

FROM A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE #4

What Did Jesus Say and Do? (Part 1)

We remember a person for the type of individual they were, what they did and what they said. We remember a person as being “good” because of his or her positive attitudes, and loving responses to others. Even though Jesus was violently executed he is remembered as a “good” person because of his way of treating people with love and respect and for what he taught. Jesus expressed the “words” of God and he lived the attitudes of God toward all people.

Nothing stands out more about Jesus than his teaching about forgiveness. And because he is a Divine Person his words and teachings and attitude tell us directly about God. Jesus did one of the hardest things anyone could imagine. He forgave his enemies and he prayed for his enemies as they were executing him by crucifixion. However, before the time of his death he had taught many times about the necessity of our forgiving each other and he said we should pray for those who persecute us. These are heroic teachings and they are difficult for us as humans to live out. He demonstrated multiple times how to do it. Many times when he healed someone who was sick he would say, “Your sins are forgiven, your faith has saved you.” Everyone in those days in Israel knew that only God could forgive sins and sometimes they were astonished when he said, “Your sins are forgiven.” But beneath his normal human appearance he was also the Son of God, the Second Persons of the Trinity. Believing in the Divinity of Jesus is the foundation belief that unites all Christian denominations and churches. When some people brought before Jesus a woman who had been caught in adultery his response was compassionate. “I do not condemn you, go and sin no more.” When men were nailing him to the cross he said, “Father forgive them, they know not what they are doing.” Peter the apostle once asked Jesus how often he should forgive his brother, “as much as seven times?” Jesus answered, “No, not seven times, but 70 times 7 times. God is willing to forgive us too as long as we turn to God and ask for forgiveness. This forgiveness from God gives us a freeing feeling and we follow it up with our intention to try not to commit sin again. No one else is as ready and excited to forgive us as God. Jesus told a parable story to try to demonstrate this wonderful attitude of God. This story is one of many like it and it comes from the Gospel of Luke in the New Testament of the Bible. Luke 15th chapter, verses 1-10.

“The tax collectors and sinners were drawing near to listen to Jesus, but the Pharisees and scribes began to complain, saying, “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.”

So Jesus addressed this parable to them.

“What man among you having a hundred sheep and losing one of them would not leave the ninety-nine in the desert and go after the lost one until he finds it? And when he finds it, he sets it on his shoulders with great joy and, upon his arrival home, he calls together his friends and neighbors and says to them,

‘Rejoice with me because I have found my lost sheep.’

I tell you, in just the same way there is more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who have no need of repentance.”

Notice Jesus use of the word joy to express God’s attitude toward those who seek his forgiveness through their turning away from their sins. He is ready to do that for each of us.