

Nobody Like Jesus!

Overview

This little story, which is an outstanding story, it's taken from Luke's Gospel, chapter 5, and it begins this way, once when he was standing on the shore of Lake Jehnezarit, the crowd was pushing in on him to better hear the word of God. He noticed two boats tied up. The fishermen had just left them and were out scrubbing their nets. He climbed into the boat that was Simons and asked him to put it out a little from the shore. Sitting there using the boat for a pulpit, he taught the crowd. That is absolutely loaded. I was in Kenya, and with the help of a brother who visited us about a year ago, on Mother's Day, in fact, Harold Miner, he took me out very close to the footing of Mount Kenya.

He wanted to introduce me to his friend Simon Gugi, and Simon had eight daughters and a very worn-out wife. And they had their own little garden patch, and he was pastoring five churches, all of which he had single-heartedly built. I could tell you much more about that visit and how I slept in the kitchen that night. African people have kitchens. All they do is put some rocks down, throw some wood on it, and it's the kitchen. So they swept out the charcoal and moved the rocks, and I slept in that little room.

And there's more. I'm not going to have you on the floor laughing. I'm going to leave you there, and tell you that in the evening, I was going to be preaching. And so as soon as we arrived, some little children saw us, and they got all excited. And so they went and found their friends. Their friends told their parents, and on and on and on. So we started off with about 25, 30 people in front of me right here. But as I got preaching, the crowd continued to grow and grow. Now there's a unique thing about Kenyans, about any people in Africa. Nobody wants to sit in the back row. So they continue to build a new front row. They're sitting on the ground. So you're speaking away, and all of a sudden, there's somebody standing right here in front of you, and then they drop down. Well, they're almost sitting on your toes. So you back up. You just created another pew.

And they just keep on coming. I've often said preaching in Kenyans is a very moving experience. And they're just enamored with the mzungu, the white man. And they want to know every word that he has to say. And they're the most inspiring audience. And as I preached on into the darkness, I didn't know how many people were out there. Like there were tons and tons of people. We had an extraordinary day. And the following morning, Simon and Google took me to another home. And they presented me with, to give me thanks, and to pay me for what I had done last night, they gave me two stocks of sugar cane and a chicken, a live chicken. I'll never forget how I didn't know what to do with these things. And I was saying, no, no, really. And Harold saying, take it, take it, take it, take it. You don't say no. And so we had to put these tall stocks of sugar cane and a live chicken in the back of his car.

We decided, of course, he put the chicken in the trunk. He never noticed that when he was slamming the trunk down, the one leg was outside. And so that would be called a wicked drumstick. So at any rate, I told you that to tell you that when I read this, that the crowd became so huge that Jesus is now, I see him backing up, and pretty soon he's standing in the water. He's standing in the water. The people are getting closer in pushing. And why? They're so excited to hear what he has to hear. I don't think it's any clearer and any more powerful than to watch this movie that Pastor Peter needs to watch called The Chosen.

I keep on telling him, he got to watch this. I finally got converted. I'm watching it. And to watch how the people clung to every word that Jesus said, thousands would come. Wonderful, wonderful story. And so Jesus, I really believe he's standing in the water now. Caesar boat, says to Peter, I want to borrow your boat. I just want to mention this to you, it doesn't say so in the passage. But I know this is what happened because, well, I was an eyewitness, I was there. I'll tell you another one in a few moments. So what happened was that people ran down the shore, grabbed a hold of boats, and now they started rowing, rowing over, and said, oh, Jesus, sitting in a boat, there are boats bumping into his boat. How do I know that that's what transpired?

Because as you read on in the chapter and the day came to a close, Jesus remained in the boat, the rest of the disciples joined with him, and it says that as they started leaving the shore and heading out, all the other little boats tried to follow them. So that tells you that people were so enamored with what he was saying, and what his potential was capable of. The word was out there. He was healing people. His fame went through the whole region. Everybody was talking about this rabbi, Jesus, who could actually turn water into wine, and he could manufacture bread and fish enough to feed thousands. But that's not why I don't believe that's not why they sat there. I wasn't feeding anybody at the foot of Mount Kenya.

I was simply there to present a message, a message that these people had never heard before. But I'm no preacher compared to that preacher, Jesus. But let me tell you what my assessment is of this Jesus and why people clung to him and why they gathered by the thousands. Because there was nobody at that time, no one before, and no one since, who could tell people with such gravity, such authority and such clarity, the wonders of the Lord our God.

You think about this. My mom is in heaven. My dad's in heaven. My grandmother's in heaven. And if the Lord could forgive my grandpa for chewing tobacco, then he's there too. And that's about all I know about heaven. I've read about it here, but so have you. And still our knowledge of heaven is ever so... It's down to zero. It's nothing. But when Jesus talked about heaven, he spoke about it with such gravity. He spoke of it not in ethereal ways, like floating philosophical concepts. But when he talked about heaven, you felt like you were there. And there was so longing, I wanted to go there.

We've all heard about the fact that there's an enemy of our souls called the devil. There aren't people who don't even believe that that creature exists. Trust me, folks, he does. And that's about all I can tell you. But when Jesus preached and he mentioned about the enemy 5 roaring like a lion seeking whom he made to power, Jesus spoke of it with such power. The hair in the back of your neck would stand up. Jesus introduced to us the Hebrew people the very concept

of a father. Do you know in the Old Testament, you have to really read between the lines somewhere to discover the fatherhood of God. God is a potentate, he's powerful, he's a deliverer, he can do all awesome things.

But it's not until Jesus comes and he says to those who said, Jesus, we want to be like you, can you teach us to pray? And he said, yes, I can. And he brought it down to such simplification. He was saying, there's no liturgy that matches your heart and your life. There's no prayer that I can give to you in written form that would help in any way accomplish your speaking to God what you need. Here's how you ought to pray, dear father, who inhabits the heavens. I halo your name. And when Jesus spoke these words, it was like a brand new sunrise.

It was like a glorious moment when fresh air started to come through like a morning breeze. People suddenly felt like this man knows the father. I have been surrounded by lions and almost died at, I almost was dinner for five lions. And that's another story. And some of you are going to hang me out to dry because I've mentioned it several times. And you've said, you never tell us the story. Keep on coming to church on Sundays. One of these Sundays, I'm going to break it loose. But I almost, I really, I was within a second of being devoured. I'm serious. It was a horrendous moment. But I never got to know their names, the cats. I mean, it would be hard to describe.

They were moving so fast. I couldn't even describe them. But Daniel was in a den with them. I can't tell you a whole lot more. But when Jesus would tell a story like that, you could smell the breath of those lions. We all know people who are so able to tell you about a meal and they can have you salivating before they finish telling you. They can tell you about a trip up into the Arctic or maybe into the Caribbean or whatever and give you a wordy picture of something that they saw and they say, you've got to see it for yourself. And suddenly you're long. You want to go there. You want to go. Nobody could invite you. Nobody could entice you like Jesus. When he talked about heaven, you wanted to go there.

When he talked about that devil, you hated him. When he talked about hell, you made it a determination. I don't want to go there. When he talked about the father, you suddenly were in love with the father. I'm telling you, nobody, but nobody was like Jesus. Nobody. But I want you to kind of let your imagination get stretched a little bit this morning. You follow me a little bit here because I've picked up little things here and there in the gospels that tell me other things like Jesus essentially said, I don't speak. I don't do anything without checking with my father. He talked about his relationship with the father. We also know that he had a dynamic relationship with the Holy Spirit that essentially commenced at the river Jordan when Jesus was baptized in water.

So I want to suggest to you that while Jesus, you're the crowd in front of him, okay, and he's in the boat. Because Jesus is telling you these marvelous, wonderful things at the same time, simultaneously, he's communicating with the father. But he also met people like Nathaniel and he said to a fan, you, yes, I remember you. Nathaniel said, no, we've never met. Oh, yeah, he says, I saw you under a fig tree. What's that tell you? Nathaniel had been sitting under a fig tree just a few minutes before that. How could Jesus, how could this Jesus know that? Because Jesus' senses were incredible beyond our imagination. He met a woman at a well.

You know the story as well as I. And he talked about her husband. She said, I have no husband. He said, yeah, I know you've already been through five of them and you're living with now, blah, blah, blah. She exclaims. Where did he get that? As Jesus is preaching to the crowd, he's anticipating their response one by one in the audience. I believe that is he speaking to you. He hears, senses in his spirit. There's a woman somewhere over on this side. And as his eyes roam over there, his eyes fasten upon her, it's her. And he begins to grieve for her because he realizes that she has not had food for three days. Her tummy's empty and she doesn't know how she's going to prepare food for her little family, her husband has perished. And at the same time as he's preaching away and he's holding a spellbound, he spots a little boy sitting up on a tuft of grass just over here. And at that moment, Jesus perceives that when he spoke of the Father, he brought tears into the eyes of that little fellow because that daddy's dead, that little fellow's daddy perished. And that little fellow is missing his dad.

But here's this Jesus talking about the Father, the Father, and Jesus realizes that soon as he said the name Father, he lost the attention of a little boy because that little boy had in his imagination wandered off, remembering his daddy, taking him down to the sea and showing him how to catch fish. Remembering when his daddy would play soccer in the field with him, he knew he'd lost that little fellow. You know, he told us that Satan desires to sift you, Peter. He's going to sift you like a woman would sift wheat preparing a loaf of bread. He's after you. Jesus knew that the enemy was working overtime. So as he's preaching to this crowd, telling them the kingdom of heaven is like this and you can be a part of it, the devil is behind him whispering in his ear. He's communicating with a father and the devil's talking behind him and saying, go ahead and tell him how wonderful heaven is. They'll never make it. They're all wasted sinners. You know heaven can't handle this sinful crowd. They're mine.

So Jesus is fighting off the fiery darts of the enemy. He's listening to the father, but he's totally aware of what's happening to the individuals all throughout that crowd. There was nobody ever like Jesus. That's why they came by the thousands. That's why they wanted to get close to him. I can imagine him telling the story of hell, the very first man Adam, how the Lord created him. Jesus could tell it like nobody else. It says that God, I believe that God knelt down and breathed into Adam's nostrils the breath of life. I hear Jesus saying, and as the father breathed out, Adam breathed in and Adam became a living soul. How could Jesus know that? He'd think Martha that the way he talks that he was there. To hear him talk about Daniel and the lions' den. Wow. He told us details that we never heard before.

They wanted to hear another story. On the occasion when he fed 5,000, you know why that was necessary? Because they'd been there for two days without food. They would listen by the hour, by the hour, by the hour, and they could not bring it to themselves to leave. They wanted one more story. They wanted to hear about the father one more time. They wanted to hear how glorious heaven is going to be. And they longed to be a part of this. The Word of God says that the wisest people of the day said, I know the scriptures, but I've never heard a man speak with such authority with the Word of God. There's nobody like my Jesus. There's nobody like your Jesus who, too, never doubted that. So you get all these things going on. He's communicating with the Father. He's communicating with the thousands.

There's a concern that He has for their need for food. But the enemy is behind him, mocking, and trying to disturb his flow as he's speaking so beautifully. All these things are going on simultaneously. You never skipped a beat. He carried on. I want to take you just in your imagination to the end of the chapter that we read. Just read the first couple of verses in the opening, but the chapter goes on, as you know. And probably you'll recall that at the end of the day, he says to the disciples, let's go to the other side.

The Word of God says that when they arrived on the other side, that the moment the boat rested on the sandy shores on the opposite side of the lake, a raving maniac came running towards them out of a cave. The writer of the gospel tells us this about this man. Says he was totally deranged. This man was troubled not by a demon from hell, but a whole legion of demons. This man was infested like fleas on a dog's back, and every one of them was tormenting him. The story goes on to tell us that the women of the town appealed to the elders and said, this man is scaring us all to death. He comes out of the cave, stark naked, screaming, running through the streets. He picks up a piece of broken pottery and starts tearing at his flesh and bleeding. His snot is running down through his beard. He's scaring us to death. He's going to do harm someday.

The story goes on to say that they chained him. They drove spikes into rock and put chains, manacles on his hands and his feet, and he broke the chains. So powerful was the spiritual dynamics working in a negative force in his life. He was uncontrollable, but when Jesus arrived in the boat and stepped out, this man came running because this man was at the point of desperation. And Jesus performed a miracle and delivered that man. And when Jesus was finished ministering to him, the man was totally made whole. Don't doubt that story. I had something happen to me not unlike that down in South Africa.

That's another story where they brought an insane man who had a murderous spirit about him tormented beyond measure. And I don't know how they ever got privileged to get him out of this place where he was locked up. Some men had him in the back of a car when I got to a tent meeting where I was preaching for a week in South Africa. Malangani, who was the one man in the area who spoke English and was in charge of organizing these meetings for me to preach, came out of the tent and said, brother David, it's so good you're here. The tent is full to capacity. People are laughing and singing and dancing. They're waiting for you to preach. That's how the Africans get excited. They kick up a storm. None of them were wearing shoes. They come barefoot.

The fact that there was a car there was a big story. The man deranged was locked up in the car with these men. I went over and I beckoned them to just drop the window just this much. And as they did, I put my mouth up near the crack in the window and I said, Jesus, and you went totally crazy. Like the guys couldn't hold them down. He was going to hurt somebody. I turned them all in gunning. I said, open the door. He said, are you sure? I said, well, he's tearing the place apart. Get him out here when they get them out. The guy went absolutely stir crazy. And all of a sudden he stopped. Now this man's language is Shangan.

He knows not a word of English and he's been an insane asylum for a good part of his life. He

stood there, his mouth opened. He smiled and he laughed at me and he said these words in perfect English. David, no power, no power. At that moment he was right. I could feel the tears running down my legs. I was scared to death. God's man of faith and power has arrived. Let me at him. No.

And then suddenly, you know, the word of God says, out of your innermost being will flow rivers of living water. So I take no credit for him. What I'm about to tell you now, I'm no hero. I was scared. But suddenly there was something coming up from within me. And I won't hold it. Repeat the words. I don't need to do it right. Do so right now. But I commanded those evil spirits to get out of them right now and the men collapsed on the ground. He looked lifeless. The other men that were standing there were asking Malangani in shangan, what's going on here? They didn't know what I had said and they certainly didn't know what this man had said.

They want to know what's going on. None of them apparently asked this question to which Malangani gave to me. Is he dead? I said, I don't know. What do you want us to do now? Put him back in the car. Are you sure you want us to do that? I said, yes. I said, look, I said, if God has repaired his soul and set him free, he doesn't need us anymore. And if it's not accomplished, we don't need him anymore. Get him out of here. So they folded him up, put him in a car and the last I saw of him was tail lights.

That's not the end of the story. You know it's not. The following night it came back to the tent meeting. Malangani came out of the tent. There was no car there. He said, brother David, so good to see you. Remember the man from last night? Yes. He said, he's not here. I said, oh. He said, before they got back to the institution, he was sitting there quietly singing songs with the men, repeating scripture. They had a prayer meeting before they got to the place. When they got back there, they went with him, knocked on the door and asked for their head guy. They had to get some guy to come from his house over who sat there and interrogated him and checked them all over and said, no need for you to stay here. You can go. I said, where is he? He said he's been away from his family for years. He set out last night, probably around midnight, he's walking home. He said, God has set the man free.

You see, there's nobody like Jesus. Nobody like Jesus. I want to go back now to finish with this. As Jesus is keeping command over thousands of people telling them the good news, not otherwise known as the gospel. At the same time, he's reading everybody's mail. He knows exactly what's going on in hearts. At the same time, the enemy is fighting him and at the same time he's communicating with the Father, but as he was speaking through that message, every once in a while there had to end up in a pause, a pause. And maybe Jesus turned and looked across the lake. Somebody said, what's he looking at? I don't know. I don't see anything.

Then he came back and preached some more. And then it happens again. We see him look. Somebody says he hears something. I don't hear it. Do you hear anything? I don't hear anything. Well all this was going on because he's touching hearts, he's listening to them, he's fighting off the enemy, communicating with the Father. He heard one more voice. He heard a voice from clear across that lake. And I have a picture in my head that at the end of the day Jesus gets in the boat, says to the guys, come with me, we're going across.

Jesus, can we just pitch a tent right here and sleep? We're all worn out. But why do you want to know we have to go, guys? No, Jesus, come on. We have to go now. Jesus was not going to be at rest until he had gone out and searched for that one more voice. One more voice. You have a voice. You have a voice. It might be silent, deep within your heart. But he knows the thoughts. He knows what goes through your mind and he knows if there's turmoil in your heart. He reads you like a novel. He's the one who knows the most about you. He knows things about you that maybe there's not another person on the planet that knows. And in spite of all the things that he knows about you, he still loves you. And he's still pursuing you and that one more voice prevents him from resting until he achieves this, that he puts his arms around you and holds you close and says, from now on, we're going to be friends.

Jesus is the friend of all those who need a friend. He's the father of all of those who cry out for fatherhood in their life. He's the papa for every little child who's missing a daddy or a mommy. He's the friend to the rejects, to the persons that we consider wasted and undone. So many hearts are plowed up like a field. They're wasted. Jesus cares. And he makes a difference in every heart. You think about this now as I close. There's nobody like Jesus. And he wants to be the personal friend of everybody in Vineland, of everybody all over the world. He wants to be your personal friend. But it's your choice. It's your choice. Will you accept his friendship? That word is a very shallow word friendship. It's far more than a friendship. There's so many biblical words like redemption, adoption. He redeems us.

He adopts us. He calls us brother. He calls us friend. And the word of God says that having become friends of God, we actually become heirs and joint heirs on an equal basis with Jesus. No, Dave, how could we ever be on an equal basis because we are being converted and responding to his love and inviting him into our hearts, we become one with him so that where he is, we're without until we get there. We're in him already, we're walking in him and joining our relationship with him. How many people are there like the Grubbs today who have seen a little child birthed by natural process or wonderfully adopted through another. How many? But how many were giggling like this crazy guy on the platform this morning? You know why? Because it's our walk of faith and it affects every dimension of our lives and little children being welcomed into a family, to them, it's like somebody arriving into heaven, like it's a glorious thing.

Every part of our lives are affected by what we know about Jesus. Every part of it, we can't eat a meal without thanking him. Every moment of every day, we're captivated by this lovely Jesus who's never far from any one of us. What a glorious journey it is. And when the journey's over, he says, come on home, Dave, it's time for you to come and be with me. We had a funeral this week for a beautiful lady who was a part of this church, probably since her infancy, she was not afraid to go. When you know where you're going, there's no fear, bud. There's no fear in it. In fact, there's an anticipation, last breath here, first breath of heavenly air. She left this old 90-some-year-old body. She suddenly felt our hand reaching out to her, and as she clasped onto that hand, she was welcomed home. Nobody liked Jesus. There's nobody like Jesus.

Let's bow. Heavenly Father, for those who are sitting in this room, and for a number that we have no idea, a number of other people who are tuning in over the Internet, I want to pray, Lord God, that however many, I'm not going to say, if there's one, there's got to be one, there's got to be

more, there's got to be people who are listening in this service today and others over the Internet, that when I spoke about Jesus today, there was a little ray of sunshine came, a little inkling. Someone might have been wondering, this guy's pretty convincing.

I wonder if he really does know Jesus. Lord God, I can't answer all those questions. How would anybody have any reason to believe that I know what I'm doing? Maybe I'm just a poached egg. But Jesus, when you speak into our hearts that there's no doubt whatsoever, I'm praying, Lord God, that whoever's listening to my voice right now, in this room or in any other room on the planet, if they really are searching, if they're open, I pray that they will whisper a prayer to you even now, say, Jesus, I'd like to know you and I'm opening up my heart to you. Dear Lord God, what a joy and a privilege it is to know that Jesus comes into the sanctuary of our souls and there takes up residence. As you said, I stand at the door and I knock and I call out, if anyone hears my voice, let them open the door and I will come in.

I pray, Lord, that as somebody says, Jesus, I hear you now, I'm opening the door. I want you to come in. Oh Lord, that would be such joy for them and for this family, what family, the family of Christians all over the world. Let it be so today. In Jesus' name, amen. I want to encourage if there's one or a dozen, however many there might have been today, that actually prayed that prayer and something transpired somehow in here. You need to tell somebody and say, you know, when David prayed that prayer, I was praying that prayer too. It's good to confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe Him in your heart. No confession is actually a denial. You need to get it out. Tell somebody today I'm reaching out to know Jesus. And if anybody wants to sit and talk to Dave, he's available. I'm available to talk any time. Well, not after midnight. I do sleep a little bit now and again.

Now we have this wonderful little prayer that we pray over each other as we're leaving this house. We do it every Sunday. It's just a beautiful habit now. And this is the prayer. God bless you. It's a universal prayer. I can do it with my hand. And I'll speak to somebody and then they're totally different language. I'll go like this. I would pray that God would bless you and people would understand. They understand. So today as we're leaving, say those words. It's a prayer. God bless you. And remember, there's nobody like Jesus. And if it was a commercial on TV and I'd say, but wait, there's more. If you call in right now with your credit card, no, we're not going to go. No, there's always more. Can you say amen?