

Jesus is a Teacher

Week 2

by Mandy Barkhaus

Well, good morning. One of my all-time favorite Christmas movies is the movie Home Alone. It's great. Yeah. If you have never seen it, please watch it like it is a great movie. It's funny and heartwarming. It's a movie about the adventures of an eight-year-old boy, Kevin. He's left home alone after his family woke up late for their Christmas trip to Paris. He leaves and rushes to the airport, leaving without him.

Now, the movie has some really great quotes. Some of my favorite quotes are: "Keep the Change of Filthy Animal." That one's a good one. "I made my family disappear." That's a good one, guys. I'm eating junk and watching rubbish. You better come out and stop me. Then, his prayer. So Kevin's prayer in the movie, Bless this highly nutritious microwavable macaroni and cheese dinner and the people who sold it on sale, Amen. And, of course, the classic. "AH" Right. It's a great, great movie. But as I grew up, became an adult, and then had my own kids, I did question a little bit like, what? What kind of parents could leave the house, like, drive all the way to the airport, get halfway across the ocean before realizing they left one of their children at home?

Like, certainly, this couldn't be something that the mother and father of the Son of God, they couldn't do something like this, right? Well, actually, we find a story in the gospel, according to Luke, about a time when Mary and Joseph, Jesus's parents, accidentally left 12-year-old Jesus behind in Jerusalem for three days when they couldn't find him.

So, as you'll hear in a moment, Jesus's adventures are slightly different than Kevin's in Home Alone. So here is the Scripture passage found in Luke chapter two, starting at verse 41. Each year, Jesus and His parents went to Jerusalem for the Passover Festival when he was about 12 years old. They went up to Jerusalem, according to their custom.

After the festival was over, they were returning home. But the boy, Jesus, stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents didn't know it. Supposing that he would be, he was among their band of travelers. They journeyed for a full day while looking for him among their family and friends. When they didn't find Jesus, they returned to Jerusalem to look for him.

After three days, they found him in the temple. He was sitting among the teachers, listening to them and putting questions to them. Everyone who heard Jesus was amazed when his parents saw him. They were shocked. His mother said to him, Jesus, child, why have you treated us like this? Listen, your father and I have been worried. We've been looking for you.

And Jesus replies, Why were you looking for me? Didn't you know that it was necessary for me to be in my Father's house now? I love this scripture passage for a lot of different reasons, but for one, like we don't find a lot in the Bible about Jesus as a boy, as a child. Now, there is one other scene when he is younger that we're going to talk about in a couple of weeks.

But besides the birth story, this is the story that we have about when Jesus was a child. He's 12 years old, and we know this and everything else we know about Jesus. His childhood comes from other

passages in the New Testament like he was the son of a carpenter and probably from an average-income family. He was from Nazareth, a sibling, and a brother.

But the very first words that we heard from Jesus' mouth when he was just 12 years old, Jesus said, Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house? That's Jesus. His very first words that we have recorded now, when we translate this from Greek into English, it's a little bit problematic because the word house does not actually appear in the Greek text.

It's probably better translated as this. Did you not know that I would be about my Father's business like Jesus is saying? Of course, I'm going to be about my Father's business. So now, it is important to note that Jesus was not referring to his earthly father. He is, for the first time, saying Father as in God, the Father. Hinting that Jesus probably did know that He was the Son of God.

Now, I don't know about you, but when I hear these words when I read these words about Jesus saying this to his mother at 12 years old, I feel like there's there was probably a little bit of teenage attitude in that, you know, like maybe an eye roll, maybe a sigh, and then like, OMG, mom, you don't have to worry.

Like obviously, I am about my Father's business. But as we think about the New Year, as we think about 2024 that we're about to step into, I think an important question for us to ask ourselves is, whose business will I be about this year? That's a question we should ask ourselves. Now, here we are in this sermon series, and we're talking about some of Jesus's roles that he plays.

And Jesus plays many different roles throughout his life. He's a leader, he's a healer, he's a friend, he's a son, a brother, a God, and Messiah. But I think that there is one role that people most relate Jesus to. In fact, almost every other major religion also thinks about Jesus in this way. So this is from a cold case, Christian Christianity, and they have different religions, different major religions, and what they think about Jesus.

Now, these things are backed up by their holy Scriptures and their holy, Holy writings. So, in the Jewish circle, in the Jewish religion, Jews believe that Jesus was a miracle worker and had many disciples claim to be the Messiah. They believe that Jesus was crucified. They believe that Jesus was Mary's Son, and they believe that Jesus was a teacher.

Now, in the Islamic faith, Muslims believe that Jesus was born of a virgin. They believed that he was a prophet. They believe that he was a miracle worker. They believe that he ascended into heaven and will come again. And they believe that Jesus was a wise teacher. Are you getting the theme here in Hinduism? Hindus believe that Jesus was a holy man, a h, a god, not The God, but a god.

And they believe that Jesus was a wise teacher. Gandhi, for example, admired the teaching of Jesus greatly, especially the Sermon on the Mount, and he saw Jesus as a symbol of superior ethics and loved Jesus's teaching. And in Buddhism, they believe that Jesus was in light enlightened. They believe that Jesus was a holy man, and they believe that Jesus was a teacher.

So many Buddhists also respect the teachings of Jesus to a really high degree, especially Jesus's teaching about kindness and loving one's neighbor, and Jesus is an example of compassion. The Dalai Lama was just so impressed by Jesus's teaching. But there is power in a good teacher. There is power for those of us in this room who follow Jesus and follow Jesus' teaching not only as a wise teacher but also as we talked about last Sunday on Christmas Eve at Jesus as God, that God who came to Earth and dwelt

among us, and in and through Jesus. So Jesus is God, and Jesus is a teacher. Now, I think that we can we can relate to this one because everybody's had a teacher before, right?

Either informally or formally, like we've all had people who have been teachers to us in our lives, good teachers and bad teachers. Many of us probably had a favorite teacher. I want you to think about your favorite teacher, and I want you to think about the qualities and traits that they have. And then now I want you to take out your bells.

So this is a bell time. And here's what I want you to do with your bells. I'm going to say some traits about teachers. I'm going to say some good traits, some things that we might want our teachers to have. And I'm going to say some traits that we might not want to have our teachers have. So if it's a good trait, if you're like, Yeah, I want my teacher to have this trait, that's what I want you to ring your bells.

Okay? If it's not a great trait, then don't ring the bell. Okay? This first one should be an easy one. Okay. Would you like it if your teacher was kind? Yeah, yeah, yeah, of course. Of course. Would you like it if your teacher was a good listener? Yeah, that's helpful. Would you like it if your teacher was mean?

Like, Oh, people would. Would you like it if your teacher fell asleep while they were teaching you? Yeah. Okay. Okay. That was. That was a mix. I get that. Yeah. Okay. Dang. Yeah. Okay. Would you like it if your teacher was patient? How about impatient? Mm mm. Would you like it if your teacher was compassionate and caring?

Yeah. Would you like it if your teacher yelled a lot at you, too? Okay. And the last one. Would you like it if your teacher really took the time to get to know their students? Yeah, that would be really good. Okay, well, that was the last one. You guys can put your bells away. Thanks for helping. Helping me out.

So Jesus was a teacher. In fact, Jesus was a good teacher. Now, there is a story in the Bible that illustrates this, and it's about this rich young ruler who approaches Jesus to learn from him. So this scripture is found in Matthew chapter 19, and it says this: A man approached Jesus and said, Teacher, what good thing must I do to have eternal life?

And Jesus said, Why do you ask me about what is good? There's only one who is good. If you want to enter eternal life, keep the commandments. And the man said, Well, which one's like, which commandments do I keep? Then Jesus said, listing some of the Ten Commandments. He said, Don't commit murder, don't commit adultery, don't steal, don't give false testimony.

Honor your father and mother. Love your neighbor as yourself, as you love yourself. And the young man replied, Okay, great, great. I've kept all of these things. What am I still missing? And Jesus said If you want to be complete, go and sell what you own and give the money to the poor. Then you will have treasure in heaven.

And come follow me, said Jesus. And when the young man heard this, he went away saddened because he had many possessions. Now, this story about Jesus and the rich young ruler is an amazing story because Jesus tailors his lessons to each individual student because we all need something different. Like, that is the best kind of teacher when understanding your learning style when they understand what you need and, what you want, what you need to grow and learn.

Now, teachers don't always give us the answers we want to hear. But good teachers will always tell us what we need. And that is what Jesus does in this story for the rich young ruler. He wants to learn from

Jesus, and He and Jesus knew that he needed to let go of his possessions in order to follow Jesus completely.

Jesus knew that. And Jesus tailored his lesson specifically for this man because he knew him. Now, we are all designed uniquely. We all have different traits. And there is something in our hearts that is probably holding us back from fully embracing the teachings of Jesus. Now, maybe it's money and possessions like the rich young ruler.

Maybe it's anger. Maybe it's an addiction, selfishness, or a lack of empathy or compassion. Jesus is the most incredible teacher, and we learn from 12-year-old Jesus at the temple like he's going to the temple because he's not only asking questions of the rabbi, but the scripture also says that he's answering the questions, and the teachers there are amazed.

And this wise teacher has a 12-year-old boy who said, Well, of course, of course, I'm going to be found in my Father's house. Of course, I'm going to be about my Father's business. Then the question comes back that we should ask ourselves: Whose business will I be about this year? How will we learn from Jesus as a teacher?

Now I'm doing this thing called the 30-day Shred. I did it last January, and I'm reading the entire Bible in 30 days. A little disclaimer: I started a few days ago and plan to be done by the end of January. So it's going to be a little bit more than 30 days. But I started this because it's an amazing way to learn. Getting into Scripture is an amazing way to learn from our teacher, Jesus.

Now, in my Tuesday email this week, I invited you to consider joining this 30-day Shred, reading the Bible throughout January, and you can join. It's easy, easy to join. It's a big commitment. It is a lot of reading every single day. But I promise you, you will be blessed by doing it. Now, in my email, I joked and said, That's fine.

If you don't want to do the 30-day Shred with me, I have another alternative for you. You can join me in February. Doing the polar plunge as we jump into the icy lake benefits the Lincoln Sharks Special Olympics team. So take your pick. Right. It's up to you to know; in all seriousness, though, the Bible app, which is where you find the 30-day Shred, is an incredible tool.

If you don't know, it's the YouVersion Bible app. They have all sorts of devotionals and plans. They even have ones for kids. So, for kids and families, this is a great way to learn from Jesus. There's another one that I recommend. It's called Encounters with Christ. It's a lot less sweet reading. It's only ten days, and it would be a great one to follow along with this sermon series.

But go to the version app. You can find it there. You can find Horizon's church there as well. And if you look under events on that YouVersion Bible, you'll find every Sunday we have the scripture that we're talking about. So that's an easy way for you to follow along if you didn't know about that. But if we go back to thinking about all these other religions, all of these other people all across the world who are inspired by Jesus, his teachings, like we better ask ourselves as followers, Christ, like, what are we doing about it?

Like, what am I doing about Jesus being a teacher of mine? Somebody that inspires me and guides my life now, this interaction between the rich young ruler and Jesus and, you know, it was not necessarily

about possessions and money like the rich young ruler went away sad because he had to give up his possessions. And it's, you know, it's anything that gets in our way from fully following Jesus.

Now, Jesus is the most amazing teacher. And we can learn not only from 12-year-old Jesus but also from all of Jesus's teachings. These are powerful teachings that can guide our lives and change our lives. But if we're not doing anything about it, then we should probably consider whose business we will be about this year.

Would you join me in prayer? Holy God, we come today before you with hearts full of gratitude for the gift of your son, Jesus, who walked among us as a teacher and a guide, and in his presence on earth, we find this embodiment of wisdom, compassion, and love. And so, as we approach this New Year, let us approach as eager students ready to absorb the lessons that Jesus has for us this year; open our minds to help us comprehend the depth of your teachings. May we, like the disciples, sit at the feet of Jesus with our hearts open, eager to learn from this incredible teacher. God, guide us this year, help us move, and help us to grow and love like you love. And we say all of this in Jesus' name, Amen.