

Unit 4 Assignment

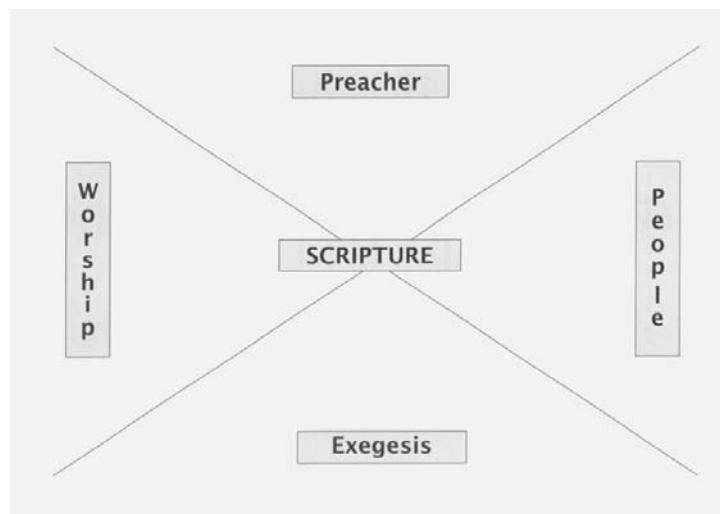
The Teaching of Jesus



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Unit 4 The Teaching of Jesus

Part a, Sermon plan grid



Scripture

Matt 27:32-33

³² As they were going out, they met a man from Cyrene, named Simon, and they forced him to carry the cross. ³³ They came to a place called Golgotha (which means The Place of the Skull).

Luke 23: 26

²⁶ As they led him away, they seized Simon from Cyrene, who was on his way in from the country, and put the cross on him and made him carry it behind Jesus.

Exegesis

Prisoners condemned to crucifixion were forced to carry their own cross to the execution site. Golgotha was probably a place regularly used for public execution for those found legitimately guilty and as a deterrent to others. Possibly called the place of the skull because of its appearance. Jesus was physically unable to carry his own cross due to the beatings he had received earlier. The Roman soldiers were unsympathetic towards Jesus and to those Jews lining the streets. As an army of occupation they had authority over all the local population.

Simon of Cyrene, a North African Jew, was visiting Jerusalem for the Passover festival. He had two sons, Alexander and Rufus.

Simon was forced into service without choice, by being in the right place at the right time. He had come to Jerusalem possibly for a once-in-a-lifetime experience not expecting it to be quite as life changing as it turned out to be.

He was chosen even though he was a foreigner and visitor to Jerusalem.

Jesus, although physically weak was still able to talk to people (Luke 23:28ff) including some women behind Him.

People

Both before and after the event Simon of Cyrene was an anonymous figure. His place in history occurred for a short period of time for one specific task.

How would we feel if we were called for one thing at one time?

Simon carried the instrument of Christ's death.

He carried the burden of the cross for Jesus.

Could we, and can we, help with Jesus' burden?

Simon was an ordinary bloke who got to do an extraordinary thing although it's significance and it's future impact wasn't known at that moment.

Worship

At Easter we often concentrate our thoughts on the central figures of the story, Jesus, Peter and Herod and of the major events that happened; the court room drama, the beating and humiliation, the crucifixion.

The church community, in common with the general populus, are like the Jerusalem crowds, the masses, the ordinary folk there for the festival of Passover and not the public execution.

Lets make sure we don't miss the really important event while concentrating on the religious and the ceremonial.

Preacher

How often are we dragged into service, unprepared and without knowing the whole picture?

It's easy to be pulled along by events only to find out later what it's all about.

To carry the cross for Jesus would only be an honour at the time if you knew in hindsight of it's significance.

We should be ready to offer and gladly accept tasks given to us for or on behalf of Jesus even if we don't recognise their value at the time.

We should learn to discern the 'voice' of God and trust that what we do is His will.

Unit 4 The Teaching of Jesus

Part b narrative sermon.

Simon of Cyrene



“My Children!, come, sit down.
I just have to tell you what happened on my trip to Jerusalem.
As you know, I didn't leave as early as I wanted.
You remember how nothing seemed to go right that morning as I packed to leave.
And, as you could expect, the more I hurried, the slower I got.
When I neared Jerusalem I was running way behind schedule.
I had missed so many things.
I knew that I had to hurry because I had to make arrangements which isn't easy during
Passover.
You know how it is when you're hurrying there are always problems.
This time the problem was a traffic jam.
I was not far from the place outside Jerusalem called "Golgotha" because it looks like a skull.
Right ahead of me was a huge mob of people.
It looked like they might be watching a parade.
I had no time to wait so I pushed my way through the crowd.
When I got to the front of the crowd, I found myself right next to the road.
There in the distance I could see a man trying to carry a cross.
He had been badly beaten.

Boys, I've seen lots of beatings but I've never seen one this bad before!
It was all he could do to walk never mind carry his cross.
In fact he would never have made it up to Golgotha.
I didn't know what to make of it.
But then I saw some people I recognised by the way they were dressed.
They were devout Jews. I had met them on previous trips to Jerusalem.
I pushed my way over next to Ananias who is a Pharisee a very Godly man and I asked him,
"What is happening?"

He said, "This man thinks he is the son of God!"
That made me so mad that I shouted and shook my hand.

"YOU BLASPHEMER!"

Ananias then said, "He calls himself the King of the Jews."

I couldn't control myself I shouted out

"YOU TRAITOR! YOU HYPOCRITE!

YOU'RE GETTING EXACTLY WHAT YOU DESERVE...."

As I continued to shout he and the soldiers were getting nearer and nearer.

Right in the middle of my shouting one of the soldiers reached out and grabbed my arm.

This man had just fallen again. The soldier said, "Carry this Cross!"

Well --- I hated to carry that cross.

First of all I was late.

I didn't have time for interruptions.

Besides, he should have to do it himself it was his cross.

Nevertheless, I had no choice.

So, with anger and impatience I bent over to pick up the cross

Boys, this was the magic moment.

As I picked up the cross I touched him.

His blood was spilled on me.

I don't know why but I immediately remembered how our ancestors put the blood of the lamb on their doorways and the children of the Israelites were spared.

Not only did I touch him and get his blood on me but as I bent over to put my shoulder under the cross our faces were only inches apart.

I saw his eyes.

I'll never forget that moment as long as I live.

For the first time I saw that he was not a violent man.

In his eyes I saw many things.

I saw that he had heard my screams just a few moments earlier.

I felt so guilty.

And yet his eyes seemed to say "God has forgiven you because you didn't know what you did."

Love flowed from his eyes.

It was like light from a flame.

It penetrated me and made me feel like I mattered.

It made me forget myself.

I forgot I had a hurried schedule.

Somehow I felt like I was surrounded by love.

It was a funny feeling, It's like being in the presence of God himself.

Boys, I wish you could have seen the love in his eyes.

It was priceless, yet he said I could show others the same love and the same power because God would give it to me.

That's another thing, He spoke to me all the way up the hill.

He was in great pain and yet he spoke in a calm voice.

I was the one who should have been comforting him, but he was comforting me.

He told me that it is better to give your life for those you love than to try to force them to change their ways.

He told me that when we're being persecuted God gives us extra strength.

Then I asked him about my life.

You boys know that I have felt something was missing.

I asked him about it and he said that if I will give my life responding to the love of God and showing it to others, I will find what I missed.

I admit that I didn't know exactly what he meant but I'm beginning to learn.

I know now that it's not enough to keep the laws because your importance is placed on the laws themselves.

But when you love people, your primary concern becomes people.

But boys, something else happened on that trip with the cross.
Somehow as I carried that cross I got a taste of the suffering that was ahead for him.
I think I experienced a part of the suffering he had to endure.
I experienced the pain.
I felt the pain of having nails driven through the body to the cross.
I felt the pains of the wounds of his beating.
I felt the struggle of fighting for that next breath on that cross.
But there was more than pain.
I felt his suffering of loneliness.
Boys, there is nothing as lonely as walking that hill with people shouting, and spitting, and throwing rocks.
He was so lonely because his closest friends had left him and only watched from a distance.
But more important, the loneliness was intensified by the hatred in the air.
You could feel it.
It was as if he was a scapegoat.
And they were killing him for their own sins.
While I carried that cross I knew this was for real.
This wasn't a game.
It made me realise that much of our worship has been treating God like a thing.
We come and worship God and our God is simple an object.
We get in trouble and we pray for help to a thing.
At this moment he became a real person.
I think I knew how Moses felt when he met God face to face, not a thing but a personal God.
I think I know how Jacob felt as he wrestled all night with God, not a thing but a personal being.
I began to realise that religion is not a toy or a hobby.
It's not something for me to support with me spending money.
But boys, for the first time, I realised more deeply than every before that religion is a life and death matter.

Let me say, I am a different person than when I left.
I'm going to make mistakes, but I will be more holy than I have been.
Because, from the time that man looked into my eyes a part of his spirit entered me.
Somehow that spirit of love which I saw in his eyes filled my heart.
Why, would you believe it, on the way home I met Urias and was able to show love to him?
You know that we have not said a good word to each other for over 20 years!
But more importantly I wasn't putting up a front.
Something came across me and I really cared about him.

By the way, I didn't tell you who this man was.
His name was Jesus.
He was born in Nazareth.
His father was a carpenter.
He had so much of God's power in him that even the soldier at the cross said that he was the Son of God.
Now, as I was saying, I remember how angry I was at Jesus the first time I saw him.
You know as I watched them nail him to the cross I got that same feeling.
I started to draw my knife and attack them, but he looked at me with those same eyes filled with love.
Here, somehow, he was able to love them as they drove nails into him.
He really loved them.

Now you may wonder why I'm telling you all this.

Well, it's very simple boys.
He did this for YOU.
This is what I found while I was with him.
I could tell by his words and actions that he was suffering for such as me.
He was trying to show us a better way.
But he died showing us that he believed so much in love as a way of life that he was willing to give up his life so we might get more fulfilment out of our lives.
He died spreading love.
I noticed that his kind of love drew hatred back in return by those not ready to receive his love.
They knew it would be too hard to live that kind of life so they tried to get rid of it.
He did this for us because it takes great faith to live your life with such love.
He did it to show us that love wins in the end.

I forgot to tell you that he was victorious
Although he was killed then he rose again.
But that's another story.
The thing is that he was able to face death unafraid because he had a great faith in what was on the other side of the grave.
He did this so we might have faith.
So that when we try to show love and get down trodden we might get up and try again.
He said that those who are persecuted for his sake are happy for they experience the kingdom of God.

Boys, he did this for us.
Can we sit here and keep it to ourselves?
He did this for all the people of the world.
Not only the Jews, but the Romans and the Greeks and the Egyptians and the Africans.
And I have a feeling that his love is designed to be spread to everyone I have contact with.
While I was hurrying about the cares of the world a cross was placed on my shoulders.
I think I learned that we don't pick the time when we will bear our burden.
We need to prepare ourselves so that when the cross comes we will be ready for it.

Rob Newton

Unit 4 The Teaching of Jesus

Part c Most effective aspects of the sermon from the preacher's perspective.

The narrative sermon generally.

This style of sermon makes great use of description and word pictures to set the scene and give some cultural background in a manner that is pleasing and easy to listen to. The amount of detail can depend on necessity and the context of the message. The scene setting is also a good opportunity to relax into the story telling and for the listeners to get used to the style while not having to concentrate too hard at the start.

The format allows the congregation to get 'into' the story. To become part of the scene in a similar way that people enjoy soap operas, they become familiar with where the story takes place and feel they know at least some of the characters involved. It should be able to personalise the action so the listener can identify with one or more of the characters. It should create some empathy with the people in the story and be able to ask questions of the listener using the characters, to enable the imagination and speculate their response to a given situation.

The style can help to cover difficult or graphically gruesome events by reporting them as matter of fact or by describing them from a third party's perspective. A description of an event from someone who was actually there at the event and living in the culture will be far better received than the same description from someone from the here and now.

This sermon particularly.

The story of Simon of Cyrene gets but two verses in Matthew and only one in Luke. Using accounts from eminent historians and research used in commentaries a small incident that this is can be built into strong message story by annotating the scripture with background information and speculating what the result was in the life for Simon afterwards.

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Part d Least effective aspects of the sermon from the preacher's perspective.

The narrative sermon generally.

The narrative sermon's effectiveness depends greatly on the orator. A good script can fail completely if it is read badly or without fluency. Listeners will soon lose interest if it is read without enthusiasm and correct inflection.

Cultural gaps are difficult to fill. Part of the scene setting must contain information relating to any differences between today's culture and that in the story. If this is inconclusive or missing the listener can either misinterpret the message or just not understand it.

This format doesn't give the opportunity for the elaboration of preaching points with personal anecdotes without breaking from the story. Adding illustration of points should really be integral to the story and this may be difficult in the context of the story line and using the characters involved.

This sermon particularly.

It relies on the ability of speaker to portray a first century devout Jew, African and father to be effective.

There is a danger the sermon may not come across or be regarded as proper 'teaching'. It can appear to lack scriptural authority due to the amount of elaboration and development of the story from commentaries and historian's opinions.