

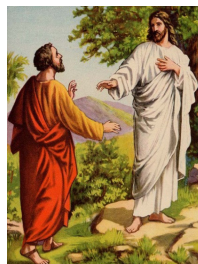


Welcome to Unity's Interactive Worship Service

**Today's Topic: Jesus, The Rebel
Rabbi**

Power Point notes available at:
www.unityofbakersfield.org

Jesus, The Rebel Rabbi



The writer of Mark has Jesus rebuking Peter for trying to keep him from going to Jerusalem for the Passover feast, knowing that Jesus may be killed by those seeking his death. "Get behind me, Satan!" Jesus went on to explain: "You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men." (8:33).

Jesus, The Rebel Rabbi

"You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men." - Mark 8:33. This very simple and short statement sums up where Jesus' mind, heart, and soul were – on God!

The affirmation in today's Daily Word could have been said by Jesus as well: "The spirit of God dwells in me, and I am made perfect." In fact he pretty much did when he said in Luke, "The kingdom of God is within you." – Luke 17:21 How perfect is that?

Jesus, The Rebel Rabbi

Today is Palm Sunday. It marks what is known in the Christian faith as the Holy Week. It has become known in some religious circles as "the week that changed the world."

Jesus is portrayed being welcomed by loving crowds as he enters the city of Jerusalem for the Jewish feast of Passover. If he was so loved by the crowd, who and why would anyone want to kill him?

Jesus, The Rebel Rabbi

The "who" were the religious elite, the elders of the Sanhedrin. The ancient Jewish court system that was the supreme religious body in Israel. There were also smaller religious Sanhedrin's in every town in Israel. They ruled on every aspect of the Mosaic Laws found in Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy.

The "why" is because Jesus didn't play by the rules of the court. His God was **Positive, Affirming, Loving, and Mindful.**

Jesus, The Rebel Rabbi

So let's look at some of the things that labelled Jesus, the rebel rabbi by the Sanhedrin of Israel.

The writer of Mark tells of a time when crowds gathered to hear Jesus speak that no one could get close to him. And while he is teaching, a group of men bring him a paralytic on a stretcher. Not being able to get through the crowd they opened a hole in the roof of the house and lowered the man down. When Jesus saw the faith these friends had for the paralytic, Jesus was moved to say...

Jesus, The Rebel Rabbi

“My son, your sins are forgiven.” The scribes that were there to spy on Jesus said amongst themselves, “Why does this man speak like this. It is blasphemy! Only God can forgive sins.” Jesus knew that forgiveness was a major issue to healing the whole person. The religious leaders knew how to use it to make money (sin tax). Jesus saw that as a major issue and taught the people they could free themselves. That they had a direct connection to God. (1-12)

Jesus, The Rebel Rabbi

Another rule is found also in Mark 2:13-17 where Jesus is seen asking a tax collector to be one of his disciples and then went to his house to eat with this sinner. And word went out to the scribes and Pharisees to go and see for themselves. And the scribes and Pharisees, when they saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors, said to his disciples, “Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?” Jesus saw everyone on one level, God’s level – Positive, Affirming, Loving, and Mindful.

Jesus, The Rebel Rabbi

So by this time word is getting around the country side that this man called Jesus was breaking the religious rules of the Jewish society, He's forgiving sins (placing himself on the same level as God), and now he's having parties with unclean people. What else is this rebel rabbi capable of?

How about working on the Sabbath? When the Pharisees saw him and his followers picking grain, they read him the riot act. Jesus just said, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath” Mark 2:23-28

Jesus, The Rebel Rabbi

Again the writer of Mark has Jesus going to the synagogue where he meets a man with a withered hand. All eyes are on Jesus to see if he will heal the man, and sure enough Jesus does. And when the Pharisees saw him heal on the Sabbath, they left and held counsel with the Herodians and plotted to kill Jesus for breaking Mosaic law. (3:1-6)

And let’s not forget the big one! The money changers in the Temple.

Jesus, The Rebel Rabbi

Did Jesus lose his cool, as the phrase “having a temple tantrum” might suggest? Both the Gospel of John (who has Jesus cleansing the temple at the beginning of his ministry) and the Gospel of Mark (who has Jesus cleansing the temple at the end of his ministry) depict not a sudden rash outburst but something carefully planned. Sin and the sin tax was at the very heart of holding people in bondage.

I believe that everything Jesus did had a plan, a purpose to bring God into the human experience.

Jesus, The Rebel Rabbi

The Herodians and the Sanhedrin plotted to get the rebel rabbi and bring him to trail for blasphemy and sedition against the High Court and the Mosaic Law. The charges:

“Your sins have been forgiven.”

“Healing and working on the Sabbath.”

“Association with sinners and unclean people.”

“Calling yourself a son of God.”

“Chasing out the money changers in the Temple.”

Jesus, The Rebel Rabbi

So what does all of this have to do with us today? Well, with this being Palm Sunday it is fitting that we realize that we too have challenges and issues we are facing and dealing with. And it's important to have the mind set that Jesus developed and taught, one that is:

- Positive
- Affirming
- Loving
- Mindful

Jesus, The Rebel Rabbi

If we're honest with ourselves then we must admit that there is a rebel within us too. As Unity teaches: The principle of the rebel within us is to not take traditions, rules, conventions at face value or simply blindly follow them because they're there. The Christ is us, the child of God in us, has a right to behold the world and take possession of it in consciousness. There's a tension between our needs as a society and our needs as individuals. That's what we have to balance.

Jesus, The Rebel Rabbi

And while we strive to find that balance, it's ok to be a rebel once in a while as long as we remember that being a balanced rebel leads to:

- Revelation
- Earmarking (a)
- Beautiful
- Enchanted
- Life