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JESUS: GOD'S POWER IN ACTION

The Conflict Begins

Bible School Lesson for March 9*

By Linda Joyner

Jesus tried to enter the city quietly, but due to His great popularity, He quickly found himself surrounded by the multitudes.

Jesus, with a full measure of authority, affection, and kindness, healed the sick and offered forgiveness for sins to all who would receive it. In this, Jesus not only showed His divine authority and power, but His sincere compassion for all mankind. As we feast on today's text, let us be assured that Jesus will meet our needs just as He met the needs of those who stood face-to-face with Him.

Usually we are not in conflict with others as long as we behave as they think we should. However, when we behave differently than they might expect, we often experience conflict.

Conflict often can be traced back to confusion. This confusion might result from misunderstood expectations, deeds, and spoken or unspoken words. Confusion occurs when the expectations we have for ourselves differ from the expectations that others have for us. When the Pharisees saw Jesus' deeds of great kindness, they were confused because they expected Jesus, the Messiah, to be a great ruler, not a humble servant of the poor and lowly.

The Pharisees expected the Messiah to come and set up an earthly kingdom.

But Jesus came to help the needy and to save sinners. The Pharisees wanted to mold Jesus into their image. Our attitude should not be like that of the Pharisees; we should not try to mold others into the image we place on them. Rather, let us

conform to, and freely allow others to conform to, His image. Satan will try to lead us into setting ourselves apart from others, not realizing that our own sins are equal to the sins we so freely proclaim in others. The Pharisees, quick to point out the sins of others, were blind to their own sinful attitudes and behavior.

Jesus offered healing and forgiveness, yet the Pharisees opposed Him. Our Lord knew what it was like to live in conflict and controversy, and He knows every detail of the conflicts and controversies we face today. We can victoriously journey through each conflict if we will allow Him to have control of our mind, heart, and spirit. The question before us when we face conflict is this: Have we accepted His offer of forgiveness and healing for our wrong attitudes and misplaced expectations of others?

Two Choices

When we find ourselves in conflict, we can either become bitter and hardhearted, or we can allow Jesus to cleanse us of sin and teach us valuable lessons. He desires for us to learn these lessons so that we can continue to grow and mature into His likeness. By doing so, we can have confidence that, in Jesus, we will weather the conflict and resolve the issues in Christian love and unity.

When we are involved in a conflict, it is natural to feel that we are in competition with that person. But we aren't. We are in conflict over an issue. What we must focus on is the issue, not the individual.

Home Daily Bible Readings

- March 3 Mark 2:1-12
- March 4 Mark 2:13-17
- March 5 Luke 15:1-7
- March 6 Mark 2:18-22
- March 7 Mark 2:23-28
- March 8 Mark 3:1-6
- March 9 Mark 3:7-12

If you are like me, you can recall many instances when Jesus met your physical, emotional, and spiritual needs. So why do we feel confused and lost when we find ourselves in conflict, rather than feeling confident that God is in control?

When we are living in step with Jesus, we can walk in full confidence that He is present and willing to work in and through the conflict to make us stronger in Him. When the conflict seems long, almost unbearable, continue in Him and know that in His timing, in His way, and for His purpose the conflict will be resolved. Let us say, "Thank You, Father," for the conflict of today that will bring us into the beauty of tomorrow.

THE LESSON WRITER:

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Lesson text: Mark 2:1-3:6. Printed text: Mark 2:3-17. Memory text: Mark 2:17. Lesson based on International Sunday School Lessons, ©2000 by the Lesson Committee.