What Jesus Taught

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Mathew 7:29 “…*He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as their scribes*.

Prior to Jesus, the concept of God was that of an impersonal Lord, Creator, Ruler, and Law Giver. Jesus taught the idea of an intimate “father” relationship, one of companionship, intimacy, and friendship. In the time of Jesus, the qualities attributed to God included Majesty, Power, and Wisdom. Jesus added pity, mercy, and forgivenss. He taught that we are under the protective care of our God the Father.

Jesus taught that through our behavior, our deeds, we realize the fullness of God, and deepen our relationship with God. From John 1:12 *But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God*.

Our relationship with God is reflected in our ethical like-mindedness with God. As our alignment with God awarenss grows, so broadens our kinship to one another : Mark 3:35 ***35*** *“Anyone who does God’s will is my brother and sister and mother.”*

He taught us to look upon ourselves as Children of God, rather than servants of God. It was imperative to develop our souls into the likeness of God. Although we are all Children of God, to claim that birthright we must strive to express divine qualities and exhibit the highest ethical conduct. As we become conscious of our kinship with each other we are drawn into more loving and sympathetic relationships with each other. We find our true selves when we come under the direction and guidance of God’s high level thoughts and values.

So it is folly to sin; sin being the rejection of our real self and a severance of our common filial relationship in spirit.

In Jesus’ time sin was considered not following the law, not tending to the ceremonial and ritual; it was an external and technical fault. But for Jesus sin was internal, living from lower thoughts, ideas, and emotions. Sin is a matter of inner attitude and disposition, rather than some outer observance. A sinner, someone expressing from the lower human emotions and thoughts, is not lost forever. They always have the option for choosing another way to think. Jesus saw the spark of divinity in everyone and was optimistic that any lost soul could find the way back to God.

Jesus taught the sanctity and possibility that all people could express God fully and live as a Child of God, and so taught us to respect all and to treat everyone with dignity. We are not to interfere in another person’s spiritual life. Mark 12:42 ***42****And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.*

Jesus taught that love toward God and humankind is the ideal of right living. In John 13:35 *"By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."* The translation of ‘love’ from the Greek implies the concept of friendship to each other and God, and would consequently lead to service of both. *“Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to take first place among you must be the servant of all; for even the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve.”* Mark 10:44-46

In contrast to the ceremonial and legal idea of righteousness that abounded in those days, the ideal for right living according to Jesus could be summed up by the Golden rule: *“Do unto other as you would have others do unto you,”* meaning: treat and serve others how you would want to be treated and served.

He taught that non-resistance and non-violence was acceptable, rather than perpetuating the rule of force that dominated his previous generations. Matthew 5:37-39 *“You have heard that it was said, “An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.* ***39****But I say to you, do not resist an evil person; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.”*

He taught us to see things differently, and to control hatred, resentment, and vengance. Jesus advocated courage, justice, and firmness when the occasion called for it, just as quickly as compassion, tenderness, and mercy.

Jesus taught a strong sense of love for self, as well as for God and others. He taught to give up anger, but not to denounce the self. We have rights, as does our neighbor. Jesus expressed open resentment to an unwarranted blow form a guard in John 18:23 ***23****"If I said something wrong," Jesus replied, "testify as to what is wrong. But if I spoke the truth, why did you strike me?"*

Jesus taught that salvation came from turning our back on sin, or our lower human motivations, and aligning our actions and thoughts with our Child of God natures, with the God-qualites.

He taught that we should forgive those who have wronged us, to recognize the God within them and realize they are struggling with the same challenges we face and not judge them.

In his own perfection of claiming his birthright as a Child of God, his nature blended the mild and the stern. Jesus set the example in words and deeds. Jesus knew that his life expressed the ideals he taught, the valuess that God wanted all of His children to know and live. This is the motivation for him to say, “My Father and I are one.” It is as if Jesus was saying , “The will of my Father and what I do, think, and teach, are one.” “No one can come to the Father, except through me.” My interpretation is that no one can know the Kingdom of God and all the blessings that God holds except by following my example.

When we follow that example – loving God, loving others in a manner of friendship, loving and respecting ouselves, giving service to God and humankind, in other words, following the example as Jesus lived then we would be re-born, reconstructed, renewed.

Even the death of Jesus was intended to encourage us to submit our wills to God’s purpose and come into an alignment and harmony with God. His was the ultimate act of fidelity and duty to God’s will.

Jesus taught through his ressurection that we are more than just these bodies: we are indomitable spirits; we are immortal. There is victory over death.

We can interpret the ressurection as happening for each of us in the future, as well as an event happening daily, as we die to our earthly natures and embrace the divinity of our spirtual selves.

Still debated, changing from denomination to denomination, are Jesus’ teachings about judgement and his return. Judgment was a daily occurrence Jesus taught, as well as a culminating experience.

Regarding the Second Coming, some interpret the Bible as Jesus expecting to return quite quickly: Matthew 10:23 ***23****When you are persecuted in one place, flee to another. I tell you the truth, you will not finish going through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes.”* Matthew 16:28 ***28****I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."* Matthew 24:34 ***34****I tell you the truth, this generation[*[*a*](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=matt%2024:34;&version=31;#fen-NIV-23989a)*] will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened.”*

Other passages paint a different picture: Mark 13:32 ***32****But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.*

Others interpret the Second Coming as a spiritual event; that when we become sware of the presence of the Christ within us, he has come again.

I will leave that debate to you and the dictates of your heart and relationship with God. For me, my beliefs do not depend on the Second Coming of Christ. If he is still to come, so be it. I will live the best life I can according to what Jesus taught. If he has already come, so be it. I will live the best life I can according to what Jesus taught.

Someone did quite a good job of categorizing the actual phrases where Jesus was teaching and listed the top ten subject areas in terms of percentage to the whole for each topic. They are: eternal life and salvation -3.04%; prayer – 3.17%; persecution – 3.57%; judgement and hell – 4.03%; predictions – about himself and his disciples – 4.43%; hypocrisy – 4.82%; second coming – 5.22%; fate of Jerusalme and evil generation that rejected Jesus – 7.87%; Jesus’ identity and mission – 8.53%.

The topic Jesus spoke of most often, at 10.51%, was the Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of Heaven, and who would find it: the humble, penitent, gentle, virtuous, compassionate, pure-minded, peacemakers, and long-sufferers. Also submissiveness and childlike trust were requisites.

He spoke of the Kingdom of God, or the Kingdom of Heaven, in spiritual terms: it was a state of mind, not a place. It was near, at hand, within you. So anyone who shared the thoughts and purposes of God in an attitude of loyalty, love, and humility would become a citizen of God’s Kingdom. The Kingdom was attainable now while still on Earth, as well as after we leave our earthly home. The apostles were sent out to teach about the Kingdom of God and to heal people.

What Jesus taught has endured for centuries. Despite the interpretations over details about Jesus, and the various denominations that have been developed because of those differences, Christianity remains a viable and meaningful source for spiritual inspiration. And in my humble opinion, the closer we can live what Jesus taught, the closer we come to realizing ther Kingdom of God in our our own lives.

In John 16:33 The Christ says, “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” My prayer is that we ‘take heart’ and ‘take to heart’ the teachings of our Christ so that we may live in peace.

Let us pray….