

How the Humanity of Jesus Christ Encourages Preachers of the Gospel.

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1. He was a genuine flesh & blood man & thus can relate to us in every respect.

He lived the same kind of life that you live. He understood all that it is to be human. He hungered and was tired. He thirsted and was weary. He wept and was overjoyed. He knew betrayal and family-life. He understood all that there is to know inherent in personhood.

2. He was brought up in a small-town, despised area of Israel (not most desirous for studying the Law).

Galilee was despised by the religious elite who lived and studied in Jerusalem (in Judea). Those who really were serious about the Law resided in the South — not in the North. But Christ grew up in this humble, despised, and in a sense, shamed, part of Israel (Galilee). Indeed, can anything good come from Nazareth? But this humble village was in fact where your Savior grew.

3. He was fervently a man of the Word -- from the earliest of age, to childhood, to adult years, He studied God's Word.

As any Jewish boy did in the ancient world, he studied first at home with his parents and then when the boy was 5 or 6, he would go to the *Beit HaSefer* and learn the Law from the trained instructors. They would instill the Law of God in these young boys. They would begin with Leviticus and then the rest of the Torah before moving on to the Prophets and the Writings. But the primary subject these young boys learned was the Law. It was memorized and internalized.

4. He was devoutly a man of prayer. He prayed and communed with His Father.

In your Christian faith, you must depend upon prayer as the fuel and substance of your communion with God. It was the same with Jesus Christ. He lived a devout life of prayer. He passionately and zealously guarded times of private prayer even if it meant staying up into the late hours of the night, waking up before the sun rose, or even staying up all night communing with the Father. Jesus prayed and met with His Father. He depended on prayer. You must do the same.

5. He was a man dependent upon the Spirit for everything.

How did Jesus live a perfect life? How did He do what He did? Was it simply the 'easy' answer that He was God? This is not the answer that the NT biblical writers want you to have. Christ did what He did because He depended fully and entirely on the Spirit of God. Jesus is fully God and fully man. He voluntarily emptied Himself of all the independent exercise of His divine attributes in His incarnation. Thus, he had to depend on the Spirit of God for direction, for leading, for guidance, for protection, for strength, and for hope. The way that Jesus depended on the Spirit serves as a perfect model for you and me.

6. He was a man constantly being interrupted by folks as he was living life.

Jesus lived a busy life. You can relate to Him; He can relate to *you*. No man has ever lived who had more to do than Jesus. He had people constantly seeking Him, interrupting Him, seeking His power, His miracles. He interacted frequently with those who simply wanted his 'magical' powers and those who wanted a 'free' lunch and even those who genuinely wanted to know Him and His supernatural works. He often went from one place to another and was interrupted. The same happens to you. You are busy; you are often distracted. So was Jesus; learn from Him. Trust in God's sovereign plan and His glorious providence.

7. He was glaringly familiar with sin, its effects, its folly, its destruction, and its lure.

You live in a broken world. You know what sin is, you battle with sin's effects, you understand the folly of sin and the stupidity of sinful choices. You understand that sin kills and yet it kisses before it strangles. It lures before it molests. Sin pervades our world. Jesus knew this as well. He lived in a broken, sin-cursed world, and He humbled Himself even to be obedient to the greatest death — not just the grave, but the wrath of God on the cross for His own people. You know sin? So did Christ. You battle with sin's effects and its folly? So did Christ as He interacted with many. You know the destruction that sin produces? So did Christ. Learn from Christ.

8. He was keenly observant of nature, of customs, of people & incorporated that in his teaching/preaching.

Jesus embodied a master teacher. His teaching was riveting and perfect. He was captivating and compelling. Many of his sermons and homiletical moments include observations from nature, cultural customs, and current day events/people. He spoke of the sower, the tax collectors, the unjust judges, the harshness of the creditors, the wedding processions and the funeral rites. He understood all these and spoke frequently of biblical truth and illustrated it perfectly so all could understand — from fishing nets, to millstones, to the Seat of Moses, to bridegrooms, to mothers in labor. What a perfect teacher and what a captivating teacher He was. Let us learn from Him.

9. He was a faithful preacher of God's Truth & yet he knew what it was to be rejected, despised & ridiculed.

It is appointed for all men of God who teach God's Word to be faithful. God's stewards must be faithful — not successful in the world's eyes. Success to God is faithfulness. He had God's Word and God's mission. He was about His Father's business (from the early years of his life!) and He faithfully preached God's Word wherever He went. That was the reason He came, to preach that all should repent and believe in the gospel. Yet he was rejected by most, He was despised by the academics of the day, and He was ridiculed by the masses. Let all teachers ponder this truth carefully and find much consolation from the fact that Jesus can relate when folks don't always listen to, receive well, and diligently apply your messages.

10. He was a man who faced incessant temptations which he resisted with the Word of God, prayer & the Spirit.

Jesus can relate to you because He Himself was tempted in the same way that you are tempted; yet He was without sin. He resisted sin perfectly, entirely, constantly, and incessantly. He faced temptations from Satan Himself on more than one occasion. He prayed to the Father and asked if there was another way to take the Father's cup of wrath and drink it. He can relate to you in your temptations. Do you struggle with pride? With autonomy? With self-sufficiency? With eagerness to make your knowledge known? Christ can relate to you. Undoubtedly He faced these same temptations yet resisted because He relied on the Word of God which He hid in His heart. He resisted because He depended on the power of prayer & the sovereign power and aid of the Holy Spirit. In all temptations you face, look to Christ who Himself was tempted. Fight for purity!