

WWJD - WHAT WOULD JESUS DO?

The popular saying, "What would Jesus do?" assumes Jesus was a good role model. It is a clever trick. You end up working out the best thing to do and imagine that Jesus would have done it. Thus Jesus gets glory he is not entitled to. Thus the priests and clergy and preachers get glory too for lying about this outstanding role model.

And of course you pay lip service to Jesus' wisdom - it is yourself you are proud of for being so wise that you can know what this wise Jesus would think.

Jesus is made out to be this inclusive person to whom sin did not mean much. In fact he made it clear he would exclude people who thought they were Christians and that mere anger is murder and that lust in the heart is adultery. This does not translate into a man who really is relevant or sane.

Incredibly people say that Jesus gave away everything he owned to the poor and devoted his life to those in need. He devoted his life to those who had his version of spiritual need and Jesus never said he gave anything to the poor. He could have had a stash of cash in Nazareth. He was not going to transport that around a bandit-ridden country.

The first gospel, Mark, has Jesus showing barely any interest in preaching love. Any good deeds done are lazy ones - he just does a miracle. John is the gospel that preaches most about love but it is unthinkable that its version of Jesus who was constantly preaching love and thinking about it could be the real one. The first gospel reads as if it were the most plausible. John clearly had to invent this super-loving Jesus. No gospel would leave out such loving utterances and advice. And Jesus in Mark is careful to keep love to be a vague love for humanity - there is no real love. The real deal is directed at specific people and that is that. Anybody can feel they love something vague. Their love is transparent and hollow.

The text in blue is from the excellent [article](#) by a former Christadelphian.

My comments are in red.

You've heard the phrase, 'What would Jesus do?', often presented as the acronym WWJD. Perhaps it would help to answer that question by looking at what Jesus did do, and extrapolating from there.

So here's a list of the most notable things Jesus actually did, according to the gospels:

1. Got baptised (Matt 3:13) **That is seen as a major deed in the New Testament as if nothing else mattered as much.**
2. Fasted 40 days and 40 nights in the wilderness (Matt 4:1; Luke 4:2) **If Jesus was sinless then his doing this was just masochism.**
3. Read in the synagogue (Luke 4:16)
4. Moved house to live near the sea (Matthew 4:12)
5. Climbed mountains, several times (e.g. Matt 5:1; Mark 3)
6. Sailed in a boat many times (e.g. Matt 8:23-27, 13:1-2, 14:13; Mark 3 & 4)
7. Killed a herd of pigs, by magically sending them off a cliff (Matt 8:32)
8. Walked through grain fields (Matt 12:1; Mark 2:23)
9. Walked on water (Matt 14:25)
10. Rode a donkey and a colt at the same time (Matt 21:7). (I am genuinely impressed by this one!)
11. Made a whip out of cords and used it to drive people out of the temple, also turning tables and chairs over. (Matt 21:12; Mark 11:15; Luke 19:45; John 2:15)
12. Watched people putting money into the treasury (Mark 12:41)
13. Ate a meal with his friends (Matt 26:20)
14. Prayed a lot of times (e.g. Matt 26:26)
15. Magic. Jesus did a LOT of magic.
16. Preaching. Jesus also did a LOT of preaching.

When people talk about following Jesus' example, it seems clear to me that they are probably not talking about what he actually did, but rather about what he said. Otherwise, given the fact that none of us can do magic, we would be left with the example of preaching a lot and not much else. I've never heard Christians asking us to take up sailing or mountain climbing in the name of Jesus, but those things would seem to be equally valid candidates for "following Jesus' example", if they were at all concerned with the life he lived.

Given that we have very little information about Jesus' actual life, the only things left to actually "follow" are his words.

Those are open to interpretation, which has led to an enormous amount of theological debate, but in any case I'd agree there are some good points in what he said.

Love your enemies

Did Jesus love his enemies? He called them various nasty names, such as a "offspring of vipers"(Matt 23:33), "blind fools" (Matt 23:17) and "whitewashed tombs" (Matt 23:27). He even called Herod a "fox" (Luke 13:32).

He gave no example of how to love enemies at all. It was just words. And any dealings he had with enemies were fiery.

But what evidence is there that Jesus loved anyone? There is no act of love recorded about Jesus in the gospels, especially not any act of love towards his enemies. At best, Christians would have to point to his death as an act of love. But that assumes that everything Jesus said was true, otherwise where is the love?

In Luke 19, Jesus told a parable about a nobleman who went to a far country to receive a kingdom after which he would return. The nobleman is said to represent Jesus. The parable ends with a description of how this nobleman would treat his enemies: "But as for these enemies of mine who did not want me to be their king, bring them here and slaughter them in front of me!" Luke 19:27

Where is the good, moral example of how we are supposed to show love to our enemies?

Caring for the poor and sick

Perhaps you think Jesus' example was to care for the poor and the sick. After all, there are many examples in the gospels of Jesus healing the sick and offering verbal comfort to the poor.

But on closer inspection, it seems that Jesus never once cared for anyone but himself, except via magic. I don't see a great example here. If we had such magic powers, I think we could do many more good deeds than Jesus did. Imagine being able to heal every sick person and raise the dead, simply by chanting some words or touching them!

Compassion is cheap if you have miracle powers. It is the lazy way to help. Giving Jesus prime honour is an insult to the humanitarians who bled and sacrificed and suffered for others. I see the worship of Jesus as passive aggressive for it wishes to degrade such people, degrade the people who were helped by them and shows that Christians who do good regard it as dirt compared to doing the magic of Jesus. Doing good properly is seen as less than ideal. Human nature does not really love good but it loves whatever can look like it but which has a bad side. Magic is the proper word for Jesus when you consider magic to mean using dodgy forces that nobody can see to get results without doing things the natural way.

If Jesus really had such powers, he could have done so much more. See Matthew 10:5-8: Jesus sent out these twelve, instructing them as follows: "Do not go to Gentile regions and do not enter any Samaritan town. Go instead to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. As you go, preach this message: 'The kingdom of heaven is near!' Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons."

Doesn't it seem a little bit odd for Jesus to want to prevent his national enemies from being healed? It also seems weird for Jesus to ask his disciples to cast out demons, rather than educating them about germ theory. It's almost as if Jesus himself thought disease was caused by demons...but I digress.

I'm sure if any one of us had those same powers, we could close down every hospital in the world! Not only that, we could end world hunger and solve the energy crisis. Just imagine the possibilities!

Yet although the gospels say Jesus did use his power to feed and heal many people, the above verses show that he also placed limits on who the powers could be used on. What moral reason could there be for such a restriction?

Notice that the notion that God has mysterious ways puts faith before suffering? Believers are forced to admit that some things happen that look horrendous and random. Instead of working out that God has mysterious ways they are forced to pretend that he does because of what they see around them. The truly good person does not use the suffering of others and risk seeing it as fine in the scheme of things to develop faith. It is not about you it is about the sufferers.

A person doing magic to cure and who asks us to do things the hard and natural way is a hypocrite.

It is tempting to think that Jesus healed the sick and raised the dead primarily for the benefit of the people who were affected, as an act of pure kindness. Perhaps in many cases this could be true. We don't know. But on at least one occasion the gospels show Jesus using healing purely to further his own agenda:

But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—then he said to the paralytic —“Stand up, take your stretcher, and go home.”

Matthew 9:6

So what example did Jesus actually leave us here?

Caring for the poor and sick is a lot more difficult for us than it was for Jesus. We don't have magic to heal the blind or raise the dead. We rely on technology and modern medicine, which people have had to figure out all on their own, with no help from Jesus. Imagine if Jesus had laid the foundation for medicine 2000 years ago. Perhaps we could have a universal cure for cancer by now! But instead all we have from Jesus (or rather, the gospels), is Iron Age superstition and reports of miracles (which are plentiful from that era, even outside the Bible!).

So to summarise, whatever Jesus did or said, there is no evidence of him leaving behind any meaningful example of how we should care for the poor or the sick. In our times, we try to care for the sick and the poor, not because we needed someone to tell us to, but because we can see that it is the moral and kind thing to do. We look after each other, hoping that others will look after us. We also care for people because we love them. We even sacrifice our time and energy to assist those who are sick, and we often give of our own wealth to assist the poor. Jesus did neither of those things. Healing the sick cost him no time or energy. He also had no money with which to help the poor. If we want to help the poor and the sick, it is obvious that we must find our own way to do it, because Jesus left no such example for us to follow.

So what was Jesus' purpose?

Many people seem to think that Jesus' purpose was to show people an example of a perfect life, but I've demonstrated above that the Bible just doesn't support this view.

But we don't need to guess what Jesus' purpose was, because he told us himself in Matthew 10:34-36: "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, and a man's enemies will be the members of his household." **The believers say he was only saying what would happen to those who love him. But why does he use the language of intention? If he meant what the believers said he would have said, "Those who follow me will often face the sword. You will see a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, and a man's enemies will be the members of his household."**

This is a disappointment for those of us who do seek peace on Earth. Christadelphians **[any Bible believer is signing up to this notion too]** claim that God will set up a kingdom of peace in the future, but they also believe Jesus will be its king. I assume that's also when he'll have his enemies slaughtered in front of him. I find it incredibly disturbing that God's supposedly perfect plan to bring peace involves killing everyone who disagrees with him. That's the very same plan some nations seem to have today. The world needs an end to such barbaric tribalism, not more of it!

The perfect example to follow?

So you claim to be a follower of Jesus. Well, that's nice. But what does that mean?

Perhaps it means that you cherry-pick some of the good things he said, and try to live a good life following those principles. If so, then you're probably a pretty good person, and even people from other cultures and religions would probably agree. But wouldn't that mean your standard of what is good is actually not Jesus? Rather, you measure Jesus' words against your own standard of what it means to be a good person, and then simply accept the things that align with it. There's nothing wrong with that. **[But cherrypicking is dishonest and many cherrypickers pretend to be true believers. A religion with faulty scriptures and errors is not convincing and it will die out gradually among sensible and honest people. If a religion is going to be a force for positive long term change it needs to be persuasive. Read the next line carefully: IF AN AUTHORITY FROM GOD SUCH AS JESUS GIVES GOOD TEACHINGS AND BAD ONES - REJECT HIM NO MATTER HOW GREAT THE GOOD TEACHINGS ARE. THEY DO NOT EXCUSE THE BAD TEACHINGS BUT MAKE THEM MORE INEXCUSABLE AND YOU DO NOT WANT TO BE AN ACCOMPLICE WITH HIM. IGNORING EVIL TEACHINGS IS ITSELF BAD FOR YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO IGNORE THEM]**

Or perhaps you really do want to emulate Jesus in every respect, both in what he said and what he did.

In that case, you might want to consider a life of preaching, with no money, and hoping to heal people by chanting some words or touching them. Of course, having no money makes it difficult to truly help the poor in any meaningful way, so you might need to offer them some empty platitudes instead, and promise them success in the next life. If you're really good, you might even convince them that being poor is a blessing.

Some of the things Jesus did might make you unpopular, such as watching how much money people put in the collection bags, walking through other people's crops, and chasing a town's entire livestock off a cliff.

People like to say they want role models but usually they don't want truly moral ones but one that is partly moral will do. Is that why Jesus is so popular?

It is not love to worship Jesus or to worship in the Christian faith because that implicitly says God speaks to man and God has told man to have people stoned to death. Remember what Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 13? "If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing."

He wrote that if you commit huge sacrifices for faith but without love then you are just show. And the New Testament is clear that failure to love one person is enough. It is not loving to the victims of the Bible God to worship Jesus. If Paul's insight came from Jesus then that says it all.

The gospels let it slip that Jesus did not realise that illnesses such as epilepsy were not demon possession. He tried to cast the devil out of epileptics and that is crazy for even he must have known that there was no way to tell if the demon was gone or not for only time would tell if the fits had stopped. If you try to copy Jesus and his apostles and just go to a sick person and tell them they have a demon and proceed to cast it out, you are doing what Jesus would do. The Christian hypocrites don't want to think about that. But they know that if they would welcome an LGBT person the first thing Jesus would be doing if he were they is try to cast a demon out of the person!