

More Like Jesus and Less Like Me?  
Martinwood Christian Church

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Ahhh. Good morning Martinwood! A few days ago I was reading an article how we view Jesus.

“Scot McKnight is a recognized authority on the New Testament, early Christianity, and the historical Jesus. McKnight, author or editor of forty books, is the Professor of New Testament at Northern Seminary in Lombard, IL.”

He polls his students when class first starts and asks them questions about Jesus.

Questions like:

**1. Is Jesus moody?**

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**2. Is Jesus talkative?**

**3. Does Jesus think marriage is old-fashioned and should be done away with?**

**4. Does Jesus prefer to go his own way rather than act by the rules?**

Then he asks them the same questions, worded a bit differently, but this time he's asking them about how they feel about themselves. Oddly enough he's found they use, for the most part, the same answer for both questions.

His concern; that we mold our image of Jesus into something that allows us to sin and tolerate something other than who Jesus was. I am enthralled at the concept and so I wanted to bring it to your attention and take a look at ourselves to see how we envision Jesus.

Maybe even take a look at the church and see how closely we mimic Jesus, or how much closer we can become. Maybe we need some work to be done. See what you think.

When I find things, I like to share what I've read, what I'm thinking, and most of all what God has put on my heart to share. When I see things like what I just read I think about things like WWJD

**WWJD?**

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We all know what this means. We've heard it before and probably even contemplated, maybe in our own situations

**What  
Would  
Jesus  
Do?**

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Since the first time I saw this I asked myself "how am I supposed to know what Jesus would do? I'm not a mind reader, so how would I know? I've read the Bible more than once, but how would I know? Then I ask myself who's asking and why would whomever started this think I'd know what Jesus would do?

**Isaiah 8:8**

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**“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,” declares the LORD.**

**Isaiah 8:9**

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**“For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts**

Then I ask myself, is someone or something in this world trying to get me to step up and be God and try to “read between the lines” about what Jesus would do?

This kind of thinking allows me to put my “spin” on things. To actually put my humanly, natural spin on it. To use my experience, my background and sprinkle it with a little bit of what I would want or think Jesus would do.

I know what Jesus DID, or at least some of what He did, but in certain situations I DON'T know what Jesus WOULD do.

There are many things He did that I would have handled differently, but I'm not divine either. There are things Jesus did that wouldn't have even crossed my mind. So is there someone out there who wants me to think I'm God? Who wants me to think I know what Jesus would think, that maybe I'm higher, or as high as He is?

I cannot, in all reality say WWJD, but I can say WDJJ, and the Bible has many, many instances of things that still happen today that state what Jesus did.

It stated what He did when challenged, what He did when met with authority, hating, people wanting your life taken from you. I know what He did because the Bible tells me so, and this is the Truth; my compass.

The reason I bring all this up is because of the article I referred to earlier titled "How Do We Arrive at the Truth?" It was in this month's Christian Standard magazine. The author poses the issue that instead of living our life according to what the Bible says, we make Jesus in our image to justify our actions. Here's what he writes.....

"I'm reminded of the French philosopher Voltaire's words, "If God has made us in his image, we have returned the favor." I see this played out often within the church. People form Jesus in their image to justify their preferred sins or pet doctrines. This serves to give divine approval to artificial truth.

This is the opposite of spiritual formation. When we become more like Jesus, that's spiritual formation. When we make Jesus become more like us, that's spiritual deformation."

This is not a conviction, this is a caution.



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I find there are those who believe Jesus is who he is. We trust His compassion, eternal perspective, moral imagination, intellect and commands. They love Jesus, but have a hard time loving the Bible. They love Jesus and believe He truly is the way the truth and the Life, yet they

question the Bible; who wrote it, was it really divinely inspired, it is the truth?

We have to be careful here. McKnight went on to say:

“There is no perfect Bible reader out there. We should not confuse our fallible interpretations of the Bible with God’s inspired Word. It is possible to live into your beliefs with confidence while simultaneously holding them with humility.

Author N.T. Wright wrote, “I used to tell my students that at least 20 percent of what I was telling them was wrong, but I didn’t know which 20 percent it was.” If Wright is getting 20 percent wrong, I’m off on at least 50 percent.”

We need to check our own beliefs. How do we arrive at the truth. There are so many outlets nowadays with “the truth,” but we arrive at our own truth. Let’s not insert our values into Jesus word to validate our actions or even worse, think we’ve invalidated our sins?

**Revelation 2:7**

**“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.” ’**

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**This week take a close look at how you see Jesus and His words. Are we looking at His words through a clean lens or one that we adjust His words based on our experiences to vindicate us from sin.**

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Lord,

We come to you with open arms to understand Your Word and the application of it to our daily lives. Keep your light on our path and give us discernment so we know how you want us to go. We look to you and only you for the way, the truth and the life. Bless your ministry on 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue. In Jesus name we pray.....Amen.

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We'd like to give you the opportunity to make Jesus part of your life. Pray with me

Lord Jesus  
I repent of my sins  
Come into my heart  
I make you my Lord and savior.

If you've said that simple prayer we believe you've been born again. Get into a Bible based church and tune in right here next week. Trust in God and He'll take you places you've never been before.

Now let's get our praise on....

All references in this sermon to the Scott McKnight are from the January/February 2023 edition of the Christian Standard from the story titled "How Do We Arrive at the Truth?" written by Tyler McKenzie.

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