**Series Description**

Jesus is \_\_\_\_\_. How would you finish that sentence?

Whether you are just curious about Jesus, entering into a relationship with him for the first time, or you’ve known him for decades; there is always more to discover about the depth of his character and the impact of his life. Who is he? Who does he desire to be in your life? How can knowing him change the way you live?

Starting on Easter Sunday, this series will help all of us come to better know Jesus and discover who we are and how we can live because of him.

**Week 1 | April 17, 2022 (Easter) | Title TBD**

**Message Big Idea:** Jesus is Alive! In Jesus, we find a new way of living.

**Scripture:** Ephesians 2:1-10, John 10:10

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, 2 in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. 3 All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. 4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. 6 And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, 7 in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. 8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9 not by works, so that no one can boast. 10 For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. -Ephesians 2:1-10

“I came so that they could have life—indeed, so that they could live life to the fullest.” -John 10:10 CEB

**Message Description:**

Are you alive? You are breathing, your heart is beating, so yes, you are alive. But are you really living?

In Ephesians 2:1-10, Paul reminds us that before Jesus rose from the dead, we were dead in our sins. The bad news: We’re all sinners (Romans 3:23). The good news: If you’re a sinner, you fit right in with the rest of us. And the even better news? God has made a way for us to get back to really living.

Jesus is risen! Jesus is alive! (Matthew 28:1-7) And because he is alive, we too can now live...really live. His resurrection is our resurrection.

In Jesus, we can come alive!

Alive with Eternal Hope (v.6-7)

Alive without Regrets (v.8-9)

Alive with a Clear Purpose (v.10)

Jesus is alive and he offers us a new way of living! Are you ready to really live?

**Week 2 | April 24, 2022 | Title TBD**

**Message Big Idea:** Jesus is gentle. In Jesus, we find grace and new beginnings.

**Scripture:** Matthew 11:29, John 8:2-11, Hebrews 4:14-16

29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. -Matthew 11:29

2 At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. 3 The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group 4 and said to Jesus, “Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. 5 In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?” 6 They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him. But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. 7 When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, “Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.” 8 Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground. 9 At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. 10 Jesus straightened up and asked her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” 11 “No one, sir,” she said.

“Then neither do I condemn you,” Jesus declared. “Go now and leave your life of sin.”

14 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. 15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. 16 Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. Every high priest is selected from among the people and is appointed to represent the people in matters related to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. 2 He is able to deal gently with those who are ignorant and are going astray, since he himself is subject to weakness. -Hebrews 4:14-5:2

**Message Description:**

Do you ever feel like God’s patience with you must be running thin? Do you live with a nagging fear that at some point he’s going to bring the hammer down?

Many of us have an image of God as an angry parent. We know he loves us, but we also think we’re probably on his last nerve. So we brace ourselves for punishment, knowing we have it coming.

But is that what God’s like? Is that how he feels about us?

Jesus came to show us who God is, to reveal what he’s like. His words and actions throughout the four Gospels – Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John – reveal his personality and character; but there is actually one place where Jesus tells us about his own heart. And what does Jesus say?

“...I am gentle and humble in heart…” -Matthew 11:29

This is how Jesus describes himself. This is how Jesus reveals what God is like. Gentle and humble.

In this message, we’ll explore what it means that Jesus is “gentle” (In Week 3, we’ll talk about “humble”). This gentleness is on display in how Jesus responds to a woman caught red-handed in the middle of her sin. He doesn’t shame her. He doesn’t condemn her. In fact, he protects her from those who want to accuse her.

Pastor Dane Ortland writes:

“Jesus is not trigger-happy. Not harsh, reactionary, easily exasperated. He is the most understanding person in the universe. The posture most natural to him is not a pointed finger but open arms.” -Gentle and Lowly: The Heart of Christ for Sinners and Sufferers

This is how Jesus relates to sinners. He is gentle. The writer of Hebrews tells us that we can approach his throne with confidence for there we will receive mercy and find grace. He will deal with us gently.

When you mess up, when you sin, you can come to Jesus. He will not scowl and scold. He will not turn in disgust or give you the silent treatment. No, he will embrace you in his loving arms as he says, “Neither do I condemn you,” as he invites you to, “Leave your life of sin,” and begin again.

**Week 3 | May 1, 2022 | Title TBD**

**Message Big Idea:** Jesus is humble. In Jesus, we find someone kind and approachable.

**Scripture:** Matthew 11:29, Luke 7:36-50, Mark 10:42-45, Philippians 2:5-8, Ephesians 3:12

29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. -Matthew 11:29

36 When one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, he went to the Pharisee’s house and reclined at the table. 37 A woman in that town who lived a sinful life learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee’s house, so she came there with an alabaster jar of perfume. 38 As she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them. 39 When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, “If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner.” 40 Jesus answered him, “Simon, I have something to tell you.” “Tell me, teacher,” he said. 41 “Two people owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. 42 Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he forgave the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?” 43 Simon replied, “I suppose the one who had the bigger debt forgiven.” “You have judged correctly,” Jesus said. 44 Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. 45 You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. 46 You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. 47 Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little.” 48 Then Jesus said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.” 49 The other guests began to say among themselves, “Who is this who even forgives sins?” 50 Jesus said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.” -Luke 7:36-50

42 Jesus called them together and said, “You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. 43 Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, 44 and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. 45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” -Mark 10:42-45

5 In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; 7 rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross! -Philippians 2:5-8

In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence. -Ephesians 3:12

**Message Description:**

Who are you nervous to be around? Who intimidates you? No matter who you are or what status you have gained in this world, we all experience that sense of being anxious or nervous in someone else’s presence. We’ve all found ourselves in positions or places where we felt out-of-our-league, where we didn’t belong.

We can project onto Jesus our skewed instincts about how the world works. Pastor Dane Ortland observes:

“Human nature dictates that the wealthier a person, the more they tend to look down on the poor. The more beautiful a person, the more they are put off by the ugly. And without realizing what we are doing, we quietly assume that one so high and exalted has corresponding difficulty drawing near to the despicable and unclean. Sure, Jesus comes close to us, we agree–but he holds his nose.” Gentle and Lowly: The Heart of Christ for Sinners and Sufferers

Jesus came to show us who God is, to reveal what he’s like. His words and actions throughout the four Gospels – Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John – reveal his personality and character; but there is actually one place where Jesus tells us about his own heart. And what does Jesus say?

“...I am gentle and humble in heart…” -Matthew 11:29

This is how Jesus describes himself. This is how Jesus reveals what God is like. Gentle and humble.

Last week, we explored what it means that Jesus is “gentle.” This week, let’s talk about what it means that Jesus is “humble.”

The word most often translated “humble” in the New Testament is not referring to the virtue of humility, but humility as a state of being. It’s the same word Paul uses when he tells us, “Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position.” (Romans 12:16)

Jesus willingly took on this lowly position. He emptied himself of his divine privilege and glory to become an ordinary human being. And, as Paul says, “And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death–even death on a cross.” (Philippians 2:8) Jesus uses his power to serve (Mark 10:42-45).

And why? Because he wanted to show us that God is kind and approachable.

The story of the woman who had lived a sinful life anointing Jesus’ feet demonstrates his kindness and approachability. While others with “status” in the house were scoffing that he’d let a sinner touch him, Jesus welcomes her and blesses her.

“For all his resplendent glory and dazzling holiness, his supreme uniqueness and otherness, no one in human history has ever been more approachable than Jesus Christ.” -Dane Ortland, Gentle and Lowly: The Heart of Christ for Sinners and Sufferers

No matter who you are, no matter if you feel like a “least” or a “most” in this world, in Jesus, you belong. As the saying goes, the ground is truly level at the foot of the cross. Jesus welcomes every one of us there. And he stands among us as one who is humble.

**Week 4 | May 8, 2022 (Mother’s Day) | Title TBD**

**Message Big Idea:** Jesus is King! In Jesus, we find someone to worship and follow.

**Scripture:** Mark 4:35-41, Matthew 2:1-Mark 11:7-10, Zechariah 9:9, Revelation 19:16

35 That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, “Let us go over to the other side.” 36 Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. 37 A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. 38 Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, “Teacher, don’t you care if we drown?”

39 He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, “Quiet! Be still!” Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. 40 He said to his disciples, “Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?” 41 They were terrified and asked each other, “Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!” -Mark 4:35-41

The Thread of Jesus as King is Found All Through the New Testament

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem 2 and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” -Matthew 2:1-2

7 When they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it. 8 Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields. 9 Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted, “Hosanna!” “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!” 10 “Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!” “Hosanna in the highest heaven!” Mark 11:7-10

9 Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. -Zechariah 9:9

16 On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: king of kings and lord of lords. -Revelation 19:16

**Message Description:**

In the previous two weeks of this series, we’ve highlighted that “Jesus is gentle,” in him we can find grace and new beginnings; and “Jesus is humble,” in him we find someone kind and approachable.

These qualities made Jesus irresistible to the twelve he called to follow him as his closest disciples. And yet, the intimacy of their relationship with Jesus did not overshadow another aspect of his being that they came to recognize.

Put yourself in the boat with Jesus and the disciples on the Sea of Galilee. A furious storm comes out of nowhere and the disciples are panicking, fearful for their lives. Where is Jesus? Asleep in the stern. They call out to him and he awakens. “Be still,” he says, and the wind and the waves die down. Stunned, the disciples look at their friend and teacher, and they ask the right question: “Who is this?”

The answer: Jesus is King.

This humble, gentle, approachable being is also the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

A thread of Jesus as King is found all throughout the New Testament.

We see it at his birth as the Magi asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews?” (Matthew 2:1-2)

We see it as he rides into Jerusalem on a colt (Mark 11:7-10), fulfilling the prophecy of Zechariah: “See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey…” (Zechariah 9:9)

We see it in the great visions of Revelation as Jesus is depicted as the rider on the white horse with the name “King of kings and Lord of lords” written on his robe and his thigh. (Revelation 19:16)

Jesus is King. And as King, he is worthy.

Worthy of our worship.

Worthy of our trust.

Worthy of our allegiance.

This message will include a call to follow Jesus. Finding your way back to God is about declaring your allegiance to Jesus as King and following him in the ways of his Kingdom as part of his Kingdom Community.