The little church in the pines

MACK’S INN, ISLAND PARK IDAHO

July 25, 2021

John 6:37-40

The impact of one man, Jesus the Christ

By having Jan read the Scripture she did, to me, speaks of the duty that Jesus asked of all of us, and that duty is to live our lives for Him and show it….and in a great variety of ways and vocations, be they, let us say a custodian, a physician, a teacher, a salesperson, a business owner, an artist, a song writer, etc., etc., etc.

In doing this we will fulfill His words spoken to all who call themselves disciples of Christ; “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nation (help the people, teaching them of Me, to believe in Me, and obey My words, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.”

There are countless ways to teach, countless ways to exhibit His role and place in our lives….and it is in this myriad of ways that we find people turning to Him….loving Him….devoted to Him….living out their lives for Him as they come to understand His great sacrifice, in obeying the Father, the One God, the Great I AM. That sacrifice being His willingness to die for the sins of the men and women of the world, who come to Him in acknowledgment and repentance. At that moment they are filled sealed by the Holy Spirit of God unto salvation….life with Him forever more.

In 2018 almost to the day I wrote and preached a sermon remarkably like this one. No one man born has impacted the world in almost every way possible.

Jesus….a common name in His day, born in the humblest of circumstances. Think about this. The story as it unfolds as we follow in the Bible is a remarkable tale. The fulfilment of words from the prophets of old, down to the smallest jot and tittle. Born, in the

then and still tiny nation of Israel, not formally schooled except by the religious leaders of his then hometown. The school was a religious school only….learning from the Torah His history, which was the history of His own people.

The adopted son of a carpenter, He Himself following in the footsteps of Joseph…learning a trade that would add income to the family needs, splinters, calloused hands, learning to develop and eye for detail, while again, learning, devouring Holy Scripture than one day He would use to confound the religious leaders of His day, with far deeper understanding of their true meaning that any of them could claim.

Though in many ways His childhood was not unlike that of the other children in His community.

Except….He, this child of His literal Father, Jehovah God, the One God, Creator of all….would have a deep and eternal IMPACT, not only the nation where he was raised, but throughout the entire world….and for all of eternity.

* His impact would deeply influence & elevate the VALUE of human life.
* Compassion and Mercy
* Grace as deep as Universe itself
* Marriage and Family
* Education
* Moral advancements
* Government and social order throughout the entire world
* Science
* Art, Music, Literate
* Freedom on a new level
* The personal and deep changes brought about through His love, acceptance, and forgiveness in the lives of billions

To my way of thinking, though all these are amazing in and of themselves, as I will cover some, maybe all of them to a degree, the last one, the changed lives of billions of everyday human beings, is the most important of all, because that one itself is why and how all the other influences and changes come to be.

Throughout recorded human history, the IMPACT of Jesus has never even come close to being surpassed. No other person has inspired so many positive changes in the lives of both His followers and the world’s population. People who encounter and accept the Risen Christ are transformed….from within, then without. History is replete with their and our stories. To the degree often that transformation is often being compared to being “born again.” Their and our source of power for change for the better comes through His teachings and the transformative power of the Holy Spirit whom we receive the moment we believe.

It is just that simple……but involves a dedicated willingness to desire and then obey….and that transformation is both intellectual and spiritual transformation.

The power in and of Christ knows no boundary of time or space. In our age and in ages past, many skeptics have been convinced that Jesus was not the Christ, or that there ever would be a Christ, and set out to prove it. For example…Lew Wallace, a famous general and known as a literary Genius, was a known atheist. For two years (listen please) for two years Wallace studied in the leading libraries of both Europe and America, seeking information that would forever destroy Christianity and nullify Christ. While writing the second chapter of his book outlining his arguments, he suddenly found himself on his knees crying out to Jesus, “My Lord and My God.” His life turned around 180 degrees…now speaking with the same fervor and intellect as another man on the road to Damascus.

Similarly, the late C.S. Lewis, professor at Oxford University in England was an agnostic who denied the deity of Christ for years. But he too, in intellectual honesty, submitted to Jesus as his God and Savior, while studying the “evidence” he had hoped would confirm His previous denial that Christ was both divine and God.

Both men when on to write books such as Mere Christianity, Screwtape Letters, The Lion, the With and the Wardrobe, The Great Divorce, The Chronicle of Narnia, The Problem of Pain….and many others as a witness as to the power and Person of God….and His Creativity in Man.

The IMPACT of Jesus Christ, the Son of God continues to this day, influencing and changing the lives of those who in all honesty, are seeking truth…..I believe at some time not far off there will once again (because of what is coming on our country and world) be great numbers who will come to Him because of the events that are unfolding in our nation…with the loss of hope, order, lawlessness, justice and more….because in time of great need. people recognize their inability to put in place that which needs to accomplish and will call on God to intervene.

As I spoke on two weeks ago, God’s system of Justice is the primary outline of our own system of Justice. So extensive is the Christian contribution to our laws, our economics, arts and even our calendar. AD which means ‘the year of the Lord” meaning the reckoned year of the birth of Jesus, counting the years from the start of this epoch, and BC denoting the years prior to this era. There is no zero in this schematic, so, the year AD1, immediately follows the year,1BC. This calendar is that which the world turns on. The birth of this child, born in this tiny obscure town in the tiny nation of Israel.

COMPASSION AND MERCY

Kennedy and Newcombe in a book the two authors collaborated on, writing detail of the rise of charity in the name of Jesus over the centuries, still going on deeply and profusely without much recognition. Historians record that prior to Jesus, the ancient world left little trace of any compassionate and merciful organized charitable effort. Period!

For example, Jesus’ parable of the Good Samaritan is a classic illustration that is still a part of our language today, in pointing out this example of doing good birthed in Christianity….for even our enemies. We are all neighbors He says, and we are to love our neighbors and our enemies…doing good to both.

This concept was born of Christ and has changed the world tremendously.

We have the Red Cross, the Salvation Army, religious hospitals, church supported food kitchens, housing for the homeless. Orphanages all over the world, and oh so many more such organizations that work by and through the Christian churches.

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

Christianity exalts monogamous love, which provides the basis for a lasting and exclusive family circle geared toward providing for and loving family units.

EDUCATION

From the beginning of Judaism, there was an emphasis on the written Word, as recorded by those assigned to let each generation to grown in and its history and God’s voice in their lives.

The phenomenon of education in American and now the world, has its roots in the Protestant Reformation. In order of promote Biblical literacy, Christians have been at the forefront of not only Scriptural learning….but practical and vocational learning. All this was accelerated with the advent of the printing press which was primarily invented for the printing of Bibles. Many of the world’s languages were first set to print by Christian missionaries for people to eventually be able to read the Bible for themselves.

The very first work printed on the Gutenberg printing press was the Bible, of which I have one page of one of the very first published. On this page are smudges that are said to perhaps be blood because it was against the law (the Catholic Church) persecuted unto death those who were printing Bibles….for the Church wanted only the priests to be able to do so, and most of even them could not read in those days.

Art is another witness as to the power of God….on the ceilings, walls, and canvases were painted powerful depictions of scenes from the Bible….so much so, that people were often overwhelmed by their majesty, and beauty, and even simplicity…as illustrations of stories they told, that many came to Believe because of them.

Music, another avenue to spiritual rebirth and the power of words and song….as authors told of their own spiritual journeys, moving many to understand for the first time the beauty and sometimes glory of God…and simply at times of God’s love for the world and all its people. Music is one of the most powerful witnesses to the world as exampled in the Messiah, the Passion of Christ set to music, hymns such as “How Great Thou Art”. “Amazing Grace” “On Christ the Solid Rock I Stand” “It Is Well with My Soul” and so many others.

All of these are but witnesses as to the IMPACT of HIS WITNESS TO HIMSELF….AND WHO HE IS….AND OUR WITNESS AS TO HIS IMPACT ON US….

I am coming back to this where I started….that the Greatest Witness to the IMPACT of Jesus Christ to unbelievers….is YOU and I, who are to live lives that reflect His ministry and His life, as He exampled for us as to how to live….

Now to make this personal….Jesus IMPACT on Today’s world results in their being 7:3 billion Believers……and the reason, because of the witness for the most part of everyday Christians.

The question I leave with us is this….What IMPACT are you and having in our daily lives….on our neighbors, enemies and even our families….and friends.