

Your Kingdom Come

PART 5: 'WHY JESUS CAME'

Over 2,000 years ago in our earthly timeline, the Creator and Sustainer of the universe; the King of Kings; the Lord of Lords; the second Person of the Trinity did something which was unprecedented, remarkable, unthinkable and almost incomprehensible. The Son of God made a choice which impacted all of humanity: past, present and future. He stepped out of heaven and into the womb of a Jewish teenager to be born as a human – to become one of us. The Son of God stepped out of eternity and into time and emerged as a carpenter named Jesus. We call this the 'incarnation' and it was perhaps the greatest miracle of all time. But why did Jesus come to earth?

There are probably many answers to that question. He came to die for our sins; He came to live a perfect life on our behalf; He came to usher in the kingdom of God and teach us how to live as authentic people made in the image of God; He came to conquer sin, death and Satan once and for all time by rising from the dead; He came to commission us and empower us to spread the good news of God's amazing grace and salvation to the uttermost parts of the world and to make disciples who will make disciples who will make disciples!

There are many things Jesus achieved in His time on earth but I want to suggest to you that there is one over-arching and undergirding reason why Jesus came and this reason informs all the other reasons. But before I share that, I want to paint the backdrop a little more by asking another question.

What is theology? I have read a number of definitions, but in simple terms theology is the study of the nature of God. That being the case, we really should be encountering theology in every sermon, every hymn and worship song, every teaching seminar and book written about the Church and on every page of the Bible. However this study of the nature of God is not confined to the cerebral, intellectual part of our being. To truly study God is to experience God in His fullness in a way that impacts our mind, our will and our emotions.

So in light of that understanding of theology, it has been said that Jesus Christ is therefore perfect theology. By that I mean anything that you think you know about God that you can't find in the person of Jesus, you have a reason to question because **Jesus came to reveal the Father.**

Jesus came to do something which had never been done before to this extent – He came to show us God. When Jesus said, *"If you've seen me you've seen the Father,"* that's exactly what He meant. Any faint concept of God as our Father in the Old Testament was completely overshadowed by the clear and powerful revelation that Jesus brought to humanity when He came to earth. The opening words of the book of Hebrews say it best – and this is one of the most profound statements in the whole Bible.

"In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being ..." (Hebrews 1:1-3)

If that doesn't cause your heart to skip a beat – then please check your pulse! Jesus is the exact representation of the Father; He is God incarnate and when I right click on the word 'incarnate' my trusty thesaurus that 'incarnate' means 'embodied' or 'personified' or 'alive.'

So Jesus embodied God the Father; He personified God the Father; when Jesus came to earth, God was alive on earth through a human being. We can live ignorant of this truth, like most of the world does, or we can embrace it and live within that reality and then truly understand that this is why Jesus came to earth. All of those other reasons are really sub points of the primary point. And sometimes it's easy to get to get caught up in all the sub points and never fully catch why He came to earth. He came to reveal the Father. Everything was about revealing the Father. He said, *"I and the Father are One . . . if you've seen me, you've seen the Father."*

When Jesus healed blind Bartimaeus he was revealing the Father - He was doing what any father would do for their son if they could. Jesus never broke character. He never strayed from His purpose - to show us what the Heavenly Father was like. Every single thing He did, every word that He spoke revealed the Father. It says that so clearly in John chapter 5. Jesus only did what He saw the Father doing and only spoke the words the Father gave Him to speak. As the primary function of His coming to earth, He wouldn't even say a word unless the Father said it first.

So Jesus came with this mission, this assignment, this commission, call it what you will, He came to reveal something what had never graced this planet before. He came to reveal that we have a Father Who is perfect, Who loves us with an ever-lasting love and Who has made provision for us to be restored to Him. It's amazing. It's incomprehensible. Revealing the Father was Jesus' heartbeat. If you want to get a glimpse of His heart then you need to read what is the real 'Lord's prayer' in John 17. What we call the Lord's prayer is actually the disciples prayer - a model prayer the Lord gave us when teaching us to pray.

The Lord's personal prayer is in John 17 and it's truly amazing. This is where Jesus stands before the Father and starts giving an account of how He has lived His life on earth. He goes through several things including, *"I made Your name manifest . . . I have declared Your word . . . I have performed Your works."* And He goes through this list of things – all of which were intended to lead people to their heavenly Father.

So the blind were healed because Jesus was showing us what the Father is like. The multitudes were fed because Jesus was showing us what the Father is like. A woman caught in adultery found herself at Jesus' feet one day. The religious leaders stood around with stones waiting to kill her because of her sin. But Jesus released such an atmosphere of grace that these people who wanted to live with the condemnation of the law fled for their own safety. Once again Jesus reveals the Father's love for His daughter. This is a precious father-daughter moment. Jesus is doing what any father would do if he had the chance to restore his daughter. Without condoning her sin in any way, He lavishes grace and forgiveness upon her. It was all about revealing the heart of the Father. Grace doesn't pretend there is no sin - grace enables us to live victorious over sin. So Jesus comes to this woman and He reveals the Father and transforms the life of this sinner.

Have you noticed that the only people Jesus had a hard time with were the religious leaders that kept condemning and putting restraints on people that Jesus didn't put on them? It's really was awkward sometimes but sinners just loved to be with Jesus – they would seek Him out. Like Zacchaeus - the scum of his community. As a tax collector he had been stealing from his own people. He would skim off the top for his own personal gain. And we know that because he confessed it to Jesus - but Jesus never pointed it out. Can you imagine? Having a bank account full of stolen money and you want to be with God Who knows all. That's like begging for a beating in Old Testament terms and yet Zacchaeus saw something in the person of Jesus and he was willing to risk everything he had, everything he was, for that moment of encounter. So Jesus looks at old Zac and says, *"I'm coming to your house. It's not good enough that you just see me from up in that tree - let's share a meal together."* I don't think any of us in this time and culture can appreciate just how amazing this was.

And what about the prostitute who trashed all protocol just to be close to Jesus. She barges into this rabbi's house, this religious leader's home and comes to where Jesus is eating and starts weeping and spilling her tears all over his feet and wiping them with her hair. She pushed every button that existed in that crowd. I doubt even the disciples thought this was a smart idea. But they needed to learn that Jesus came to reveal something else. He came to show them that you can demonstrate mercy; you can demonstrate grace; you can demonstrate kindness, without condoning sin. I believe there is still a fear in the Church that if we get too loving, we will actually condone people's sin. So we end up focussing on the sin and become harsh and condemning. But Jesus just wasn't wired that way.

Jesus came to reveal the Father. What is the very first word of the model prayer Jesus gave the disciples? It begins, *"Our Father .."* Jesus was focusing on something more than just revealing the Father to individuals. He was developing a concept of family, of community, so He said when we pray we say 'our' Father, not 'my' Father. **There are things about God as Father that you can only learn in relationship with other people.** They're not independent discoveries. Even though we individually have a relationship with God and it is precious and wonderful, there's another whole dimension of knowing God as 'our' Father. We know God fully in community, in the family of God.

So when Jesus came into each community in His travels, He would walk through town and immediately draw a crowd. They would press in around Him and try to touch His clothing. He would then stop when the Spirit prompted Him and pray for the sick, the demonised and the oppressed. He would show them the Father-heart and love of God as He set them free from their affliction. He came to reveal the kingdom of heaven – that kingdom where God is ever-present - and when that kingdom encounters this kingdom, God is always healing, delivering, restoring, forgiving, reconciling and lavishing His grace, love and mercy upon anyone who would come to Him. So Jesus came to reveal the Father. Let me take you to John chapter 20 once again, reading from verse 19.

"On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit." (John 20:19-22)

So just imagine for a moment that you are hiding in a room, thinking you might die, full of fear that the same people who murdered Jesus would come for you . . . and while bunkered down listening to every noise outside and checking the windows every 30 seconds . . . the guy you saw murdered walks through the wall and stands in front of you! I am not sure that would help you with your fear issues! Perhaps that's why Jesus' first words were, *"Peace be with you."* Roughly translated it would be *"Chill guys, it's me – everything is fine!"* After releasing peace, Jesus showed them His hands in His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw it was really the Lord. Jesus then gave them another dose of peace in verse 21 and says, *"Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."* Have you ever thought about that? As the Father sent me. What did the Father send Jesus to do? The primary reason Jesus came was to reveal the Father. So here Jesus says, *"As the Father sent me, I send you."* With that one statement Jesus merged His purpose with our purpose.

The kingdom of God, the kingdom of heaven is a family run business. It has to do with family and if you miss the concept of family, you've missed the concept of God's kingdom. It's not a bureaucracy. It's not a religious institution. It's not an earthly government. It's not a corporation. It's none of those things. It's a family. Time after time, those in great ministries, with great responsibilities, have learned the hard way that this whole thing is not about an organization. It's not about an institution. It's about being a family. The moment we leave that concept of family, we actually abandon the primary reason our Father sent Jesus and Jesus sends us.

In 1654, French Philosopher and mathematician, Blaise Pascal, had a near fatal carriage accident which caused him to turn to God. He died only 8 years later from tuberculosis but in those final years of his life Pascal was a prolific writer. Many of his works vanished after his death but one quote has remained and has re-surfaced many, many times. You may recognise it:

“There is a God-shaped vacuum in the heart of every human which cannot be satisfied by any created thing but only by God the Creator, made known through Jesus Christ.”

People are crying out to know that there is a Father in heaven Who loves them and Jesus came to reveal that Father and His love. So in that upper room when Jesus appeared to the eleven remaining disciples He breathed on them and said, *“Receive the Holy Spirit.”* In that huge moment, He also said, *“My job is now your job. What the Father sent me to do, I am now sending you to do.”* Which is what? To reveal the Father. That means the way we respond to a neighbour, the way we treat a business associate, the way we do Church life, the way we relate to those outside the Church - it's all about revealing God to people. There is an amazing prayer in the first two verses of Psalm 67.

Psalm 67:1-2 *“May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face shine on us - so that your ways may be known on earth, your salvation among all nations.”*

“God, be gracious to us and bless us.” Did you know that you have an actual responsibility to pursue the blessing of God? It's not optional. Without being blessed, you're not equipped to demonstrate what God is like. One of the most selfish things the Church has done is when in the name of humility we have not pursued the blessing of God. God's blessing is God's equipping. *“God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face shine on us.”* What is that? Well I can tell you that neuro-scientists have actually found the 'joy centre' of our brains. They've done studies and have actually written about this. They have discovered that an infant is actually trained in joy, by the joyful countenance of their caregiver – usually their mum and dad. There's something about the wrinkle in our eyes and our smile and those silly words that we say to tiny babies, you know, the words that don't exist. It's all of that which communicates to that child, what joy is like, and it actually activates that part of their brain to experience joy. They are actually trained in joy.

When I first read that research I couldn't help seeing a correlation to the lack of joy in so many Christians who have never seen the countenance of a Father who delighted over them. So here in Psalm 67 we have this amazing prayer asking God to fix that; to shine the light of His countenance upon us and pour out His blessing on us; to delight over us like any loving father would over his children; to so impact us that our own face radiates with our Father's likeness. There's something in that encounter that changes us deep inside.

Remember that the only time we saw the face of Moses shining is when he saw the goodness of God. God wants to change the countenance of the whole Church as His goodness and love is revealed to us afresh. So here's the prayer, *“God be gracious to us and bless us, cause Your face to shine on us.”* Why? What is our motivation in asking God to shine His countenance upon us? Verse 2 tells us: *“.. so that your ways may be known on earth, your salvation among all nations.”* In other words, *“Lord, if You don't do something so significant in me that it is noticeable by others, then they won't know what You are like.”*

So brothers and sisters, I want to give you a fresh challenge right now, that every day of your life, you be the representative of a perfect Father. I really pray that in this next season of your journey and mine, that we will boldly embrace the mission of Christ and take the baton Jesus passed to us in that upper room that day. Jesus came to reveal the Father, knowing that when God is truly known on earth, everything else will fall into place. That's why He commissioned us to do the same – every day in every possible way.

Sadly, for some of us that has been very difficult because in this broken, dysfunctional world many people have not yet had their 'joy centre' activated. They have not really experienced God's face shining on them. Or perhaps they did once and this world and other fallen people beat it out of them and now they have many emotional and spiritual scars which reflect those beatings.

Our Father's love can heal any wound, no matter how deep or how painful. But He doesn't tend to remove the scars in this life. I used to wonder about that when for many people those scars are just a reminder of the pain they endured. But then I heard a prophetic word some time ago which really spoke to me. In this word God said, *"I'm not going to remove the scars from your life. Instead, I'm going to arrange them like a carving on a fine piece of crystal."*

That really resonated with me. God doesn't want our scars to be a reminder of the pain and the suffering which produced them. He wants them to be a reminder of His loving grace in healing of those wounds as He moved us past that painful chapter in our lives. Our Father so longs to hear us pray that prayer of Psalm 67. He is always waiting for us to open ourselves up to Him and cry out for Him to bless us and cause His face to shine upon us. Only then, can we pick up the baton Jesus passed to us. Only then, can we fulfill His mission, which is our mission, and reveal our Father to all those around us.

Let me pray with you and for you.

Gracious and ever-loving, ever giving, Father God . . . you know that for some of us today those are just words because Your love, Your grace, Your blessings and your Father-heart seem to have alluded us. Things happen in this fallen world which make it really hard for some of us to relate to You as our loving Father. Perhaps it was the absence or the abuse of an earthly father; perhaps it was a really bad experience of Church which pushed us away from seeking You; perhaps it was false teaching about law and grace and what Christ achieved for us through His life, death and resurrection. There are many things which can make it hard for us to open up and trust You as our Father. But Lord if we are to fulfill the mission of Christ, if we are to have that same over-arching priority Jesus had when He was among us, we will want to do as Jesus did, which above all was to reveal our Father to the world around Him.

So Father God, for the sake of the gospel, for the sake of the mission of Christ, for the salvation of all those friends and family members we know who are yet to embrace Your love and grace, we ask that you would pour out Your healing, Your grace and Your power upon us right now. We stand against the work of the devil who always wants us to re-visit the pain, the loss, the grief, the betrayal and all those things which have wounded us so deeply. In Jesus' name I break that curse and release the healing, restoring, strengthening power of God's love into everyone who wants to receive it right now. Draw a line behind us today Lord and may we only go forward, by your grace, for Your glory in the power of Your Spirit. In Jesus' matchless name I pray, Amen.