

## Week 4: Walking As Jesus's Representative

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Living in the Last Days Life Group

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**Description:** The Bible calls us to be Jesus's ambassadors and representatives on the earth. He prayed that He did not take us out of the world. How do we represent Jesus well? What does it call us to do?

## Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

## Teaching (45 minutes)

### Our Mandate and Commission

#### The Great Commission ([Matthew 28:18-20](#))

##### **Matthew 28:18-20** ESV

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

We must be clear about our mission given to us by Jesus. Many translations dropped the ball here. When you get to [Matthew 28:19](#), the commands by Jesus do not say to, "Go." He commands us to "make disciples."

All the other action words in these verses explain how we make disciples for Jesus. We do this with three actions:

- i. In your going – It's better to understand "go" as "as you are going." To make disciples, we must baptize people. Most people think this refers to water baptism, and to some extent it does.

- ii. Baptizing – The Greek word “baptize” means to fully immerse, or to dunk. Jesus doesn’t tell us to baptized people in water. He tells us to immerse people in the name (reputation and knowledge) of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. To baptize people is to make them fully aware of God in His triune Persons and unity.
- iii. Teaching – We teach people about Jesus and all that He has commanded and taught.

This is an impossible task if we forget what Jesus says before and after He commands us to make disciples. Before He gives the commission, He tells us all authority is given to Him. We walk in the authority He has given us, specifically to proclaim the gospel and heal sicknesses ().

Right after He gives this commission, He tells us He will be with us to the end of the age. We are not doing this alone. We’re doing it with Jesus right beside us. Since He goes before us and is with us, we can fulfill the great commission by the power of the Spirit. The Church has been doing it for 2000 years. And we will do it until Jesus returns at the end of the age.

### **Christ’s Ambassadors ([2 Corinthians 5:17-20](#))**

#### **2 Corinthians 5:17–20** *ESV*

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

You usually only hear the first verse about becoming new creatures in Christ. But what Jesus has done in making us new creatures is just the beginning. We have been reconciled to God, our relationship with Him fixed and restored.

We show this restoration to the world in our actions and relationships. People in the world don’t usually reconcile. They remain angry, indignant, separated, and alone. Reconciliation is the light of the gospel and for many people it is very inviting.

The ministry of reconciliation is part of being a new creature in Christ. When we confess, forgive, restore, and unconditionally love, it shows the world what Jesus has done for us and will do for them.

In these ways, we are Christ's ambassadors, people who let the world know what Jesus is all about. We have to follow through and be those ambassadors to make Jesus more attractive than ever to people who need Him the most.

### **Examples of Christ's Love and Transformation**

When we do all these things, we are examples of what Jesus can do for others. We must be good examples for His plan for the salvation of the world to come to pass.

We are not always perfect or good at doing this. We still have flaws and are still learning how to be that people Jesus has declared us to be. We will make mistakes but we must do better each time so the world can see Jesus in us.

## **"In but Not of"**

Wouldn't it be nice if Jesus saved us and then took us out of the world? We would not be surrounded by sin and wickedness anymore. We would not have to battle with our fleshly desires and temptations every day.

But that's not how Jesus in His infinite wisdom chose to do this. If he removed each of us from the world, how would more people become like us, meeting Jesus and being changed forever?

Instead of removing us from the world, Jesus left us in it and prayed for us instead. In [John 17](#), the true Lord's Prayer happens. In it, Jesus says things like this:

#### **John 17:11 ESV**

And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one.

#### **John 17:15-16 ESV**

I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.

### **John 17:18 ESV**

As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.

Jesus left us here to make a difference, equipped us for the task, and holds us in the palm of His hand. He has given us the Holy Spirit to help us not only stave off sin and wickedness but also be witnesses of His love and grace.

This leaves us with an important part of our lives to continually be evaluating. Are we influencing the world for Jesus or is the world influencing us against Him? Because we used to be like everyone else in the world without Jesus and without hope, we can sometimes find the world enticing again.

We must influence the world for Jesus instead of letting the world influence us with its temptations.

## **Different Perspectives and Worldviews**

Don't forget that the world will hate you because of a different perspective and worldview. It may not be a very strong hate, but they definitely notice a difference between you and them.

We have a different perspective than anyone in the world. We see the world differently than they do. We see it as passing away while they think it will be here forever. The Bible holds us to certain ethical standards the world does not have to follow.

It's easy to look back at a different era, like the 1950s, and say that people were more holy and "Christianized" then. The fact is that every era has its own sins and social allowances. We need to remember that when we long for times in the past.

It will be hard to evangelize people no matter the times and circumstances. Jesus is not really a stumbling block to many. When we are truly living for Him, we look and live different from the world, and they notice.

We have different perspectives than the world. We live with eternity in mind while they focus on the present only. We live as stewards of God's earth and they don't care if they abuse it. We focus on people because souls are eternal and they abuse people (some more than others). We tried to steward our money well because it belongs to God first and they squander it or hoard it.

These are just a few of the differences in perspective. They will not understand why you live the way you live. It may not appeal to them at all.

Here are three approaches Christians have historically and currently used to deal with the culture around us.

- **Isolationist View** – Some Christians have sought to get away from the world and build their own fully functional communities. One example of this in the Bible is the Essenes. Current example is the Amish.
- **Incorporative View** – Some Christians have sought to so integrate with the culture around them that they don't consider the sinful and wicked parts of the culture. Every culture has unbiblical and wicked parts to it. There could be some redeemable qualities, but if you just except and incorporate into the culture, you will be embracing those bad parts. It also makes it hard to witness to others when they think your lifestyle is no different than their own.
- **Evaluationist View** – Some Christians seek the best of both worlds. They evaluate the culture and abstain from medieval and wicked ways while not swearing off the people in the culture and some of the culture that can be redeemable, if not be used as an example of Jesus's sacrificial love. This gives them the ability to evangelize others because their lifestyle is different from those around them. But it doesn't make people so stand-offish that they think Christians are backward and want to have nothing to do with them.

## Evangelism Styles

There are different ways to tell people about Jesus. Any of these will work as long as you have the personality to carry them through. Some of them require a lot of preparation beforehand.

The biggest mistake you can make in sharing Jesus with others is trying to be something you're not or trying to evangelize in a way that makes you uncomfortable.

These types of evangelism fit your personality and style. There are many ways to tell others about Jesus and you must find the one that works best for you. You can have strengths in more than one of these methods.

**Confrontational Evangelism** – This approach is usually seen in to door-to-door and Street evangelism. It can be abrasive and is definitely confrontational. You are talking to people about Jesus without knowing who they are in most cases. I call this method “cold turkey evangelism.”

**Rational Evangelism (Apologetics)** – This approach requires a lot of studying, reading books on apologetics, and being prepared to answer questions “off-the-cuff.” If you read a lot of books about the Christian faith, this may be the approach for you. Apologetics is a word that comes from Scripture, meaning “to reply back.” When people ask you why you believe in Jesus, you are answering them with rational answers they can understand. Apologetics makes use of the culture and background of the people you are witnessing about Jesus to.

**Conversational (Comfortable) Evangelism** – If you are a more laid-back person and the confrontational and approaches make you hope for another option, this is it. Conversational evangelism is when you simply talk to people and share about Jesus when the opportunity presents itself. It is a “laid-back” approach to sharing your faith about Jesus. You get to know people, and the Holy Spirit reveals to you ways to speak to them about Jesus that will be the most effective.

**Friendship Evangelism** – If you are the person who makes friends easily and through your friendship show your relationship with Jesus and invite people to become Christians and experience Him like you do, friendship evangelism may be your style. Don’t forget that you are not befriending people to lead them to Jesus. You are befriending people, and throughout your relationship introduce them to Jesus. Avoid the “bait and switch” approach. Be a genuine friend.

**Compression Evangelism** – If you are the kind of person who notices the felt needs of people and does your best to fulfill them, this may be your evangelism style. When you help people with their needs and they can understand why, that is your open door to share the gospel. You cannot just take care of people’s needs. The government can do that. You have a reason for helping them, and that is Jesus. You must speak when the open door presents itself.

**Lifestyle Evangelism** – No matter which type of evangelism you choose, you should be practicing lifestyle evangelism. This is where you live the life of a Christian in front of unbelievers so they can see Jesus working in your life and heart every day. This may open the door for them to ask about your faith. It

makes it much easier to open your mouth and talk about Jesus and your relationship with Him.

## Our Attitude in Evangelism

How we evangelize others is super important. We are representatives of Jesus, and so we must be like Him as we reach out to others. If we have the wrong attitude, they will not sense Jesus in us and be interested.

### **1 Peter 3:14–17 ESV**

But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.

Notice how Peter talks about “giving a defense” of our faith. Either way, this is where we get the word for apologetics. It is not an apology the way we think of one. It is a defense.

If someone asks us for a reason why we have hope and believe in Jesus, we should answer them with gentleness and respect.

We cannot be abrasive in our response or make fun of them for their beliefs. We must be respectable of them. Remember that all people bear the image of God and the way we treat even unbelievers shows how much we love God.

This will give us a good conscience in our dealings with people who don't know Jesus so that they will feel bad about how they treat us instead of us feeling bad about how we treated them.

We have the light and truth of Jesus but we must give it to others in love and grace ([John 1:14](#)).

We must have the same balance of grace and truth Jesus had. He loved people, but He did not ignore their sin. He spoke about their sin with unconditional love. He is our model.

Christians often are strong on either truth without love or love without truth. We must strike the balance between love and truth so people hear our heart and see Jesus.

### Three Kinds of truth

- **Subjective Truth** – Truth is whatever it means to you and whatever it means to me. What’s true for you is not necessarily true for me. This is often used in social situations. But it can even go to morality. People believe truth is different for each person.
- **Objective Truth** – Truth is the same for everyone. It’s like the law of gravity. If you don’t believe it, jump off a cliff and defy it. The world operates in the same ways for everyone. What’s true for me is also true for you.
- **Personable Truth** – The best Truth is found in Jesus Christ. He is God’s Truth incarnate ([John 18:37-38](#)). Pilate was interrogating Jesus about His Kingdom when he finally got fed up and asked, “What is truth?” He stormed out of the room before the answer could come that he was staring Truth right in the face.

Jesus calls us to be salt and light in the world ([Matthew 5:13-16](#)). Why did he call us to be these things? Salt is used as a preservative. It can preserve foods for a longer time than if they all do not have any soul.

In the same way, we need to act as preservers of righteousness in our conversations ([Colossians 4:6](#)), interactions with others, and our ideas. You can present righteous ideas in the workplace no one would of thought of because they do not know Jesus.

## Christian Ethics toward Unbelievers

We need to treat unbelievers with love, respect, and gentleness. We should not be taking advantage of unbelievers.

We cannot share the gospel with anger in our hearts. That’s an oxymoron. We need to look like Jesus as we interact with unbelievers.



We must tell people about Jesus. Imagine if you were in the middle of the desert and needed a cup of cold water. If I walked by you with a whole case of bottled water, you would probably beg me for just one bottle.

You have the water Jesus everyone in this world needs. If you do not share Him with those around you, that is not being kind, keeping out of people's business, or loving them. If you loved them, you would share Jesus before their time is up and it's too late.

If you don't think you are good at sharing Jesus, get the resources from church, Christian books on evangelism, and any other resource you can find, perhaps on the web. Make yourself proficient at sharing your faith of Jesus.

Paul says something incredible about how we can live in these last days as good evangelists. He is actually talking about everything we are doing, but it holds true for evangelism.

#### **Ephesians 5:15–17 ESV**

Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

Paul says we should make the best use of time, of every situation, and understand what the Lord's will is. Here is the Lord's will for these last days:

#### **2 Peter 3:9–10 ESV**

The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

God is waiting for the maximum amount of people to come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ before it is too late and His judgment comes. At that time, this era of grace we are in will be over. We only have so much time, whether it is our lifetime or the return of Jesus.

## How to Have a Positive Attitude in a Negative World

We live in a world that is dead set against us. It's hard to have positive relationships with unbelievers because of such a difference in perspectives and worldview. Jesus promised several things that can easily depress us.

- Jesus will divide families and households ([Matthew 10:34-39](#)).
- We will have tribulation while in this world ([John 16:33](#)).
- People will hate us and persecute us and bring us before the authorities ([Luke 12:11-12](#)).
- We will be persecuted at least in speech if not in deed ([Matthew 5:10-12](#)).

How can we remain positive in a world that is so set against Jesus, and us because we associate with Him?

Here are some ways we can be positive even while we live in a world set against us and Jesus.

- Read the rest of the verse on having tribulation, that we can take heart because Jesus has overcome the world ([John 16:33](#)).
- We have Jesus's Spirit within us, the hope of glory and our inheritance in heaven ([Ephesians 1:13-14](#)).
- We have fellowship with God and the saints ([1 John 1:7](#)).
- We have the joy of the Lord, and that is our strength ([Nehemiah 8:10](#)).
- We can encourage one another with Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs ([Ephesians 5:19](#); [Colossians 3:16](#)).
- Our bodies are wasting away but inwardly we are being renewed day by day ([2 Corinthians 4:16](#)).
- Our momentary struggles and suffering is building up for us a weight of glory ([2 Corinthians 4:7](#)).
- When one person turns to Jesus, it should make wells of joy bubble up and spill over from within us.
- We must enjoy good relationships with everyone we can.

- Whether we can see it or not, God is doing great things all around the world. We can find out about these things and rejoice with other Christians about them.
- Get supercharged on great experiences with family, friends, and the people of God when you can for the times your batteries will be worn down by the world and negative situations.
- Inasmuch as you can, take yourself out of negative experiences and relationships with people. When you can't, remember your true perspective and destiny.
- Ask Jesus to infuse you with His power to get through those negative days and to let His joy carry you through those times. Rely on your relationships with other Christians and let them know what's going on so they can encourage you and help you.

## Talking and Witnessing to Unbelievers

You may not know when the right moment arrives to talk to your friends about Jesus. Sometimes we just need to pay closer attention to those openings.

When you hold conversations with people, pay attention to questions they may have about Jesus, a situation they are in where they feel hopeless, and any number of cues.

Listen to the Holy Spirit as you have conversations with unbelievers. He will give you the right time to speak and even the words to say ([Luke 12:12](#)).

When you know the situation of a person you are witnessing to, you can tailor the gospel message to that person's situation and desires. Use compassion evangelism with your other evangelism styles.

Ask to pray for people. They almost never refuse prayer. Whether a person believes in God, a higher power, or some other being, most people are open to prayer, especially when they are at their weakest, or at the bottom of the rope.

## Living As a Good Citizen

This comes under lifestyle evangelism, but we must always remember that we can be good citizens here on earth and remembering that our citizenship is in heaven. Instead of being “to heavenly minded that we are no earthly good,” we should be so heavenly minded that we are of immense earthly good.

First, we are a citizen of a country on the earth, and we must be good and godly, upstanding citizens on this earth ([Romans 13:1-7](#)). We must live a life worthy of the gospel and represent Christ in the way we live as a citizen ([Philippians 1:27-30](#)).

At the same time, our citizenship is in heaven and we await Jesus’s return eagerly ([Philippians 3:20-21](#)). We should not be so tied up in the things of this world that we forget this world is not our home.

How should we apply these principles to the way we live? How much should Christians get involved in politics, for example? Or really in anything? We don’t want to be so isolationist that we don’t even worry about witnessing to others.

You must work out where you and the Holy Spirit fall on the issues of this world and how much to be concerned with them. I think it’s a healthy place to be when you are not so afraid of what’s going on around you that you forget about your heavenly citizenship.

## Discussion (30 minutes)

## Application (10 minutes)