

5. Jesus as the Master Teacher (4Q 2020—Education)

Biblical Material: Heb. 1:1–4; 2 Cor. 4:1–6; John 1:14, 18; 14:1–14; Phil. 2:1–11; 2 Cor. 5:16–21.

Quotes

- Jesus does not give recipes that show the way to God as other teachers of religion do. He is himself the way. *Karl Barth*
- The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires. *William A. Ward*
- Jesus comes then not to condemn (to bring the consequences we deserve) but to save by shining the light on our evil, by naming our evil as evil so we can repent and escape a chain of bad actions and bad consequences to forgiveness, and so we can learn from Jesus the master teacher to live more wisely in the future. *Brian McLaren*
- Your Master Teacher knows all you need to learn, the perfect timing for your learning it, and the ideal way of teaching it to you. You don't create a Master Teacher—that's already been done. You discover your Master Teacher. *Peter McWilliams*
- Jesus Christ is infinitely more than a great teacher and philosopher. *Joseph B. Wirthlin*
- Either Jesus is the Son of God; or a madman or worse. But His being just a great teacher? He's not left that open to us. *C.S. Lewis*

Questions

In what way is Jesus the Master teacher? Is there a danger in seeing Jesus as simply a teacher? What are we supposed to be learning, and how? What would you say was Jesus' teaching agenda? How did Jesus teach—what elements do you think are significant? How can we take from the life of Jesus principles by which we too can learn, and teach?

Bible summary

“The Son is the radiant glory of God, and the visible expression of his true character.” Hebrews 1:3 FBV. “For God who said, ‘Let light shine out of the darkness,’ shone in our hearts to illuminate the knowledge of God’s glory in the face of Jesus Christ.” 2 Cor. 4:6 FBV. The Word became flesh... the Son has made the Father known (John 1:14, 18). “Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.” John 14:9 FBV. We are to have the same attitude as Christ (Phil. 2:1–11). “For God was in Christ bringing the world back from hostility to friendship with him, not counting anyone’s sins against them, and giving us this message to change his enemies into his friends. So we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God is pleading through us: ‘Please, won’t you come back and be God’s friend?’” 2 Cor. 5:19-20 FBV.

Comment

The key verse in this study is John 14:9—Jesus as the one who reveals the Father. In the context of education and Jesus as the Master Teacher, we should realize that this was his primary motivation. In becoming one with us, living and dying here, God in Jesus shows us what he's really like. So it's not primarily the transmission of knowledge, as we often understand education, but the *demonstration* of truth, because he is the truth.

Why did Jesus come? So we could see and know and understand the truth. For all the lies had blinded us to God, so that we couldn't see. Because of the way we are, we prefer the lies,

and believe in them. Isn't it true that "A lie travels round the world while truth is putting its boots on"? But as Friend and Father, God couldn't leave it like that. For our sakes he had to make sure we understood the difference, that we didn't confuse truth and lie, so we could make a real choice.

"What is truth?" asked Meister Eckhart, and then went to answer: "Truth is something so noble that if God should turn aside from it, I could keep to the truth and let God go." We are to study truth for ourselves, examine the evidence, and come to a logical conclusion. It is not enough to accept the verdict of others, however believable. Nor is it acceptable simply to take the opinions of those in authority, however esteemed. We are called on to investigate truth for ourselves, to analyze and experiment, to make deductions and test the conclusions against what we observe, both theoretically and practically in our own lives. We are to accept nothing uncritically, and God invites us to examine his words and his actions to see whether they do indeed make sense, that they are true and trustworthy.

So when it comes the Master Teacher it's not a question of just listening to him, but seeing him for who he truly is. In all our explanations of our beliefs, we should be making this perspective central. Otherwise we risk getting lost down some obscure theological corridors, and not showing others that the knowledge of God is illuminated in the face of Jesus.

Ellen White comments

"He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." Christ had not ceased to be God when He became man. Though He had humbled Himself to humanity, the Godhead was still His own. Christ alone could represent the Father to humanity, and this representation the disciples had been privileged to behold for over three years. {DA 663-4}

Who is Christ?—He is the only begotten Son of the living God. He is to the Father as a word that expresses the thought,—as a thought made audible. Christ is the word of God. Christ said to Philip, "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father." His words were the echo of God's words. Christ was the likeness of God, the brightness of His glory, the express image of His person. {SD 21}

Christ was the greatest teacher the world has ever known. He came to this earth to shed abroad the bright beams of truth, that men might gain a fitness for heaven. "For this cause came I into the world that I should bear witness unto the truth." He came to reveal the character of the Father, that men might be led to worship Him in spirit and in truth.

Man's need for a divine teacher was known in heaven. The pity and sympathy of God were aroused in behalf of human beings, fallen and bound to Satan's chariot car; and when the fullness of time was come, He sent forth His Son. The One appointed in the councils of heaven came to this earth as man's instructor. The rich benevolence of God gave Him to our world, and to meet the necessities of human nature He took humanity upon Himself. To the astonishment of the heavenly host, the eternal Word came to this world as a helpless babe. Fully prepared, He left the royal courts and mysteriously allied Himself with fallen human beings. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). {LHU 166}

Jesus Christ is our spiritual touchstone. He reveals the Father. . . . The mind must be prepared to appreciate the work and words of Christ, for He came from heaven to awaken a desire and to give the bread of life to all who hunger for spiritual knowledge. {CTr 221}