

**'THE REALLY GOOD LIFE!'**  
***(The Life of Christ Series)***  
**Gospel of Luke**

**'Jesus – The Un-Fluffed Version'**

Most people tend to have their own ideas about Jesus according to how they want Him to be, not necessarily according to the biblical record. In their minds they tend to paint an imaginary Jesus they are comfortable with, a Savior Who looks much like themselves, or One whom their religious denomination tells them to accept. Like a sketch drawn by a carnival artist, on the canvas of their fantasy the Lord is more of a caricature than a very lifelike masterpiece of the Savior in Scripture. God, the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, puts His signature on the only inspired canvas bearing His Son's likeness – the pages of the New Testament. Anything and everything else is a flawed forgery of the One Who was '***God manifested in the flesh***'. Every born-again Christian's goal should be to search the Scriptures objectively to carry in his or her heart a true picture of the Savior they have received and lives within them. Restoration of a blemished painting takes a skillful artist who seeks only an unembellished image that has been obscured and blurred. As with the Jesus of Scripture – skillful, Spirit-filled saints seek to restore the ***exact image of the invisible God*** He was, is, and forever will be (***Colossians 1:15, Hebrews 13:8***).

A characteristic feature of most fraudulent, fictional caricatures of Jesus is that He had only a kind, tender, gentle, and passive nature. Although this side of Jesus' human nature is true, it's not the only character hue with which to paint Him. Equally true is that Jesus is holy and just. He absolutely hates sin and His wrath against it is a dark hue of truth that highlights and defines the lovelier side of the Son of God. He is not just one or the other – all sweetness and light, or foreboding and wrath; the Savior of Scriptures is always 100% both when viewed within the holy frame of both Old and New Testament Scripture. To omit the softer hues of Jesus is to leave one with a totally angry, fearsome Savior. To omit the darker hues of justice and wrath is to blur the picture with a fluffy fake vision of Christ and the Almighty God He personifies.

His first coming and this Church Age highlight His forgiving, enduring, and loving side; His second coming profiles His hatred of sin, rebellion, and His wrath against it. This balance is revealed in the awesome, fearsome focus of the OT and the loving, forgiving, merciful focus of the NT. It is the same God (***and Savior Who reveals Him***), not either or, but both in perfect 100% balance. The Gospel accounts of Jesus beautifully connect the OT and NT emphasis in perfect balance seen in the perfect God-Man, the Lord Jesus. To omit either side of His divine nature is to just roughly sketch a Savior who doesn't exist (***except in one's blurred imagination***), never did, and never will. It is a statue-less idolatry that portrays Jesus as anything more or less than what He biblically is (***Romans 1:18-22***).

Jesus is both toughness and tenderness, in perfect eternal balance. To portray Him as too tough is a harsh misrepresentation; portraying Him as too fluffy and too tender is just as unbiblical. This is so important because the Holy Spirit is seeking to restore the image of Him in all of us who have received the true Jesus of Scripture into our hearts as the model He is at work making us to become (***Romans 8:29, 2 Corinthians 3:18***). God is trying to reproduce His image in us, not some imaginary alternative of our choosing. God is trying to make us perfectly balanced in spiritual toughness and tenderness just like His Son Jesus is, was, and always shall be.

It is a fact that most Christians are extremely uncomfortable with the tougher side of Jesus (***rebuking the false teachers and His own disciples at times, upsetting tables in the temple, cursing the fig tree or criticizing unbelief of the apostles in the Upper Room, etc.***). Most choose to avoid tough passages, preferring a passive, permissive Jesus they can more easily live with. Sadly, a ***fluffy Jesus*** is what most Christians try to misrepresent in their lives. Others portray a ***feisty Jesus***, stern and always looking for a fight. Neither of these extremes is correct. Both falsely portray a Savior that to no one's surprise is rejected by most we try to win to the faith. It should come as no surprise that nobody wants a ***softy Savior*** or a ***scary Savior***. When we seek to be strong, faithful disciples ready to fight for the faith in a loving, gracious way, the Masterpiece Savior God wants displayed through us will be both admired and desired by others in whom He dwells. Even those in spiritual blindness are drawn to the ***truth AND grace*** Savior of the Bible (***John 1:14-18***). Jesus was/is neither ***fluffy*** nor ***feisty***. As His disciples, we should seek to be like Him-- ***full of grace AND truth***. May the canvas of our lives be painted by the Spirit of God with an accurate portrait of Jesus for us to be and all to see 'til He comes. ***PtL***

## ‘Weep Then Sweep’

*(Jesus’ King-Cleaning of His House / Spring April AD 30)*

**Luke 19:41-48**

**Synopsis & Review:** Jesus’ ‘Triumphal Entry’, views Temple & back to Bethany (Sunday, April 10)  
Jesus’ return to Jerusalem / teaching, fig tree curse, cleanse temple and  
return to Bethany at the end of the day (Monday, April 11)  
Jesus’ return to Jerusalem / lessons on withered fig tree and long day of  
teaching, confrontation of religious leaders and prophetic previews on the Mount  
of Olives on the return to Bethany (*Matthew 21-25*) (Tuesday, April 12)

### Jesus’ Tough Examination

*(Withering if His command is broken – the system)*

**Not in Luke / Matthew 21:18-19 & Mark 11:12-14**

*“Now the next day, when they had come out from Bethany, He was hungry. Seeing from afar a fig tree having leaves He went to see if perhaps He would find something on it. When He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. In response Jesus said to it, “Let no one eat fruit from you ever again.” And His disciples heard it.”* **Mark 11:12-14**

The fig tree was a symbol of Israel. The religion of Israel was/is Judaism, a beautiful religion begun by God to bring people to know Him as the one true God. Over many centuries it didn’t draw people to God but continued with impressive rituals, pageantry and tradition, but no fruit (*people with changed lives*). Jesus saw Israel and Judaism as worthless religious pageantry and condemned it. In these contemporary days after the beginning of Christianity, much religion is just like that fig tree – liturgy, but no fruit.

- *How can you tell if a religious group is just ‘leaves without fruit’? Should you be a part of it?*
- *How does the fig tree incident compare with Jesus’ future judgment of our lives?*

### Jesus’ Tearful Exhortation

*(Weeping if His love is rejected – the city)*

*“Now as (Jesus) drew near He saw the city and wept over it, saying, “If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you, close you in on every side, and level you and your children within you to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation.”* **19:41-44**

Jerusalem’s general rejection of Jesus broke His heart because of all the wonderful gifts and blessings they and their descendants would never get, and the future hard times and suffering that would come because of their rejection. Jesus wept because His love for them was rejected.

- *Have you ever been rejected by somebody you love and care for?*
- *How did you handle the sorrow you felt? Like Jesus with prayer and tears to God?*

Now Jesus will have to judge them instead of bless them, but it was important for Israel to know that even with His judgment, He still loves them. How have Israel/ Jewish people suffered ever since?

- *When you must be firm with someone (a disobedient child, employee, a friend who has sinned or an unbeliever who needs to repent) do you first get your heart tender and prayerful before you confront?*
- *Why is it important to reinforce your love before being firm with another? Has someone been this way with you? How did it help?*

### Jesus’ Thorough Extermination

*(Wrath if His abode is disrespected – the sanctuary)*

*“Then He went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in it, saying to them, “It is written, ‘My house is a house of prayer’ but you’ve made it a den of thieves.” And He was teaching daily in the temple. But the chief priests, the scribes, and the leaders of the people sought to destroy Him and were unable to do anything; for all the people were very attentive to hear Him.”* **19:45-48**

Today, the temple is the believer’s body in which the Holy Spirit dwells. When Christ comes into our hearts, He begins to clean house of the wrong things in our life and heart (*2 Corinthians 5:17*). He begins to refurbish our new life with new attitudes, values, desires, friends, habits and activities.

- *Talk about how God’s Spirit continues to make room for better things in us by continuing to clean house throughout our lives. Read and discuss *1 Corinthians 3:16-17, 6:18-20, 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1.**