



Part I: Lesson 4

Becoming Good Soil: Knowing Jesus

Fertile Soil: Starting Your New Life with Jesus

The Christian faith begins and ends with Jesus Christ. It is not a collection of rules and regulations. The Christian faith is living in a **relationship** with the risen Christ. It is a relationship with a personal God who cares very deeply about you. The Apostle Paul wrote in Philippians 3:7-11,

But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.

YOUR GROWTH GOAL



In this lesson, you will learn three essentials about **who Jesus is** and **what He has done for you**:

- 1) **Jesus is both God and human**
- 2) **Jesus is Savior and Lord**
- 3) **Jesus is the Only Way for Salvation.**



Before you go any further, stop and ask God to help you understand His word, to help you experience His presence, and to become the person He wants you to be.

A STORY OF JESUS: Jesus Raises Lazarus (John 11:1-45)



This following Scripture is a dramatic story from the life of Jesus that illustrates two sides of His personal nature.

Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. (This Mary, whose brother Lazarus now lay sick, was the same one who poured perfume on the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair.) So the sisters sent word to Jesus, “Lord, the one you love is sick.”

When he heard this, Jesus said, “This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God’s glory so that God’s Son may be glorified through it.” Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days, and then he said to his disciples, “Let us go back to Judea” . . .

After he had said this, he went on to tell them, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up.”

His disciples replied, “Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better.” Jesus had been speaking of his death, but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep.

So then he told them plainly, “Lazarus is dead, and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.”

Then Thomas (also known as Didymus) said to the rest of the disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with him.”

On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. Now Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem, and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home.

“Lord,” Martha said to Jesus, “if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask.”

Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.”

Martha answered, “I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.”

Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?”

“Yes, Lord,” she replied, “I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.”

After she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary aside. “The Teacher is here,” she said, “and is asking for you.” When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to him. Now Jesus had not yet entered the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. When the Jews who had been with Mary in the house, comforting her, noticed how quickly she got up and went out, they followed her, supposing she was going to the tomb to mourn there.

When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.”

When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. “Where have you laid him?” he asked.

“Come and see, Lord,” they replied.

Jesus wept.

Then the Jews said, “See how he loved him!”

But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?”

Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. “Take away the stone,” he said.

“But, Lord,” said Martha, the sister of the dead man, “by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days.”

Then Jesus said, “Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?”

So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.”

When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face.

Jesus said to them, “Take off the grave clothes and let him go.”

Therefore many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.

After reading this story about Jesus, what are your personal impressions, thoughts, and feelings?

What words would you use to describe Jesus?

This story illustrates two parts of Jesus nature—the human and the divine. In the chart below, list these qualities as written in this story.

Jesus' Human Qualities	Jesus' Divine Qualities

In the next section, you will examine three indispensable truths about Jesus Christ as a foundation for your knowledge and worship.

DIGGING DEEPER: EXAMINING JESUS' LIFE



I. JESUS IS BOTH GOD AND HUMAN (John 1:1-5, 14)

Read the following Scripture and underline any words that describe Jesus' nature.

In the beginning was the Word [Jesus], and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. . . . The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Use the chart below, to list the descriptions of Jesus from John 1:1-5.

Jesus, "The Word"	How does this describe Jesus' nature?
<i>In the beginning was the Word (v. 1) He was with God in the beginning (v. 2)</i>	
<i>the Word was with God (v. 1)</i>	
<i>Word was God (v. 1)</i>	
<i>Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. (v. 3)</i>	
<i>In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. (v. 4)</i>	
<i>The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. (v. 5)</i>	
<i>The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. (v. 14)</i>	

How would you reply if someone told you that Jesus was only a good man?

For further evidence that Jesus had a human body, the New Testament records this evidence:

1. *He was born (Luke 2:7)*
2. *He grew (Luke 2:40, 52)*
3. *He got tired (John 4:6)*
4. *He got thirsty (John 19:28)*
5. *He got hungry (Matthew 4:2)*
6. *He was physically weak (Matthew 4:11; Luke 23:26)*
7. *He died (Luke 23:46), and*
8. *He had a real human body after His resurrection (Luke 24:39; John 20:20, 27).*

Throughout the Gospels, Jesus displayed several human emotions:

1. *He wondered (Matthew 8:10).*
2. *His soul was very sorrowful, even to death (Matthew 26:38).*
3. *Jesus was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled and even weeps (John 11:33-35).*
4. *His soul troubled (John 12:27).*
5. *He was “troubled in his spirit (John 13:21).*
6. *The author to the Hebrews writes that “Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears” (Hebrews 5:7).*

Jesus is like you in every respect with a human body, heart, mind, and will—except for sin.

2. JESUS IS SAVIOR AND LORD

The following Scripture is part of a sermon given by Jesus’ disciple Peter, shortly after the Lord’s death and resurrection before thousands of people in Jerusalem.

Then Peter stood up with the Eleven [disciples], raised his voice and addressed the crowd: “Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. . . . this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

*“In the last days, God says,
I will pour out my Spirit on all people. . . .
I will show wonders in the heavens above
and signs on the earth below
before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.
And everyone who calls
on the name of the Lord will be saved.”*

“Fellow Israelites, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. This man was handed over to you by God’s deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. But God raised

him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him. . . . Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:14-36).

What happens to everyone who calls on the name of the Lord?

Again, the Christian faith begins and ends with Jesus Christ. His defining acts were at the cross, where He gave His life for you, and in an empty tomb, where He overcame death and all the forces that keep us from God. As a result, He is both Lord and Savior.

Why is Jesus our Savior and Lord? Read the following Scriptures and write down in your own words your understanding:

You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through him! For if, while we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! Not only is this so, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation (Romans 5:6-11).

He has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel (2 Timothy 1:9-10).

The title “Lord” means a person who has authority, control, or power over others; a master or ruler; one of great influence. Read the Colossians 1:15-23 and 2:9-10 and make a list of reasons why Jesus is recognized as Lord, as in these verses.

The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and

through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation—if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant (Colossians 1:15-23).

For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and in Christ you have been brought to fullness. He is the head over every power and authority (Colossians 2:9-10).

How is Jesus recognized as Lord in Colossians 1:1-23 and 2:9-10?

3. JESUS IS THE ONLY WAY FOR SALVATION

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

What is the claim that He makes in these verses?

If we know Jesus, whom do we know?

How would you say Jesus' statement in your own words?

For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all people (1 Timothy 2:5-6).

A **mediator** is someone who brings reconciliation and understanding between two people or groups.

Why is Jesus the only way for our salvation?

Therefore God exalted him [Jesus] to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:9-11).



BECOMING GOOD SOIL: HOW YOU CAN KNOW JESUS



I. APPLYING THESE TRUTHS

I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. . . . I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings (Philippians 3:8, 10).

The primary objective in this verse is _____?

What are some ways that you can know a person, such as a friend?

What are some ways that you can know Jesus better?

In your everyday decisions and life, how can you show that Jesus is Lord over your life?

2. COMMITTING TO THESE TRUTHS

Take some time with your mentor to discuss how you will apply these truths in your daily life. **Write these commitments down.**



With your mentor and other followers, **pray together**, asking God to guide to your steps, to strengthen and protect you, and to provide for your daily needs.

Read Philippians 3:10-11 every day this week, I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.

3. REFLECTING ON THESE TRUTHS

When you are alone, do the following prayer exercise.

Find two chairs and place them facing toward each other. Sit in one chair. Now imagine that Jesus is sitting in the chair across from you (if you can't find two chairs, sit down on the ground and imagine that Jesus is sitting on the ground across from you).

Jesus is patiently waiting to hear your prayers and requests. He will listen and love you. What do you need to say to Jesus? Go ahead and tell Him.

Now that you have spoken, is Jesus saying anything to you? Take some time to listen.

Close your time of prayer in gratitude and confidence.

