

Life of Christ

A study of the life and teachings of Jesus

The Sign of Jonah

Luke 11:29-32

—by Rachael Bernardi

In today's passage, the crowds press into Jesus, asking for a miraculous sign that He is the Messiah. They wanted a sign, but they didn't want to obey. Jesus answers that He will only give them the sign of Jonah, yet they had no idea what a sign that would be! The best sign, the best miracle of all—the most astonishing feat anyone has ever accomplished—is that He rose from the dead after three days in the tomb!

A few days ago, on Day 20, we read about how John the Baptist sent a messenger to ask Jesus, “Are You the One we've been waiting for, or should we look for someone else?” John was also asking if Jesus was the coming Messiah, the coming King.

Christos, the “Christ” part of Jesus' name, means “anointed,” “the Messiah.” It's where we get the word “christened.” We read in the Old Testament about people being anointed (christened with oil), and this practice is reserved for the kings, prophets, and high priests of Israel. Here, Jesus Christ is Jesus the Christ—which literally means “Jesus, the Anointed One,” anointed as Prophet, Priest, and King. Prophetically announcing everything He came to do, and then doing it, Jesus, the righteous and holy High Priest (1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 2:17; 3:1), sacrificed Himself as the unblemished Lamb (John 1:29; 1 Peter 1:19) for our redemption, then rose from the dead, demonstrating His eternal power over death and claiming the Kingship that was rightfully His. Jesus the Christ is indeed the Messiah, our Savior, our High Priest, our powerful, mighty King!

I cringe when I hear other people use Jesus' Name—especially His full Name—in ways that do not honor Him. I asked Him early this morning, “Why do they use Your Name, Jesus? Why don't they shout, ‘Uncle Joe!’

or a random famous person's name?" I instantly sensed His quiet, gentle response: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me" (Matthew 28:18), and "My Name is above every other name" (Philippians 2:9-11).

Jesus' Name is used because, without even acknowledging it, people subconsciously agree with the truth that His Name has power above every other name. Even if a person's motive is out of frustration over some unfortunate event or circumstance, their declaration by default proclaims the power and authority of the name of Jesus Christ above all others. It is a sobering reminder to me that when He speaks to me, I need to listen. And obey.

Have you ever felt a gentle nudge from the Holy Spirit to do (or not do!) something, and you didn't obey? I know I have! Sooo many times! In my younger days, they tended to be things that I should or should not do. These days they tend to be things I should or should not say! For instance, there was that unremarkable moment I unwittingly insulted a world-class musician to his face. I thought it was humorous at the time, but by the look on his face, I thought, "Note to self..."

I have more memories like that than I care to admit, and ministries like Real Change have helped me understand that yes, Jesus Christ took that, too when He took my sin to the cross on that unforgettable day some 2000 years ago. And James 1:26 has been a sobering reminder throughout my life to continually submit my words, my lips, and my tongue to the control of the Holy Spirit!

If someone believes they have a relationship with God but fails to guard his words, then his heart is drifting away, and his religion is shallow and empty. —*James 1:26*

Submitting to Jesus' lordship helps keep me from wading into the weeds—saying more than is necessary—or worse, becoming the thorn in someone else's side. Sometimes we also wait for a sign from God before acting on His nudge. Sometimes we want an answer to prayer before we obey a simple command. Choose instead to trust Him even if He never answers that prayer!

Choosing to submit in obedience to His lordship, regardless of the outcome, is a beautiful act of obedience to Jesus Christ, our Messiah, the anointed King!

Question When was the last time you shared with someone about how the power of the resurrection of Jesus changed your life and how it can also change their life forever? Do you put Jesus first in everything, or do you hold out for a change in our culture, climate, or government?

Family Chat Have you ever told anyone about your relationship with Jesus? Maybe someone in your life needs to hear about how much you love Jesus.

Prayer Starter “Jesus, thank you for showing me where I have let my relationship with You become commonplace. I am sorry, and I choose to renew my covenant with You, to serve You and You alone, and to demonstrate my covenant relationship with You through serving the needs of others today, not thinking about myself and my own needs over the needs of others.”

Take Action Because Jesus is God’s anointed Messiah, let Him have a greater claim on your obedience and your life today. Partner with someone—whether a member of your small group or your accountability partner—and pray a prayer of repentance together, focusing first on what the Lord is showing you that you need to repent from, regardless of the seriousness of the offense, and then repent on behalf of your community, your culture, and your nation.