

...and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembly together...but encouraging one another.
Heb 10:24-25

Share the teaching
Guard the sharing

Male Call

February 5, 2010—Disciples & Laborers—The Jesus Way

6:00 – 6:05	Coffee & Donuts—Opening Prayer
6:05 – 7:00	<p>“I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.” —Jesus (John 14:6)</p> <p>1) The Jesus Way—Uniquely My Way (continued from last week)</p> <p>a) Jesus, being LORD of the universe, could have ordered His life on earth in any manner He saw fit. He ordered it as He did...why? Prayerfully and scripturally attentive, Jesus deliberately chose the way He would live. If we choose to follow Him, we must be as prayerful, scripturally attentive, and deliberate. There are no other ways.¹</p> <p>2) Right Ways and Wrong Ways—Temptation in the Desert The primary documents [gospels] that tell us about the way are narratives of the way Jesus lived and the way he proclaimed the good news message.² The temptation clarified at the very outset the ways in which Jesus would do His work as the Messiah. <i>Who</i> He was needed no letters of reference...But <i>how</i> would He go about this messianic work? Paul’s time spent in the wilderness after his conversion to the way of Jesus (...Gal 1:17) suggests that not only did Jesus need to go through a time of testing and temptation but that all of us who follow Jesus need to do so. <i>Who</i> we are and what we are to do is clear enough. But, how will we do it? What ways will we use?³</p> <p>3) The Evangelical Covenant Church way We are missional pietists in it together to see more disciples among more populations in a more caring and just world. a) What is the <i>who</i> and what is the <i>way</i>?</p> <p>4) Jesus Finding His Way a) Mark 1:12 i) The Holy Spirit <i>ekbello</i> Jesus into the wilderness—forceful ejection⁴ ii) “Temptation” = used to mean “testing” or “temptation”</p>

¹ *The Jesus Way*. 28.

² *Ibid*. 37.

³ *Ibid*. 29.

⁴ Beck, T. David. (2009, Vol 2, No. 2). “The Divine Dis-Comforter: The Holy Spirit’s Role in Transformative Suffering.” *Journal of Spiritual Formation & Soul Care*. 203.

	<p>iii) Imagine all of creation stopping to watch how Jesus will respond... The devil is content to leave the matter of ends—the goal, the purpose, the grand work of salvation—uncontested. His tempting is devoted exclusively to <i>ways</i>, to the means that are best suited to accomplish the end to which Jesus is the way.⁵</p> <p>b) The first temptation: turn stones into bread (Matthew 4:3-4)⁶</p> <p>i) <u>Initial reaction</u>: A good thing on the face of it; Jesus could focus on a ministry of turning rocks into food to satisfy the needs of the hungry, whether physical, emotional, or mental.</p> <p>ii) <u>Consequence for Jesus</u>: Jesus’ embarks on a ministry limited to fulfilling people’s consumer needs.</p> <p>iii) <u>Consequence for us</u>: We are tempted to <i>use</i> Jesus to satisfy our needs as consumers? The temptation is to <i>reduce</i> people, ourselves and others, to self-defined needs or culture-defined needs, which always, in the long run, end up being sin-defined needs—and use Jesus to do it. Jesus was active in meeting needs all His life and He means for us to be similarly active, but the way He lived was not reduced to, although it always included, meeting needs.⁷</p> <p>c) The second temptation: jump off the Temple roof (Matthew 4:5-7a)</p> <p>i) <u>Initial reaction</u>: A good thing; the news would travel fast of this miraculous “save” by the angels and Jesus would be immediately widely known. Moreover, it would spice up the humdrum of daily life.</p> <p>ii) <u>Consequence for Jesus</u>: Jesus’ ministry becomes a circus of miracles, supplying ecstasy and labor-savings on demand (Jesus uses the Holy Spirit to straighten nails).</p> <p>iii) <u>Consequence for us</u>: We use Jesus as a reprieve from our humdrum lives, packaging Him as a commodity for weekend diversion. We reduce Jesus to escapism and thrills; an impersonal rescue, an irresponsible diversion, a manipulative reprieve from the ordinary...The way of Jesus is not a sequence of exceptions to the ordinary, but a way of living deeply and fully with the people here and now, in the place we find ourselves.⁸</p> <p>d) The third temptation: rule the world (Matthew 4:7b-10)</p> <p>i) <u>Initial reaction</u>: A good thing; the opportunity to immediately establish</p>
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⁵ *The Jesus Way*. 30.

⁶ Discussion of temptations from *ibid.* 30ff.

⁷ *Ibid.* 31.

⁸ *Ibid.* 32, 33.

⁹ *Leviathan* is the title of a 17th century book by English Philosopher, Thomas Hobbs, who proposed a social contract theory to avoid evil and discord wherein we need for a strong central authority to establish and maintain order.

¹⁰ *The Jesus Way*. 34, 35.

¹¹ *Ibid.* 35, 36.

¹² *Ibid.* 41. Quote from Robert Pirsig, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*.

¹³ *Ibid.* 39.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* 41. A saying of St. Catherine.

	<p>peace, justice, prosperity, and harmony in the world.</p> <p>ii) <u>Consequence for Jesus</u>: Jesus’ rule would be on the devil’s terms...without personal relationships based on love and forgiveness, to do right by eliminating freedoms.</p> <p>iii) <u>Consequence for us</u>: Rely on a governmental “leviathan” to impose impersonal, rule-based order.⁹</p> <p>The facts and statistics are indisputable: the smarter we get, the more prosperous we are, the more murderous we become...Jesus was tempted to rule from a throne-bureaucracy of abstract rules and disembodied principles imposed on men and women apart from relational trust and worshiping love. He refused. The rule of Jesus is never impersonal, never nameless.¹⁰</p> <p>In the three great refusals, Jesus refuses to do good things in the wrong way. Each temptation is wrapped around something good: feed a lot of people, evangelize by miracle, rule the world justly. The devil’s temptation strategy is to depersonalize the ways of Jesus but leave the way itself intact...the devil has great ideas—brilliant ideas!...Every time that we embrace ways other than the ways of Jesus, try to manipulate people or events in ways that short-circuit personal relationships and intimacies, we are doing the devil’s work.¹¹</p> <p>5) Coming to Know the Jesus Way</p> <p>[When recently climbing a mountain, the] way for us was far more than a way to get to the top. It was a way of being present to everything on the way...”To live only for some future goals is shallow. It’s the sides of the mountain which sustain life, not the top. Here’s where things grow. But of course, without the top you can’t have sides. It’s the top that <i>defines</i> the sides.”¹²</p> <p>If we want to get the full impact of the story of Jesus and the way of Jesus, there is no substitute for taking a long, slow, leisurely pilgrimage through the pages of Genesis to Malachi, getting the river of narrative flowing through our bloodstream, observing the enormous attention given to place and person, so that this story is rooted in the immediate and local, in named people in the neighborhood...We cannot understand the way of Jesus by means of a summary accounts of those two thousand years of history and belief and worship that preceded Jesus.¹³</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <p>All the way to heaven is heaven, because He had said, “I am the way.”¹⁴</p> </div> <p>We begin next week by examining the life of Abraham and seeing how he lived the Jesus way...</p>
	Closing Prayer
7:00 – ??	If you would like prayer, please come up front and one or more of us will remain to pray with you.

Further reading:

- *The Bible*
- Au, Walkie and Noreen Cannon Au. (2006). *The Discerning Heart: Exploring the Christian Path*. Paulist Press.
- Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. (1995). *The Cost of Discipleship*. Simon & Schuster.
- Ciardi, John & Williams, Miller. (1975). *How Does a Poem Mean?* Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Haase, Albert. *Coming Home to Your True Self: Leaving the Emptiness of False Attractions*. (2008). IVP Books.
- Martin, James. (2005). *Become Who You Are*. Hidden Spring.
- Nouwen, Henri. (1981). *The Way of the Heart: Connecting with God Through Prayer, Wisdom, and Silence*. Ballantine Books.
- Peterson, Eugene H. (2007). *The Jesus Way: A Conversation on the Ways that Jesus is the Way*. Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Shelley, Bruce L. (1995). *Church History in Plain Language*. Thomas Nelson Publishers.
- Yancey, Phillip. (2002). *Reaching for the Invisible God*. Zondervan.