



A Spiritual Encouragement Message
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The Influence of Jesus Changed This World

by Oscar Velazquez

Normally it is not my custom to repeat a lesson or a sermon until at least five years go by, then I usually upgrade it and teach it again. It helps me to measure my growth. But on this occasion, I'm going to write about a sermon I preached recently at the evening service time. It is always a perfect time to remember the following message.

Most people, not just believers, when they are begging for something or asking for mercy they usually say, "For the love of Christ," or when they have an accident they exclaim, "Oh Christ." When they see someone they don't like they say, "Oh Christ."

When they are scared or amazed by something they also say, "Oh Christ."

Nobody ever said, oh Mohammad, nor oh Buddha, nor oh Confucius.

Jesus has greatly influenced this world to the point of the way we speak and express our emotions. His very influence is proof enough that He is the Son of the only living God. Jesus was born and lived as a poor Jew. He did not have it easy to say that He is the Son of God. Our brother Reinaldo is a Carpenter by trade and Isaac is his beloved son. Now imagine if Isaac starts to say. Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am (Jn.8:58). Or, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me (Jn.14:6). That can give us an idea of how most people saw Jesus. Who was Jesus in the eyes of the people of His time? Another Zealot? Another rebel against the pagan roman government? Another normal Jew?

Jesus did not have it easy to build His kingdom. Jesus never went to school, He never wrote a book, He never held an office in government, He never built an army, never traveled more than 200 miles from His hometown, he never even bought any property. But yet look at His influence in the world! Starting with world History I will mention a few examples.

History has been transformed by Jesus. When Jesus was a little boy roman coins had the image of Augusto "divine," "son of god" on them (Mk.12:15-17), and after ten horrible persecutions to Jesus' followers there were coins running in the Byzantine period with Jesus Son of God superscription on them.

Now, two thousand years later American bills running all over the world still say, "In God we trust," because of the influence of Jesus in America.

Jesus did not have a place to be born, nor to lay His head (Lk.2:7 and 9:58), but over the centuries basilicas, cathedrals, chapels, and church buildings have been built all over the world on His name, on almost every corner. He is the most worshiped, the most written about, the most studied about, and painted about. More than two billion people today pray in His name, that is more than ¼ of humans today.

Our state of California is usually seen in a dark light from other alike sinners perspectives, but let's not ignore the very names of our cities.

San Francisco. Named after an Italian friar, deacon, preacher who devoted his life and money to serve Jesus from 1182 to 1226.

Sacramento. Named after the word sacrament, meaning the Lord's supper.

San Jose. Named after Joseph, the adoptive father of Jesus.

Los Angeles. City of angels.

Santa Ana. Mary's mother and Jesus' grandmother according to tradition.

San Clemente. Named after Clement of Rome, direct disciple of the apostles.

San Diego. Named after a native Mexican who was fueled by the Spanish conquerors with a painted image of Mary, the mother of Jesus.

If you keep going south to Mexico, you will find Valle de la Trinidad (Trinity) in Ensenada, San Felipe (St. Philip), Cavo, San Lucas (St. Luke), and the list goes on.

Romans measured time quoting their Caesars, but Jesus gave the world a new timeline. Every ruler and event in history is named after our Lord, B.C. or A.C.

The Roman Empire was the longest lasting empire but can never be compared to Jesus' kingdom. Jesus' influence is by far greater.

Who remembers the name of a biographer of Augusto, or Nero, or Caligula?

Of Jesus? Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Two thousand years later we name our kids by those names and we name our dogs Nero, Zeus and Hercules.

Education and learning was highly influenced by Jesus. In the Roman Empire, education was only for the elite, for the upper class, for boys especially. Jesus taught the poor and the women (Lk. 10:38-42). Jesus' apostles also taught and wrote to everybody, including to the poor and the women. By the fourth century monks, followers of Jesus, started to copy Scriptures and documents to teach others about Jesus in monasteries. That is how later universities came to exist. Oxford, meaning the Lord is my light. Cambridge was also founded in His name. Harding, ACU, Florida College, Pepperdine, PLNU, even the YMCA was founded by followers of Jesus.

In 1635 a puritan follower of Jesus started the first public school in Boston, Massachusetts.

Robert Raikes 1736-1811 a newspaper publisher and Jesus believer in England started Sunday School in order to educate and change kids from the streets and save them from being taken away to isolated islands as criminals. That movement grew huge, spreading to America and developed as a Sunday School hour before the worship.

Medicine and compassion were tremendously influenced by Jesus.

Jesus went around healing the sick and teaching His followers to serve and help the sick in a time and environment when the Roman Philosopher Seneca wrote. "We drown children at birth when they are weak or abnormal."

During that same time a Roman soldier wrote to his wife. "Know that I am still in Alexandria... I ask and beg you to take good care of our baby son, and as soon as I receive payment I shall send it up to you. If you are delivered (before I come home), if it is a boy keep it, if a girl, discard it." Believers of Jesus started to care for those kids receiving them in their homes and becoming their "Godparents." Widows and orphans were cared for by believers of Jesus since the first century (James 1:27). Dionisius wrote: "Widows were fined for surviving their husbands."

A follower of Jesus named Basil of Caesarea 330 A.D.-379 A.D. built the first place to take care of lepers. In the council of Nicaea, in the fourth century the believers of Jesus accorded to build a place for the sick in each cathedral. Plagues, epidemics and diseases killed $\frac{1}{3}$ of the population from the Roman Empire and the sick were left to die on their own. Followers of Jesus showed hospitality (Hebrews 13:2), love for strangers, which later turned into hospitals. Now we have Mercy Hospital, St. Jude, Presbyterian Memorial, Baptist Memorial, all these hospitals operating in the name of Jesus. The United Nations Organization came up with The Red Cross influenced by Jesus (Matthew 25:35-36). Islam came up with The Red Crescent just to copy the idea.

Dr. Kent Brantly, an ACU graduate under Randy Harris' radar, was instrumental in finding the cure for Ebola in Liberia, after becoming infected himself by caring for complete strangers on the other side of the globe.

Art has been extremely influenced by Jesus.

Most paintings, mosaics, frescos and sculptures in the world are related to Jesus.

Museums are full of items related to Jesus, at least $\frac{3}{4}$ of the art in them.

Jewelry, ornaments, decorations and even clothes are abundantly influenced by Jesus.

Architecture all over the earth has been influenced by Jesus. Iconic constructions like St. Paul's Cathedral, St. Peter's Cathedral, Notre Dame's Cathedral, the Vatican.

Movies are also some directly and some indirectly related to Jesus.

Music has been created pretty much by believers of Jesus.

The very system of music notes was developed by believers. From the first to the fifth and sixth century from Gregorian chants to the Benedictine Monk Guido 991-1033 who came up with do re mi fa sol la, to sol-fa notation music, to today's music. Hundreds of secular songs mention Jesus.

Society has been transformed by Jesus.

Human rights, dignity and honor have been given to men by Jesus. In the Roman Empire and especially in the time of Jesus, Roman wealthy citizens called Patricians ran the government and owned all property, including humans. Everyone else was the Plebeians, the ordinary people and ⅓ of the social class were the slaves. God's kingdom was to be different (Matthew 20:25-28). Here in America things were not too different. Abraham Lincoln, the 16th U.S. president, also a believer in Jesus, repented of what he called "the sin of the nation," and proclaimed the emancipation of slaves on January 1, 1863 freeing all slaves from their masters.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. fervent believer of Jesus gave the following speech in the city of Detroit in 1961.

"When you rise to love on this level you begin to love men, not because they are likeable, but because God loves them. You look at every man and you love him because you know God loves him and he might be the worst person you ever seen. And this is what Jesus means I think in this very passage when He says, love your enemies and it's significant that He does not say, "like" your enemy. Like is a sentimental something an affectionate something. There are a lot of people that I find difficult to like, I don't like what they do to me, I don't like what they say about me and other people, I don't like their attitude, I don't like some of the things they are doing. I don't like them, but Jesus said "love them," and love is greater than like. Love is understanding, redemption, goodwill for all men so that you love EVERYBODY because God loves them." He had a dream, and he was influenced by Jesus.

There has never been a community like that before, not even an idea was conceived of a community like that before. Only people influenced by Jesus can accomplish that.

Only a real Son of the living God could have that much good influence in this corrupted world full of sin, depravity, wickedness, and perversion.

Jesus influenced Human History, Education and Learning, Medicine and Compassion, Art and Architecture, Music, Society and Culture.

How much influence has Jesus had on you?

How much do you influence others to Jesus?

Let His will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.