love cannot remain at a distance***. Kristin and I dated for two years at college together, then I graduated a year ahead of her and moved back home to Chicago. So the love of my life was four hours away in the cornfields of Indiana. I was a youth pastor, so I would hop in my car and drive the four hours to visit her on Monday, my day off. I was not just willing but delighted to spend eight hours in a round trip drive for not much more than eight hours with her there at Taylor.

That's what love does. It shows up. It drives the distance to be with the one you love. Jesus proves that God is love because he came. He covered the distance all the way from heaven to earth.

Second, Jesus demonstrates God's love for us by speaking the truth.

### **Jesus proves that God is love**

#### **2. True love speaks truth**

*"And he said, 'Let us go on to the next towns, **that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out.**' And he went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons."*  
Mark 1:38-39

Jesus ministered to the crowds and healed MANY people it says. But notice it does not say he healed everyone. And whenever the crowds got large, what did Jesus do? He moved on. He was very careful not to become a traveling magic show.

Did he care about the felt needs of people? Yes. He came into the world and became one of us to fully identify with our needs. **But is Jesus more interested in healing our REAL needs** than He is in addressing our FELT needs all the time? You better believe it.

And that is why he spoke the truth. **His primary mission was to preach the gospel** – announcing the Kingdom of God. This is why we saw last week that when the four men brought their paralyzed friend Jesus first pronounced his sins forgiven and only later healed his body. The point was that the man's greater need – his real need – was to have his SOUL healed. Only secondarily did he need his BODY healed.

And here's the thing about Jesus – **he not only spoke the truth – he IS the truth.** Jesus said:

### **Jesus not only spoke the truth, He is the truth**

*"I am the way and the truth and the life." John 14:6*

Listen to how the book of Hebrews begins:

### **Jesus is the ultimate revelation of God**

*"Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days **he has spoken to us by his Son...** He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature." Hebrews 1:1-3*

**Jesus is the ultimate revelation of the character of God.** "He IS the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature." Jesus is the FINAL WORD. If you want to know what God is like, look at Jesus. If you want to know God's will, listen to Jesus. If you want to please God, follow Jesus. Jesus not only spoke the truth – He IS the truth of God in a human body.

Just to be clear on **the doctrine of the Incarnation: Jesus always was fully God.** When He was conceived and then born as a human baby He did not become less than God but simply poured the fullness of His divinity into a totally human body, which He still has to this day, just in a glorified, immortal form. The analogy that helps me with this is to think of **an Olympic sprinter**

wearing a suit of armor. That runner hasn't changed his nature at all, but some of his abilities are limited by that suit of armor.

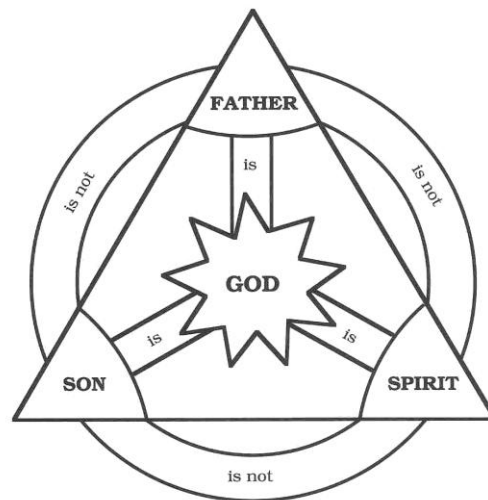
Just so, when Jesus took on a human body he experienced limitations to his knowledge, power and presence. He had to learn how to walk and talk and read and write. The author of Scripture had to learn the Scriptures. The Almighty Creator had to build up his muscles. The Lord of Heaven who upholds the entire universe with the word of his power was confined to a single point in space and time – throughout the 33 years of his earthly life.

So **Jesus was fully God and fully human**.

### **Jesus was fully God and fully human**

*“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as the only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth.” John 1:14*

100% God and 100% human – not a 50/50 mixture. Similarly to clarify the doctrine of the Trinity (image and explanation here: <https://www.gotquestions.org/Trinity-Bible.html>):



- **God is One.** We do not worship three gods, but only One unified God.
- **Each person of the Trinity is fully God.** The Father is God, the Son is God and the Spirit is God. Jesus is not less than God, nor is the Holy Spirit less than God.
- **But each person of the Trinity is distinct from the others** – the Father is not the Son, nor is the Son the same person as the Spirit, etc.

It is hard to understand the Trinity, but since we know that God is love it makes sense that God is both three and one. For perfect love unites. And God is perfectly united in the glorious eternal dance of Father, Son and Holy Spirit – constantly pouring glory, honor and love from one to the other. We have the great privilege of stepping into that joyful, overflowing fountain of life.

Nobody set out to create the doctrine of the Trinity. The early church eventually clarified the details as we understand them **BECAUSE of the clear teaching of the Bible about Jesus**. Since Jesus is the Son of God – not less than God, but fully God, we have to make sense of that. Since Jesus is the ultimate revelation of the character of God they had to figure out what that meant.

The result of a great deal of study, discussion and debate was the admittedly tricky doctrine of the Trinity.

The point for our purposes here is that Jesus came – He proved His love by showing up, so we know that God is love. Second, Jesus spoke the truth. He showed us who God is and what God expects of us. And he lived the perfect life to show us what that looks like.

The third expression of God’s love for us in Christ:

### **Jesus proves that God is love**

#### 3. True love reaches out

*“And a leper came to him, imploring him, and kneeling said to him, ‘If you will, you can make me clean.’ Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand and touched him and said to him, ‘I will; be clean.’” Mark 1:40-41*

Jesus could have healed this leper with just a word or a thought. He did that numerous times. But **Jesus approached each person with exactly the kind of love they NEEDED.** Not necessarily what they wanted right then or what they thought they needed – Jesus often pushed people in their timing and understanding. But Jesus was so gracious and understanding.

**Here is a leper:** an outcast; an untouchable. Leprosy was an unknown skin disease and probably covered several different conditions – some of which were contagious and others were not. But since people didn’t understand those conditions, lepers were kept outside of the villages and were forbidden to come in contact with anyone. They were forced to wear bells so if they ever did come into town people would hear them coming and have time to get away.

Plus, lepers were labelled **ceremonially “unclean”** by the religious leaders. So if you touched one, you were defiled by that contact and couldn’t go to the synagogue or temple for a week. Yet here is Jesus – the holiest One in the universe – reaching out his hand to TOUCH the untouchable.

**But instead of being defiled, Jesus makes the man clean.** The sickness of the leper does not transfer to Jesus. The health and wholeness of Jesus transfers to the leper! What a picture of the Gospel!

***Every one of us is unclean, filthy in our sin.*** Jesus had every right to keep His distance and leave us outside of His holy heaven forever. But instead, He came to us and reached out his hand to touch us. And though he was temporarily stained by our sin, that sin could not hold him, that stain could not stay on him, for he rose from the grave victorious over sin forever. So in the touch of Jesus, he will take your sin-stain from you and transfer His holiness and health and power and joy and life to you!

The leper was absolutely right. ***“If you are willing, you can make me clean.”*** Jesus is the ONLY ONE who can make us clean. You know in your heart that something is wrong with you. You are stained, bent, broken on the inside. Even if you clean up ok on the outside, every one of us can feel that something is wrong. We feel guilt and shame and we worry about being rejected. Ultimately we all know we are not worthy of God or heaven because we are unclean.

But that is precisely why Jesus came. That is why he preached the gospel. That is why he reached out his hand to touch the unclean – so we could become clean by His touch. Jesus can declare you to be CLEAN. All it takes is the request of faith. Come to Jesus and say to him, “If you want, you can make me clean.” And to everyone who calls on him with that kind of simple faith, Jesus says exactly what he said to the leper. “I will; be clean.”

That is love. It shows up. It speaks the truth. It reaches out. And finally, love urges forward.

### **Jesus proves that God is love**

#### **4. True love restores fellowship**

*“And said to him, ‘See that you say nothing to anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, as a proof to them.’” Mark 1:44*

Jesus was not satisfied with just healing people physically. **He wanted to restore them heart, soul, mind and body.** He not only healed the leper, he made that leper right with God and restored him to his place in the community of believers. The Jewish law required certain rites of purification. For this man to be accepted back into his community, there were tests that had to be performed and the confirmation of the priest that were needed.

So Jesus said, “Go – do what the Law requires ‘as a proof to them.’” He says, “to me, to God you are already clean. But for your sake and for the sake of the Jewish community here, follow these steps so you can be restored to CLEAN status in the synagogue.”

Jesus proves that God is love. As a demonstration of His perfect love, Jesus showed up. He spoke the truth. He reached out to unclean, wicked sinners. And he restores the outcasts into relationship with God and one another.

***We are a community of restored outcasts*** – every one of us. There is not a single insider here. All of us were unclean, sitting there outside of the village walls, wearing bells so people could stay away from us. But Jesus came to us, reached out his hand and touched us so that now we are clean, righteous, forgiven and free. And so we have been restored, reconciled, made one with God and thereby united with one another.

This is the Gospel. Jesus, the Lord of heaven and earth, came for us. He lived the perfect life so he could become the perfect sacrifice. He always was the fully divine Son of God, but he took on a human body so he could die in our place. Those are the first three saving acts of Jesus. Come back next week to hear how he calls sinners to repent.

One simple application as we close. ***Since we have been loved like this, how should we love others?*** God has given us EVERYTHING in the love of Jesus. He showed up for us, He spoke the truth for us, He reached out to us when we were most unclean and he restored us into fellowship. May this Gospel truth motivate us and move us to love one another well in the church.

This means, first of all – **showing up for each other.** Don’t make a habit of skipping church or missing your small group. If you’re not in a **Community Group**, that is your first step. You need to SHOW UP. How can you love and serve and care for and pray for your fellow believers if you are not regularly involved in their lives? That is what our small groups are for!



Second, we need to graciously, lovingly speak the truth to each other. Above all we need to be like Jesus and ***preach the gospel to each other***. Remind one another of these wonderful truths that Jesus is Lord, that He came, that He lived the life we should have lived so He could die the death we should have died. Third, reach out to others. Our lives should be defined by outreach – constantly praying for eyes to see the needs of the people around us.

One of the key reasons the early church grew so rapidly in the second and third century was the plagues. There were **two major plagues** that killed thousands upon thousands of people in the Roman Empire – one in 165 and the other in 251. When the plague came to town, everyone fled to save their own lives, leaving the sick behind. Everyone fled, that is, except the Christians. ***Many Christians stayed to tend the sick***, even though many of those infected with the plague were total strangers.

And many of the Christians caught the plague themselves and died. But when the illness finally passed and people came back to the towns, the sick ones who recovered shared powerful and consistent testimonies about the people who stayed to care for them – they were Christians. Something supernatural gave them courage and strength to stay when others fled, to touch the sick when others refused to come near.

Of course we know, that's the love of Jesus. That's what Jesus did for us. When we were sick and dying with the plague he did not keep his distance, but he came to care for us. In the process, he was infected with the deadly disease of sin and he died so we could live.

That is our example to follow. More than that it is the Gospel we believe. May this truth of the Gospel fill us with gratitude and joy to live out the love of Christ and reach out with this Good News to the people around us!

Let's pray together.

### **Mark 1:32-45**

That evening at sundown they brought to him  
all who were sick or oppressed by demons  
And the whole city was gathered together at the door.  
And **he healed many** who were sick with various diseases,  
and cast out many demons.  
And he would not permit the demons to speak,  
because **they knew him**.

And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark,  
he departed and went out to a **desolate place**,  
and there **he prayed**.

36 And Simon and those who were with him searched for him,  
37 and **they found him** and said to him, [theme of searching / finding]  
“**Everyone** is looking for you.”

38 And he said to them,  
“**Let us go on** to the next towns,  
that I may **preach there also**, [came to preach: to make known]  
**for that is why I came out**.”

39 And he went throughout **all Galilee**, [ALL of region of Israel]  
**preaching** in their synagogues  
and **casting out demons**.

40 And **a leper** came to him,  
imploring him,  
and kneeling said to him,  
“**If you will, you can make me clean**.”

41 **Moved with pity**, [knows and cares]  
he stretched out his hand  
and **touched him** and said to him,  
“**I will; be clean**.” [both willing and able]

42 **And immediately the leprosy left him**,  
and **he was made clean**.

43 And Jesus sternly charged him  
and sent him away at once,  
44 and said to him,  
“See that you **say nothing to anyone**,  
but go, show yourself to the priest  
and offer **for your cleansing** what Moses commanded,  
for a proof to them.”

45 But he went out  
and began to talk freely about it,  
and **to spread the news**,  
so that Jesus could no longer openly enter a town,  
but was out in **desolate places**,  
and people were coming to him from **every quarter**.