

The Surprising Son of God

Lesson 02 of the series "Jesus in Action"

1. By seeing Jesus in action we can learn a lot about the character of God.

"This is the Good News about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God." Mark 1:1 (NLT)

"The Son radiates God's own glory and expresses the very character of God..." Hebrews 1:3 (NLT)

Life Application: God wants us to know him so we can have a relationship with him.

"We proclaim to you what we ourselves have actually seen and heard so that you may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. We are writing these things so that you may fully share our joy." 1 John 1:3-4 (NLT)

2. Surprisingly, Jesus was willing to touch a man with a contagious skin disease.

"A man with leprosy came and knelt in front of Jesus, begging to be healed. 'If you are willing, you can heal me and make me clean,' he said. Moved with compassion, Jesus reached out and touched him. 'I am willing,' he said. 'Be healed!' Instantly the leprosy disappeared, and the man was healed." Mark 1:40-42 (NLT)

Note: Lepers were ceremonially unclean and banished from society. "Those who suffer from a serious skin disease must tear their clothing and leave their hair uncombed. They must cover their mouth and call out, 'Unclean! Unclean!' As long as the serious disease lasts, they will be ceremonially unclean. They must live in isolation in their place outside the camp." Leviticus 13:45-46 (NLT)

Note: By touching the leper Jesus revealed to us God's compassion.

"The LORD is like a father to his children, tender and compassionate to those who fear him. For he knows how weak we are; he remembers we are only dust." Psalm 103:13-14 (NLT)

Life Application: When we need help we should run to Jesus.

Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest."

Matthew 11:28 (NLT)

3. Surprisingly, Jesus told a paralyzed man that his sins were forgiven.

When Jesus returned to Capernaum several days later, the news spread quickly that he was back home. Soon the house where he was staying was so packed with visitors that there was no more room, even outside the door. While he was preaching God's word to them, four men arrived carrying a paralyzed man on a mat. They couldn't bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, so they dug a hole through the roof above his head. Then they lowered the man on his mat, right down in front of Jesus. Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralyzed man, "My child, your sins are forgiven." But some of the teachers of religious law who were sitting there thought to themselves, "What is he saying? This is blasphemy! Only God can forgive sins!" Jesus knew immediately what they were thinking, so he asked them, "Why do you question this in your hearts? Is it easier to say to the paralyzed man 'Your sins are forgiven,' or 'Stand up, pick up your mat, and walk'? So I will prove to you that the Son of Man has the authority on earth to forgive sins." Then Jesus turned to the paralyzed man and said, "Stand up, pick up your mat, and go home!" And the man jumped up, grabbed his mat, and walked out through the stunned onlookers. They were all amazed and praised God, exclaiming, "We've never seen anything like this before!" Mark 2:1-12 (NLT)

Note: By healing the paralyzed man Jesus proved his authority came from God. "You may say to yourselves, 'How can we know when a message has not been spoken by the LORD?' If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the LORD does not take place or come true, that is a message the LORD has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously. Do not be afraid of him." Deuteronomy 18:21-22 (NIV)

Note: By forgiving the paralyzed man's sins Jesus showed us God's grace.

"God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it."

Ephesians 2:8-9 (NLT)

Life Application: Friends bring friends to Jesus.

"The woman left her water jar beside the well and ran back to the village, telling everyone, 'Come and see a man who told me everything I ever did! Could he possibly be the Messiah?' So the people came streaming from the village to see (Jesus)." John 4:28-30 (NLT)

4. Surprisingly, Jesus chose Levi as a disciple and was a friend of sinners.

As he walked along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at his tax collector's booth. "Follow me and be my disciple," Jesus said to him. So Levi got up and followed him. Later, Levi invited Jesus and his disciples to his home as dinner guests, along with many tax collectors and other disreputable sinners. (There were many people of this kind among Jesus' followers.) But when the teachers of religious law who were Pharisees saw him eating with tax collectors and other sinners, they asked his disciples, "Why does he eat with such scum?" When Jesus heard this, he told them, "Healthy people don't need a doctor—sick people do. I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners." Mark 2:14-17 (NLT)

Note: By associating with Levi and his friends Jesus revealed God's love.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him." John 3:16-17 (NIV)

Life Application: We are ambassadors of the Good News about Jesus, the Son of God.

"...anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him. For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, "Come back to God!" For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ. " 2 Corinthians 5:17-21 (NLT)

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Connect Group Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever been surprised after meeting someone because they were different than you expected? Has God ever surprised you? Why? What did you learn about him?
2. Read Romans 5:8 & Luke: 32-36. How would those around us view the Good News of Jesus if we showed them the same kind of compassion God has shown us?
3. Read Mark 2:1-12. Why do you think Jesus forgave the man's sin before healing his body? Based on your answer, how does this effect our perspective when helping others? In verse 5, Jesus saw the faith of four friends who brought a paralyzed man to Him. How should we be putting our faith into action? What should we do when obstacles stand in our way?
4. Read Mark 2:14-17. Jesus invited Levi into a relationship with Him and Levi held a party to introduce his sinful friends to Jesus. How can you use meal times and celebrations to intentionally introduce your unchurched friends to Jesus? Brainstorm as a group about possible tailgates, pool parties, and barbecues.
5. Read 2 Corinthians 5:17-21. What does it mean to be an ambassador for Christ? What would it look like if you were an ambassador for Jesus at home? ...at work? ...while playing golf/fishing/working out, etc.?

Quotations to ponder:

"For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost." Jesus in Luke 19:10

"We can all understand how a man forgives offenses against himself. You tread on my toe and I forgive you, you steal my money and I forgive you. But what should we make of a man, himself unrobbed and untrodden on, who announced that he forgave you for treading on other men's toes and stealing other men's money? Asinine fatuity is the kindest description we should give of his conduct. Yet this is what Jesus did. He told people that their sins were forgiven, and never waited to consult all the other people whom their sins had undoubtedly injured. He unhesitatingly behaved as if the party chiefly concerned, the person chiefly in all offenses. This makes sense only if He really God whose laws are broken and whose love is wounded in every sin. In the mouth of any speaker who is not God, these words would imply what I can only regard as a silliness and conceit unrivalled by any other character in history." C.S. Lewis in *Mere Christianity*

"I've always said that I don't respect people who don't proselytize. I don't respect that at all. If you believe that there's a heaven and a hell, and people could be going to hell or not getting eternal life, and you think that it's not really worth telling them this because it would make it socially awkward—and atheists who think people shouldn't proselytize and who say just leave me alone and keep your religion to yourself—how much do you have to hate somebody to *not* proselytize? How much do you have to hate somebody to believe everlasting life is possible and not tell them that? I mean, if I believed, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that a truck was coming at you, and you didn't believe that truck was bearing down on you, there is a certain point where I tackle you. And this is *more* important than that." Penn Jillette of the magician duo Penn and Teller