



# Christian Crusaders

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## The King's Way

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TEXT: Matthew 8:23-27 (ESV)

“Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way where I am going.” Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way?” Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.

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Dear friends:

Is there anyone in life that you admire so much that you pattern your life after their character, their goals, their behavior? I admire Jesus Christ. Jesus said “I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through me.” I remember how Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5:5, said “Blessed are the gentle in spirit, for they will inherit the earth.” Jesus was the King of Glory. In our world, when a new king is crowned, all the people in the kingdom wonder “what will this new king be like?” So we might ask “what is the way of life that Jesus our King models for us?”

Recently I went to movie with my wife, “A Beautiful Day”. There's a scene where Fred Rogers, played by Tom Hanks, is riding a subway car. The whole group of people in the car, of all ages and races, spontaneously begin to sing because they recognize Mr. Rogers. They sing “It's a beautiful day in the neighborhood, a beautiful day for a neighbor. Would you be mine?” Jesus is the King of Glory, who left the power of Heaven as the Son of God, and came down to our world, to our neighborhood. Jesus

moved in to live among us. And still today Jesus asks “won't you please be my neighbor?” Perhaps you've had experience, like me, where someone walked past you in a public place and the fragrance of the person that walked by lingers. Maybe it's the pleasant fragrance of a cologne or the sweet smell of a good perfume. I want to ask you: when people are around you do they smell the fragrance of Jesus Christ?

Jesus shows us the way to live, first of all, by walking with humility. In the human experience, usually, the more power one has, the more selfish and arrogant we become. But Jesus, who had the greatest glory and the most profound infinite power, left the glory and the power of Heaven to become the greatest lover and the most generous giver the world has ever known. Humility is not weakness, but confidence in God's presence and love to the extent that we can place others before ourselves. Where we can see the touch of God on other people's lives, where we can treat them as if they bear the touch of the holy. Jesus always used His power to bless us and to save us.

The second way of Jesus is that He was submissive to the Father in love. Jesus was obedient to the Father's mission, even though the mission was impossible and no one else except Jesus, as the son of God, could've accomplished it. But Jesus, in love for His Father and in love for our broken world, and in love for us as individuals, embraced the difficult, dirty, and deadly mission for which He'd come. He endured the rejection and the hatred of His own people that He had created. He endured great disrespect and injustice. We read in Luke 9:51 “Jesus set His face resolutely toward Jerusalem.” It was a steely resolve. And when He faithfully committed to go to Jerusalem, He knew that He was going to die there. But He was submissive to the Father in total obedience. Remember, how in the garden of Gethsemane, He pleaded with the Father: “Is there any other way, Father? Yet not my will, but Yours be done.”

The third way of Jesus showing us how to live is that He offers his unconditional love for everyone He's created. No exceptions. Have you ever had the experience where you are in the midst of a big crowd? Maybe you're in a packed gym for a basketball game, or you're sitting in a crowded auditorium, waiting for concert from a famous musician, or maybe you're driving through a major metropolitan area in heavy traffic. And it occurs to you, crowded around by people, that God knows each person in the crowd and loves them all. Jesus has unconditional love for everyone He has created. And He encourages each of us, because He knows our full potential and He knows the purpose for which God created us. And so in His love, in the most positive way, He pours Himself in love to us so that we might become all that God intended. In His unconditional love, He treats us with kindness and patience; in truth, but also in gentleness. That's why His arms are always open to us.

The fourth quality of Jesus the King is that He is willing to serve all people regardless of who they are or what they've done, regardless of the cost, regardless of the task. Jesus courageously and sacrificially serves us, even if it causes Him great suffering. This is an upside down, countercultural quality. It's the inversion of power, were Jesus uses almighty power to serve us and to save us. Remember: Jesus is the King who knelt before His disciples and washed their feet. Jesus is the King who stood before a blind beggar and said "what would you like Me to do for you?" And Jesus told us that "I have set an example that you should also do like I am doing." Jesus has the heart of a king that takes Him all the way to the cross.

If we took an inventory of what we've discussed together so far in the way of life Jesus shows us, I have to admit to you: I fall far short. I can't follow the way of Jesus with perfection. In fact, though I deeply admire Jesus and give it my full effort, I cannot be perfectly obedient. So please know that we would follow the King's ethics, the King's character, the King's behavior, NOT as a way that we would be saved. Our hope is never based on our ability to walk perfectly in Jesus' way. Jesus is our King, who shows us the way, but Jesus ultimately is the King who had to make the way for us to be in the Kingdom of God. He had to die on the cross to open the way for salvation, that we might be the recipients of the love of God. Jesus not only shows us the way, He is the way, and He welcomes us in His love and invites us to believe in Him. Remember: Jesus said "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." So yes, we pattern our life after the way of life Jesus showed us, but we trust Jesus as the Savior who forgives all who are willing to receive His love. His arms are always open in reconciliation. Jesus removes every barrier to our peace with God. He has opened the floodgates of grace and mercy by His death on the cross and being raised from the dead.

I remember the promise in 2 Corinthians 2: it reads "thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ. He manifests through us the sweet fragrance of Christ of the knowledge of Him in every place." We are the fragrance of Christ. Not long ago I read the story of the young couple with an 18-month-old son named Eric. The little family had traveled to their grandparents' to spend the weekend. And on Sunday, after they worshiped together, the young family headed for home. Along the way, they needed gas and stopped at a truck stop for a bite to eat. As they entered into the restaurant it was largely empty, and they were all by themselves. And their little boy Eric started saying "Hi dare! Hi dare!", (meaning 'hi there'.) Every time the boy said that there was a response from a table booth in the corner: "hi, there, little boy." They looked at that corner table and saw an old, ragged, tattered man. His coat was several sizes too big and torn in multiple places. His trousers drug on the floor, and his shoes literally had holes in them, and his toes stuck out. He had an old hat tilted to the side, his face was

unshaven, and when he smiled there were missing teeth. Yet, for some reason, little Eric was attracted to this older man, and he kept saying "hi dare! Hi dare!" and every time the old man would answer. Finally, the stranger said "little boy, do you know how to play pat-a-cake?" And Eric would start pat-a-caking. "Little boy, you know how to play peek-a-boo?" Sure enough, little Eric hid his eyes and played peek-a-boo. There was an instant rapport between little Eric and the old man, who was obviously a reject of society. Eric's parents felt uneasy, and the husband whispered to his wife "let's eat our food and get outta here." So they gulped it down. Then he said "I'll pay for the food, you get Eric out to the car." Mommy started toward the door, hoping to get out without problems, but as they passed the older man he reached out his arms. The old man looked at mom and said "would you, would you let me hold your baby?" She really couldn't say no because Eric virtually lunged into the arms of the old man. He cradled Eric on one arm and patted his back with the other, as Eric put his arms around the old man's neck and laid his head against his shoulder. Closing his eyes, the old man talked to the boy with tears rolling down his cheeks. For a long moment, he held the child close and loved him. And as he did, he looked up at mom and said "take good care of your boy." She answered "I will, sir." He handed Eric back and said "thank you, thank you very much. You've given me the best gift I've had a long time."

Jesus, God's son, left the power and glory of Heaven to come down to where we are, and then to throw his arms around our neck and to embrace us in love, because that's the King's way. It's the presence of Jesus' spirit within us that is like a teabag in hot water. Jesus' spirit colors and flavors our lives with his grace. Only Jesus' spirit living within us can produce within our lives the King's way, the King's character, the King's heart, planted deep within us. Jesus' presence changes us. Faith enables us to put our hands in the hands of God. So we put our hands into the hands of Jesus Christ, and He leads us in the way of life that He has shown us. There's a poem written by Minnie Louise Haskins, it reads:

And I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year:

"Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown."

And he replied:

"Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the Hand of God.

That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way."

So we commit our lives to pattern after Jesus, who we love and admire. But we also trust Jesus, who is the only way to be in relationship with God the Father.

Amen.