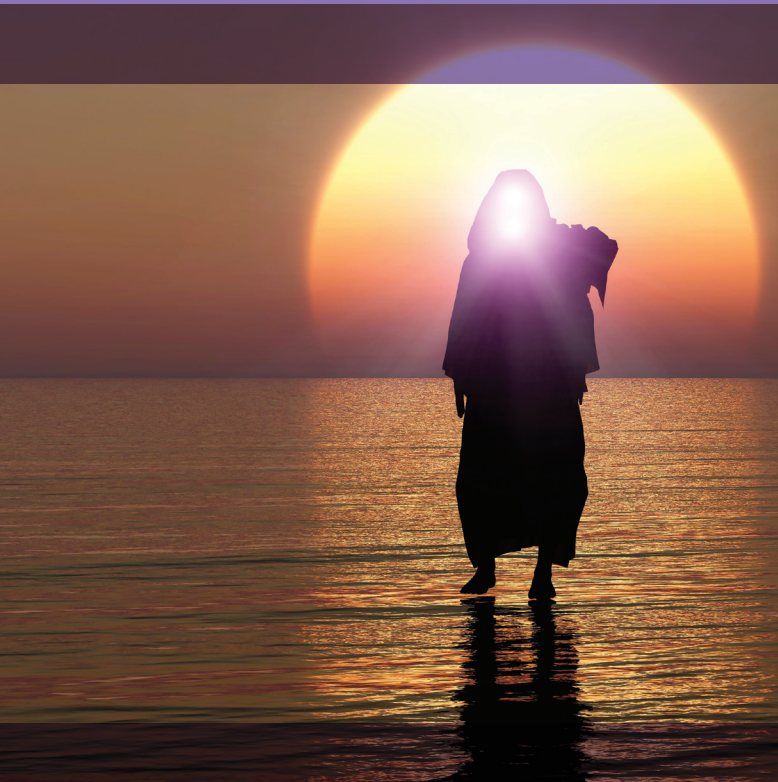


# Who is Jesus?



There's one thing for certain – Jesus wasn't the Messiah that people were expecting.

Berni Dymet

**Life Application Booklet**

# WHO IS JESUS?

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**by Berni Dymet**

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LIFE APPLICATION BOOKLET

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**THIS BOOKLET IS OUR  
FREE GIFT TO YOU**

Thank you for your generous  
support in making it freely  
available to others

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# CHAPTER 1

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## Jesus the Life Coach

Have you ever known someone for a long time – a work colleague perhaps, or a so-called friend, or even a family member – and then discovered something about them that surprised you? Or they did something that completely shocked you?

And you thought to yourself “I really don’t know this person at all.”

I was having lunch with a friend the other week, a man whom I’ve known for over twenty years now, and he mentioned that he’d been married and divorced as a young man. It blew me away. I thought I really knew him.

To tell you the truth, that’s how I felt when I started reading about this Jesus in the Bible a few years back. I had a picture in my mind of who I thought He was. I truly thought I had Him pegged. But then I looked at the things He said, the things He did and it completely shattered my stained glass image of who I thought He was.

The nice, comfortable, soft-and-cuddly-Saviour who I thought Jesus was, as things turn out, isn’t who He is at all.

So let's get started. Let's take a look at who He really is.

Life coaches are all the rage at the moment. Business and leadership mentors, financial advisers, personal trainers, even spiritual gurus all plying their brand of self-help ... at a price of course. It's a multi-billion dollar industry.

Perhaps people have finally figured out that they're missing something.

Or could it be that our drive to succeed in a world where success is everything is just too tempting a commercial opportunity for all these coaches to pass up?

Or maybe it's a cocktail of both those things – something's clearly missing in my life, I'm not as successful as what I want to be, I don't want to miss out, ergo I need help.

You know, as we grow up there are various inputs into our lives that are meant to bring us into some form of maturity. Our parents are a major influence; school and what we learn from the teachers and in the classroom; friends, particularly once we become teenagers and experience that whole peer pressure thing (something that's amplified in this age of mobile devices, social media and 24/7 connectedness); what we see on television (and all its on-demand replacements these days).

They're basically the key inputs into our lives, and yet so often the one thing that's missing in all that is how to live, how to be effective, how to balance my needs with your needs, how to

deal with stress and pressure and fear and failure and success and betrayal and ...

When you think about it, that's the really important stuff and yet it's "*stuff*" that's largely left to chance. It's part of the potluck of life. If you scored great parents, awesome. If you didn't, if your parents were too busy to invest in you, or if they themselves had terrible habits and fears that they passed on to you ... well, then you lucked out!

I remember several years back now, producing a radio teaching series that ran over a couple of weeks called, "*The stuff they forgot to teach us when we were growing up*". It had a huge response, because so often it's the absence of those basic skills that ruins our lives. You know, we have knee jerk reactions; we struggle in dealing with uncertainty; we struggle in knowing how to relate to difficult people ... all that important stuff.

Back in my day, for many families, church played an important role in shaping our outlooks, our behaviour and our responses to the things that the world throws at us. But these days, for many people, that just seems so old-fashioned, a bad fit to contemporary thought, social norms and life in general.

It was a little different back there in first century Israel. Religion did play a big part in life, but it was this legalistic, rule-based, oppressive kind of thing that really didn't help people.

Then all of a sudden, this Jesus of Nazareth at age thirty or so, began his public ministry. And



the things that He had to say when He spoke  
blew people's minds!!

*You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well; and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile. Give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you.*

*You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*

(Matthew 5:38-48)

Boom! Mind blowing! Here were these subsistence farmers whose lives hung on the whim of their Roman occupiers, not to mention the success or failure of their crops as they lived day-by-day, hand-to-mouth.

*Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing?*

*Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith?*

*Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?' For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.*

*So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today. (Matthew 6:25-34)*

God really cares that much about me? But the Pharisees and Sadducees have been telling me

that God isn't pleased with me; that I have to work harder and harder, follow the rules better and better ... and until I do, He doesn't care.

Pretty soon, the local synagogues were way too small. When Jesus came to town, the shops and the schools would all close down as everyone headed out into some big, open field to hear Him speak. We're talking huge, huge crowds – thousands of people.

Remember, even Jerusalem only had a population of fifteen to twenty thousand people at the time, so these were huge numbers!

Why? Why did so many people flock to Him in a way that, for instance today, they wouldn't flock to a church? Why was that? Because He spoke with a ring of authenticity and that amazed people!

*Now when Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.*

(Matthew 7:28,29)

There were stories, there were parables about seeds and lamps and bushels and farmers and all types of things that they could relate to. There's the parable of the sower, where a farmer was sowing seed, and Jesus told these stories and people flocked even though they didn't always understand what he was talking about, but He inspired them somehow with His passion, His power and the unmistakable, clear-as-a-bell ring of authenticity.

In their structured, rule-based, religious society where they sought to honour God, they knew deep down that something was missing. They knew that their lives weren't all that they should have been. Really, they couldn't imagine what their lives should be, but they knew that they weren't that anyway. They thought they had faith, but then ...

*He said to them, "Because of your little faith. For truly I tell you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you."* (Matthew 17:20,21)

They knew they were looking for something – could it be that in Jesus they'd found what they were looking for?

But then, at times He was so confusing, so confounding.

And still today, as Jesus unpacks the issues of life, it's so often still the way it is because we see things one way and yet, when we let His words, when we let His Being, when we let His Spirit minister to our spirit, minister to our hearts, when we hear that voice and those words, His wisdom turns our world upside down.

It's not always simple, it's not always straight forward to learn. But can I tell you, the more we follow Jesus around – like Matthew, Mark, Luke, John – the more He reveals Himself to us, and the more we come to realise that He is the

life coach that we've been looking for; the One we've needed all along.

*Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. (John 6:35)*

*On the last day of the festival, the great day, while Jesus was standing there, he cried out, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, 'Out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water.'" Now he said this about the Spirit, which believers in him were to receive; for as yet there was no Spirit, because Jesus was not yet glorified. (John 7:37-39)*

*Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him." (John 14:6,7)*

Jesus is the answer. Jesus is the One whom you have, all your life, been searching for. He loves you so much that He came to this earth to show you what God is like, and then to fling open the doors to the God Head by removing the one barrier that remained – your sin.

It cost Him everything. It cost Him His life. He came for you. He did it for you.

So ... what is it that's going on in your life? What are the issues, the relationships, the

conflict, the fears, the uncertainties that are perplexing you right at this moment?

Jesus is the One that you're looking for. Jesus has the answers.

Jesus *is* the answer!

# LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

## QUESTION 1

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What are the issues in your life at the moment that you find perplexing? Make a list. Write them down.

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## QUESTION 2

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Now, here's a challenge. Choose any three chapters of any one of the Gospels – Matthew, Mark, Luke or John – and read them.

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## QUESTION 3

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What did Jesus just speak into your perplexing issues? What wisdom? What power?

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## QUESTION 4

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What is it about what He said that's really challenged you?

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## QUESTION 5

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**What changes do you need to make – in your perspective, in your attitudes, in your behaviour?**

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# QUESTION 6

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Take some time to pray through what He has just revealed to you.

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# CHAPTER 2

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## Jesus the Spiritual Liberator + Social Integrator

Wow, Jesus the life coach – powerful stuff, wouldn't you agree? And yet, there is so much more to who Jesus is and what He's all about. The very first thing that He did in His public ministry was to read these words about Himself from the Book of Isaiah:

*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.* (Luke 4:18,19)

So let's have a look at exactly what He was talking about, and the powerful impact His purpose on this earth can have in your life and mine.

We live, work and think in the physical dimension but most of us would at least admit that there's probably a spiritual dimension to life. And sometimes spiritual things get us down. So, where is Jesus in all that?

The alarm goes off and you wake up, you're out of bed, into the shower, and the day's up and

running. We talk, we think, we see, we feel, we react, we eat, we watch, we hope. We focus on the physical dimension of life. But get us in a quiet moment, a reflective moment, and ask us, “Is there more?” and most of us would tilt our heads to one side and answer, “Well, there has to be.”

And that “*more*” has something to do with the spiritual side of life. You can’t see it, but it’s there. You can’t taste it but it can make life bitter or it can make life sweet. Sometimes there’s an oppression, a weight upon us. We just can’t explain it, but it’s there.

The question is what to do about it?

My hunch is that you know what I’m talking about, and yet (particularly in the West) we reject any notion of demons and devils and spiritual good and evil. It’s interesting to me that the statistics show that over 70% of people believe in some form of God, but only about 30% believe in the existence of a devil or in demons. Yet if we believe in a spiritual dimension, if we know in our heart of hearts that there is some spiritual thing going on that we can’t see, if we know it’s there, then we know that there is both good and evil in the spiritual realm.

So think about it. Jesus made this outrageous claim that, “I’ve come to set you free.” But what does He mean by that?! Was He saying that He’d come to boot the Roman occupiers out of Israel and restore the traditional kingship that God’s people yearned for? Well, as time went on, it became pretty clear that that wasn’t what He’d come to do, much to the chagrin of His disciples.

So are you a spiritual liberator, Jesus? Is that what you meant? I mean if you've come to set us free and if we know in our heart of hearts that there is some spiritual dimension to life and we acknowledge that there is some evil there, have you come to set us free from that?

That could well be true, if only we'd admit our need for a Saviour:

*Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, "If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." They answered him, "We are descendants of Abraham and have never been slaves to anyone. What do you mean by saying, 'You will be made free'?"*

*Jesus answered them, "Very truly, I tell you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not have a permanent place in the household; the son has a place there forever. So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed." (John 8:31-36)*

Spiritual oppression – of which sin is the most common form – is a terrible thing. It isolates us from God. It binds us in chains. But when we take our lives to Jesus, when we give them over to Him, lock, stock and barrel, when we truly mean to turn away from our sin and “repent” ... then Jesus is the One who sends His Spirit and sets us free.

*And if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed!*



But spiritual oppression – sin – doesn't just alienate us from God. It also isolates us socially because it destroys relationships.

We're going to look at a story of a man who was in exactly that situation; a man who met Jesus in that situation. So, is Jesus a spiritual liberator and a social integrator? Let's have a look. I'm going to read you this story – it's a great story. It comes from Mark's Gospel in the Bible, and it's a story about Jesus and this man.

*They came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gerasenes. And when he had stepped out of the boat, immediately a man out of the tombs with an unclean spirit met him. He lived among the tombs; and no one could restrain him anymore, even with a chain; for he had often been restrained with shackles and chains, but the chains he wrenched apart, and the shackles he broke in pieces; and no one had the strength to subdue him.*

*Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he was always howling and bruising himself with stones. When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and bowed down before him; and he shouted at the top of his voice, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me." For he had said to him, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!"*

*Then Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" He replied, "My name is Legion; for we are many." He begged him earnestly not to send*

*them out of the country. Now there on the hillside a great herd of swine was feeding; and the unclean spirits begged him, "Send us into the swine; let us enter them." So he gave them permission. And the unclean spirits came out and entered the swine; and the herd, numbering about two thousand, rushed down the steep bank into the sea, and were drowned in the sea.*

*The swineherds ran off and told it in the city and in the country. Then people came to see what it was that had happened. They came to Jesus and saw the demoniac sitting there, clothed and in his right mind, the very man who had had the legion; and they were afraid. Those who had seen what had happened to the demoniac and to the swine reported it. Then they began to beg Jesus to leave their neighbourhood. As he was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed by demons begged him that he might be with him.*

*But Jesus refused, and said to him, "Go home to your friends, and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and what mercy he has shown you." And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him; and everyone was amazed.*  
(Mark 5:1-20)

It's a great story – it's a strange story, isn't it? The notion that somebody could be demon possessed doesn't really fit with our Western understanding, our rational mindset. And yet

Jesus believed it. Jesus was there and had the spiritual insight, the discernment, to look at this man and his bizarre horrible behaviour and know that he was demon possessed.

Look, I don't have all the answers: There are people who sometimes say everyone who has schizophrenia is actually demon possessed. I don't believe that, but they might be and some of them certainly are.

Some of the behaviour that we see in people comes from that darker, spiritual side and we need to acknowledge that. I do! I believe that! And here's Jesus ... He gets out of the boat, this Jesus with rock star status by now. The people are flocking around Him. Thousands want to hear Him speak and see Him healing people and blessing them. Yet, instead of going on to do that and avoiding this grotesque specimen of a man – this outcast, this weirdo – He's right there with him. He has the spiritual authority to cast those demons out and He deals with that spiritual possession.

Isn't it interesting that everyone else says, "Wow, this is really weird. Look what happened to the pigs! Those poor pigs! That poor farmer! Jesus, would you go away, would you just please leave our region and go away?" Isn't that so often how we behave when we don't understand something?

Why wasn't there dancing in the streets, for this man had previously been a mad man, living naked amongst the tombs like an animal, and was now

healed? Why wasn't there dancing in the streets that this man had been saved, that this man had his life back, that this man had a future?

No! They thought it was weird! They thought it was strange! They couldn't cope with what Jesus was doing and said, "Go away!"

But as He gets back in the boat, the man who'd been set free from his spiritual oppression comes to Jesus and asks, "Can I come with you?" Wouldn't you say that, if you had been that man and Jesus had set you free? I think I would. It'd be your natural reaction to be with the man who'd done this amazing thing for you.

But no! Look at what Jesus says. It's just fabulous.

*Go home to your friends, and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and what mercy he has shown you.*

In other words, Jesus' heart for this man is that the spiritual healing would lead to social integration; the spiritual healing gave this man his friends and family back.

Now perhaps you're thinking, "Berni, do you actually believe this stuff?" Absolutely I do, because the devil is alive and well today. And so often when I'm out there trying to do something that is going to make a difference for God, so often on a morning that I'm about to go into the studio to record a program, or the night before, things happen in my life.

Sometimes I feel a heaviness, an oppression.

Sometimes it's physical, sometimes it's tension with someone else – I see that happen so often. Hey, I know that the devil is alive and well. I know that there is a dark side to that spiritual realm. Are we all in need of a Hollywood-style exorcist? Probably not. I'm simply saying the devil is alive and well, and that we encounter powerful evil forces on a regular basis.

Whether it's temptation and sin that racks your body and soul; whether it's a sense of spiritual oppression; whether it's people and circumstances coming against you as you set out to be holy and to serve God ... *the devil is alive and well.*

Jesus came to set us free; Jesus came to set you free. He came to reunite us with God as He delivers us from our sin, and He came to restore our relationships.

*In fact, it can truly be said that those two things are absolutely the most important things for Him: One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, he asked him, "Which commandment is the first of all?" Jesus answered, "The first is, 'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." (Mark 12:28-31)*

Jesus: spiritual liberator and social integrator!

So if you're struggling in your life and you don't know why, if nothing seems to be going quite right, if you seem to be doing all the right stuff and yet there's a heaviness and a something going on in your heart, I would encourage you to take that to Jesus in prayer.

The devil is alive and well. Fine. But Jesus ... He is your spiritual liberator and social integrator.

# LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS

## QUESTION 1

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Take a moment to consider your life. What are some of the things going on that may well have their roots in some form of spiritual oppression?

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## QUESTION 2

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Go back to John 8:31-36. What is Jesus saying to you? Do you believe Him?

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# QUESTION 3

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Okay, it's time to spend some more time just reading that story of the Gerasene demoniac one more time ... slowly this time. Put yourself in His shoes. How do you feel?

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## QUESTION 4

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When Jesus comes along, what's going on inside you? When you're set free ...

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# QUESTION 5

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Think about that impulse to follow after Jesus ... and His command for you to go home. What does “*going home*” mean to you?

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## QUESTION 6

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Take some time to pray through the opposition and oppression in your life. Ask Jesus to set you free that you may be free indeed.

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# CHAPTER 3

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## Jesus the Healer of Woman

Throughout history, woman have received a raw deal. They've been treated like second class citizens – abused, raped, enslaved. Whilst things are getting better, it's still, sadly, happening. So how did Jesus treat women?

As you look back through history there is no larger, single group of people who have been more oppressed and appallingly treated than that group in our society known as women. Treated like chattels and decorations; beaten, raped, killed, all through the reality that men are physically stronger than women. The official statistics say that each year millions of women are trafficked as sex slaves across international borders ... millions!

Add to that the psychological and physical abuse of women in the home, right through to the clear reality that women today are still paid less than men and are clearly under-represented in the ranks of senior management, as politicians and as professionals, and – as much as we might want to deny – it's a pretty bleak global picture for you if you're a woman.

Now back in the first century, women had no rights at all, by and large. They couldn't own

land, they couldn't inherit property. If you were a widow and you had no husband to provide for you, you were destitute. If you were unattractive, you wouldn't find a husband and you would probably starve. If you came from a poor family and didn't have a dowry, you would probably end up alone and destitute. It was a tough world for women.

And if we are to ask the question, "Who is Jesus?" then we have to ask, "Well, how did he treat women?" What was his relationship with women? Jesus never married. He never had children and yet there were women around him. In a tough patriarchal society where women were chattels and had very few rights, I think it is relevant to ask, "What did Jesus do with women?"

Here's a story. It's a story about Jesus interacting with two women and a man.

*When Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered around him; and he was by the sea. Then one of the leaders of the synagogue named Jairus came and, when he saw him, fell at his feet and begged him repeatedly, "My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well, and live." So he went with him.*

*And a large crowd followed him and pressed in on him. Now there was a woman who had been suffering from haemorrhages for twelve years. She had endured much under many*

*physicians, and had spent all that she had; and she was no better, but rather grew worse.*

*She had heard about Jesus, and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, for she said, "If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well." Immediately her haemorrhage stopped; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. Immediately aware that power had gone forth from him, Jesus turned about in the crowd and said, "Who touched my clothes?"*

*And his disciples said to him, "You see the crowd pressing in on you; how can you say, 'Who touched me?'" He looked all around to see who had done it. But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling, fell down before him, and told him the whole truth. He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease."*

*While he was still speaking, some people came from the leader's house to say, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further?" But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the leader of the synagogue, "Do not fear, only believe." He allowed no one to follow him except Peter, James, and John, the brother of James. When they came to the house of the leader of the synagogue, he saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly.*

*When he had entered, he said to them, "Why do you make a commotion and weep? The*



*child is not dead but sleeping.” And they laughed at him.*

*Then he put them all outside, and took the child’s father and mother and those who were with him, and went in where the child was. He took her by the hand and said to her, “Talitha cum,” which means, “Little girl, get up!” And immediately the girl got up and began to walk about (she was twelve years of age). At this they were overcome with amazement. He strictly ordered them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat. (Mark 5:21-43)*

Isn’t it a great story? It’s a story of Jesus, the superstar, Jesus who had fans flocking around him. Then this powerful man Jairus, the synagogue ruler (he was really a “someone” in town, right towards the top of the social pecking order – a leader, respected, whose daughter’s dying). He comes to Jesus and he bows down before Jesus. That in itself was a powerful act of faith and humility in front of all these other people who knew who he was, and he says, “Please, please come and heal my daughter.”

But then hidden amongst the throng of the crowd is this woman; this woman who’s been bleeding for twelve years who thinks to herself, “If I can just touch Jesus, I’ll be healed.”

And she was!

Now, I don’t know how long the telling of “*the whole truth*” – the twelve years of suffering, the many physicians, the cost, the social isolation,

the pain, the shame all took – but it wasn't a mere thirty seconds. It was probably more like five minutes ... ten minutes ... perhaps fifteen.

Don't you think it would've have been embarrassing for her? I mean, this is a menstrual problem, right? Let's not muck around here. This is very personal and in a society where religion dominated, when a woman was having her menstrual period, she was unclean. So a woman who's been bleeding for twelve years was a social outcast; she couldn't go to the synagogue, couldn't go to the temple ... nothing! And what's more, she probably stank and wasn't invited out to social gatherings.

No mention of a husband either, so she was, no doubt, alone and destitute. Had the religious leaders, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, even just Jairus the local synagogue leader, helped her?

You're kidding, right?!

So she poured her heart out to Jesus, telling Him the whole story, the whole truth. Meanwhile the clock is ticking. Jairus' daughter – hey, she's on her deathbed!!! Come on Jesus!

Jairus, this man who had power and reputation, this man who had humbled himself before Jesus, was waiting. What do you think Jairus was thinking?

“I wish Jesus would just hurry up, my daughter's dying.”

Wouldn't you be thinking that? Wouldn't I have been thinking that? Yet Jesus made him

wait while he spoke to this woman, while he put her first, this woman who was an outcast, this woman who had no job, probably no husband and no family ... and by the way, we don't even find out her name which tells you something about where she was in the pecking order.

And yet Jesus put her first. He focussed on her as though she was the most important person in the world.

Stop. Think about that, given the social context, given her social status as a woman and an outcast. Jesus put her first.

Then when Jairus' friends came and said, "Too late, she's dead!" Jesus said, "No, no. I have more than enough power left. I can do this too. It's not either/or – it's both. I haven't run out of power. I haven't run out of the desire to bring her back to life. I won't give up. Come on, let's go – let's do that too."

In the social, cultural, religious context that Jesus and these people were living in, what Jesus did for this woman who was bleeding is utterly extraordinary.

To make Jairus wait while his daughter died was a mind-blowingly politically incorrect set of priorities ... and yet how wonderfully does it speak of Jesus' attitude towards women?!

Here's this woman who didn't understand really who Jesus was (He hadn't fully revealed that yet). She didn't understand the theology of the crucifixion that was to come. She didn't know that Jesus was going to die for her sins –

in fact, she knew none of those things. She just knew that He'd been out there healing people and that He was probably her last chance. That was all.

And in an outrageous act of faith, driven no doubt through her sheer desperation, she pushed through the crowd (making unclean everyone whom she touched!). Imagine how they felt when she was telling “*the whole truth*” ... (*Did she touch me? Am I unclean now too? Really? Stupid woman!*) and touched Jesus.

And Jesus puts her first; Jesus makes the important religious leader wait in excruciating circumstances for him.

How did Jesus treat women? What's Jesus' view of women? This story tells us. And as I look at what Jesus did here, as I look at how he behaved and who He put first ... man, that touches me deep inside. That is the sort of Jesus I love, the sort of Jesus I want to follow.

That is so real, so awesome – Jesus!

# LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS

## QUESTION 1

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How do you feel about how women were treated back in Jesus' day?

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## QUESTION 2

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**And what about today? What are your thoughts on the treatment of women today, right where you live?**

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## QUESTION 3

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Try to put yourself in that place and time, walking in Jairus' shoes. How do you feel now, as Jesus wastes time and lets your daughter die?

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## QUESTION 4

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Put yourself in the crowd now and watch how Jesus treated the woman and Jairus. What is God saying to you?

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# QUESTION 5

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If you're a woman, ask yourself what this passage tells you about God's attitude towards you.

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## QUESTION 6

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**If you're a man, ask yourself whether your attitude towards women reflects Jesus' attitude ... or not.**

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# CHAPTER 4

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## Jesus – Rejected at Home

One of the things that we often don't think all that much about is the frequency and vigour with which Jesus was rejected ... ultimately to the point of death on the Cross. In fact, it was quite a feature of His ministry:

*Because of this many of his disciples turned back and no longer went about with him.*  
(John 6:66)

And as you and I well know, rejection is tough.

So when was the last time that you were rejected by someone? It hurt, didn't it? And the whole thing about rejection is that it hurts all the more when the person or people who've rejected are the ones who were supposed to have been those who welcomed you, who held you and who stuck with you through thick and thin. The closer the person is to us the more, in our minds anyway, they have a duty to stick by us, and so the more it hurts when they reject us.

It's a vicious circle, isn't it?

So if God sent His Son, and his name was Jesus, if the whole point was to show us how much God really loves us ... well, then Jesus had to experience rejection too. He had to travel

down that road to be one of us. Unless He did, the whole thing would have been ... I don't know ... something of a sham, in my view.

And the Bible tells us that that's precisely what happened:

*For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin.*

(Hebrews 4:15)

When I became a Christian over a quarter of a century ago now, I was a consultant in the Information Technology game. I travelled all around the world speaking at conferences to thousands of people in Asia, Europe and North America. People asked me for my autograph and there were lights and cocktail parties and I was highly esteemed in what I did. Not long after, I felt God's call on my life. I'd given my life to Jesus and now I felt a call to use that gift of speaking and telling stories in God's service.

So not long after I became a Christian, I found myself at Bible College and then in this ministry of Christianityworks doing exactly what I'm doing now. It's taken a few years to happen, it's been a long road, but God is doing some wonderful things. And it's a ministry that's supported purely by donation, purely by faith partners – people who believe in what we are doing.

Yet it was startling to me that almost none of the Christians that we knew in our church

became supporters, became faith partners of our ministry. “Oh well, it’s just Berni, it’s great that he’s off doing stuff”. But only a handful became supporters. Most of them just ignored the needs of the ministry. From the beginning, it felt to me like a form of rejection. It was disappointing to think, “Well, these people, who are my friends, these people who are my brothers and sisters in the church that I go to, haven’t become supporters.” Especially since in those early years, the ministry really struggled financially.

I was so disappointed until I read a passage that told a similar story about Jesus. If you have a Bible you can look it up later – it comes from the book of Mark. This is the story.

*He left that place and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. On the Sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astounded. They said, “Where did this man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been given to him? What deeds of power are being done by his hands! Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us?” And they took offense at him.*

*Then Jesus said to them, “Prophets are not without honour, except in their hometown, and among their own kin, and in their own house.” And he could do no deed of power there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and cured them. And he was amazed at their unbelief. (Mark 6:1-6)*

Now by this time, Jesus had been doing some amazing things. He'd been drawing huge crowds, thousands of people. He'd been healing people in the most miraculous ways and truly, He had celebrity status.

But then He came home and ministered there.

And He stood up on the Sabbath and spoke at the Synagogue, and it says that "many who heard Him were amazed". So He was delivering the same stuff, if I can call it that, as He had been to all those large crowds "out there". He was being this insightful, powerful, authoritative life coach. He had a gift for unlocking God's love and His truth, and yet the people looked at Him and said, "*Come on, this is Mary's son you know – the carpenter, James' brother and his sister are with us. Come on, who does He think He is?*"

Familiarity, as they say, breeds contempt.

He was from Nazareth which was "*nowheresville*". He was a lowly carpenter. They'd seen him grow up, they knew his mum, they knew his brothers, they knew his sisters. They looked at him and thought "No! Get out of here". They took offence at Jesus.

Because you and I both know that if God did decide to have this wacky plan of sending His Son to earth ... well, he certainly wouldn't come as a carpenter from Nazareth, He surely wouldn't be Mary's son, and James and Joseph and Judas and Simon's brother.

Come on, God doesn't work like that!

No – if God were going to send His Son, He'd make Him a high religious official from Jerusalem. And if Jesus had been that person, rather than the local kid who grew up in a carpenter's shop down the street, my hunch is that these same people would have been all over Him. They would have been hanging off every word.

But if there's one thing about God, it's this:

*For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. (Isaiah 55:8-9)*

Yep, God works in surprising ways.

So Jesus came home, where He'd had every right for people to look at Him and say, "Oh, Jesus! Isn't it fantastic what God is doing with you? Isn't it amazing that you've been anointed to heal people and to bless people and to preach God's Word this way? Awesome! Can we come and have dinner with you? Can we come and pray with you? I'd love to come and listen to you preaching on Saturday."

But that wasn't the reaction, was it? Instead, the people who should have been most accepting and most encouraging were the ones who rejected Him ... the most!

And indeed things went from bad to worse. Not only were they not enamoured of His preaching, but ...



*When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with rage. They got up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they might hurl him off the cliff. But he passed through the midst of them and went on his way. (Luke 4:28-30)*

Sensational. So what does this tell us about Jesus?

He's the only man in all of history who could choose the time and the place and the circumstances of His coming to this earth, and He chose Nazareth. He chose to be a carpenter; He chose to live in "nowheresville" as a nobody. God Almighty chose this. Just let that sink in for a minute.

This Jesus chose to be a nobody in the eyes of His own people. What's He saying to us? What's He trying to communicate to us?

They say that you have to walk a mile in someone else's shoes to understand them, and my hunch is that Jesus is saying exactly that – exactly what Hebrews 4:15 says about Him.

I've walked a mile in your shoes. I know what it's like to have God's call on my life and to be rejected by the very people who should be supporting me, who should be rejoicing with me. I know how you feel. I know the pain in your heart when you're rejected. I understand what's going on inside you. I feel your pain, but this is who I am. I didn't have to be – but this is who I became ... for you."

And it is for this reason that we can...

*approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:16)*

Jesus was rejected by the world, by the religious leaders, even by His own friends and community; Jesus the Son of God, Jesus the rejected One, Jesus the One who understands what it is to be you and me.

Therefore ...

*Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death— even death on a cross. (Philippians 2:5-8)*

That's who Jesus is. That's who you and I are called to be.

# LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS

## QUESTION 1

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Take a moment to think about some of the times that you've been rejected, how that felt – the scars that perhaps still remain.

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## QUESTION 2

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Now imagine for a moment that you had been God. Would you have chosen that for your Son? Why?

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## QUESTION 3

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**What does God's choice to allow His Son to be so frequently and vehemently rejected say to you?**

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## QUESTION 4

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Go back to Hebrews 4:15,16. Drink that in. How do you feel about the powerful truth that because Jesus experienced, amongst other things, rejection ... you can come ***boldly*** before the throne of grace to find help in your hour of need?

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## QUESTION 5

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**What is the one need in your life right now that you most desperately need help with?**

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## QUESTION 6

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Instead of rushing on to the next chapter, spend the next 30 minutes in prayer, praying that need through with the Lord, in light of what He has just spoken to you

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# CHAPTER 5

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## Jesus the Team Provider

One of the really popular buzzwords that's been doing the rounds in business circles over the last decade or so is "*empowerment*". We need to empower our employees to make decisions; we need to empower our employees to innovate; we need to empower our employees to serve our customers better.

Now I don't know about you, but the more they talk about this stuff the more small companies are being gobbled up by bigger ones. There are mergers and acquisitions and stock market listings and the bigger companies are becoming more complex and more bloated with a range of services that they struggle to cope with.

They deal with the complexity by building bridging systems, and pushing customer contact to call centres where you talk to someone who not only doesn't get paid very much, but who's constrained by these complex systems that have been patched together in mergers and acquisitions, and who simply doesn't have the authority to make a decision in your favour.

Empowerment! Yeah, right! Try asking your bank or your insurance company to help you with something that doesn't quite fit their rigid rules and complex systems, and see how you get on!

Perhaps I'm a bit cynical but it's an all too familiar story to most of us, isn't it? As consumers we certainly have more choice and really, choice means more ways to spend our money. Yet the complexity that comes with that choice means we have to fit in to the service providers' systems; we have to play their game. They want to treat us, pretty much, as though we're all the same.

And yet when I look in the mirror I see me. When you look in the mirror you see you. We're so different aren't we? Different and special and creative; we have different skills and hopes and dreams and abilities and indeed, weaknesses and limitations as well.

And we want to express those. That's what it means to be human! We want to innovate; we want to be creative. We want to be, to contribute, and to be valued.

One of my sons who's now in his forties has done very well working with large retailers around the world. Early on, he was working with a particular retailer – he'd become a department manager, had lots of people working for him and was heading up the ladder of success. Another few years and he would have been a store manager.

But he left. When that happened, I asked him why. He replied, "Well, it's a big company – you're just a number. They don't really care about you."

It's a story that repeats itself over and over again. Empowerment ... not really.

Okay – so who is Jesus in all of that?

Throughout this booklet so far we've seen a few snapshots, a few vignettes if you will, to help us ask and answer the question: Who is Jesus? And not only that, but is He still relevant here in the 21st century?

Does He matter today? Does He care for the likes of you and me today? Does He have something relevant to say and something worthwhile to contribute into our lives today?

Well, does He?

Time to take another snapshot; employee empowerment. Hmm ... let's see.

*He called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. He ordered them to take nothing for their journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belts; but to wear sandals and not to put on two tunics. He said to them, "Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave the place. If any place will not welcome you and they refuse to hear you, as you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them." So they went out and proclaimed that all should repent. They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them. (Mark 6:7-13)*

Remember, these weren't Masters in Divinity graduates from the finest seminaries in Jerusalem. These were mere fishermen and tax collectors.

And Jesus says to them, “Go out and tell these people all about me. I know this is Israel, I know they’re Jews; I know they’re focused on their law. But I’m the Son of God, and God is sending a new message and I’m here to show God’s grace. So get out there and tell them the Good News. I give you authority over the evil spirits, so go and heal people, go and cast out demons ... go on, get out there. Oh, and by the way, don’t take a whole lot of supplies with you and don’t take a whole lot of money. Don’t rely on what you have but just trust me; just go and do this for me.”

So you have to ask yourself, where is Jesus on empowerment?

These disciples were like His unpaid employees. I mean, I know they were volunteers but they were His disciples. He was the boss, they were the workers. He says, “Two by two – go on, go together. You need support and I will give you authority over the unclean spirits.” The Son of God gives these bumpkin fisherman and tax collectors authority over the devil.

If that isn’t empowerment, I don’t know what is.

And don’t take any props or provisions – why did he say that? So that they would experience, they would taste, the power and the faithfulness of God.

“Just go into the village, go and tell people the good news, go and stay with people. If they don’t welcome you, shake the dust off your sandals and go to the next one. Trust me!”

What must it have been like for those disciples to go out there with no money, no

food, not even a spare tunic, no cash reserves, no overdraft, no credit card – just living off the land and trusting God? Wow! Quite a call. Quite a challenge. Would you or I have gone? Hmm.

And they had a tough message to sell. Repent. Turn away from your sin and turn back to God.

They didn't have a snowflake's hope in hell – at least not from a human standpoint. But Jesus ... He gave them the authority. And at the name of Jesus, even the devil has to flee. Demons were cast out. People were healed. People repented.

All because Jesus gave them the authority. Jesus gave them the power.

There it is: empowerment!

Were they weighed down with some rule book? No! Jesus inspired them. They had seen and heard Him. They had a relationship with Him. It was on that relationship that Jesus traded and said, "Don't take anything with you, just go in my Name."

If we look at the here and now, there are a groups of disempowered people all over the place ... at home, at work ... even at church.

Perhaps you feel disempowered. Perhaps you have these gifts and abilities and resources ready to go, but no one is interested.

Let me tell you something. Jesus is interested; Jesus – the one who was rejected: The one who healed and set free and broke demonic powers: The one who created you just the way you are:

The one who is so passionate about deploying your gifts and abilities for His glory, just as He did with those twelve, two-by-two.

Listen to me: He has everything locked and ready to go.

*For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.* (Ephesians 2:10)

Come on, tell me this isn't relevant! Tell me He's out of date! Come on, tell me this doesn't ring your bell. Go on, tell me that deep down inside, you don't want to know this Jesus who says to his disciples "I give you my authority – go, trust me, go and I will be with you and I will never leave you, even until the end of the age." Tell me that is boring.

Jesus has walked in your shoes. He knows what it's like. And right here and now this edgy, non-religious, subversive, rejected Jesus is calling you; anointing you.

Are you ready? Will you go?

# A Time to Pray

Lord God, thank you for sending your Son, Jesus, for me. Thank you that you humbled yourself, that you put yourself in a place and in a time where you would be rejected ... to the point of death on a cross.

Thank you that you showed me, through Jesus, exactly who you are – the heart that you have for the least, the lost, the ordinary – people just like me.

Thank you that you came to set me free from the powers of darkness and transfer me into the kingdom of light – your kingdom, the kingdom of your Son. Thank you that you are so ready to pour your wisdom and compassion out on my life.

I have so much to thank you for.

Lord, thank you for being who you are and showing me the way, for making me who I am, and preparing those good works so that they are ready for me to walk into.

And Lord, my only response can be to hear your call, to accept your call, to say, “Here I am, Lord. Send me. Use me. Work through me to make an impact in this world.”

I’m sure, if I knew what that would mean, I would run a million miles in the opposite direction. But I stand here now dear Lord and ask you, with all that I am, to pour your Holy Spirit out on me to empower me, to make me more and more like you ... whatever that may cost me.

In Jesus’ mighty name I pray. Amen.



# ABOUT CHRISTIANITYWORKS

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Here at Christianityworks our passion is seeing countless lives transformed one by one, as we share the good news of Jesus through the media around the globe.

It's something that we've been doing since 1957. Of course back then we were known as Back to the Bible, changing our name to Christianityworks in 2001.

Today, the radio and television broadcasts that we produce with the support of friends like you, reach a weekly audience that we conservatively estimate to be over 20 million people in 160 countries.

We believe that as we make innovative use of mass media – radio, television, digital + online and print – God works mightily by His Spirit and His Word, transforming lives.

In fact, its not something that we just believe, it's something that we know.

We receive so many testimonies each month from around the globe, of lives that have been saved, touched and transformed as God works through the ministry of Christianityworks.

Thank you for remembering that Christianityworks is a faith based ministry. We rely on the support of friends like you to reach the lost with the saving love of Jesus.

Your secure, online gift today will make a powerful difference in the lives of so many.

To give, just visit: [christianityworks.com/donate](http://christianityworks.com/donate).

Thank you with all my heart.

Your friend in Jesus,



Berni Dymet



Berni Dymet

## Who is Jesus?

There's one thing for certain – Jesus wasn't the Messiah that people were expecting.

So often we think we know Jesus ... and yet, He seems a long way off. And it turns out, we may know about Him – but in reality, we don't know Him. You know what I mean.

Well, in this latest booklet leading up to Easter, Berni goes hunting around through the Scriptures – specifically the Gospel Accounts – looking for Jesus.

Who is He? The answer may well surprise you!