

## JESUS' LEGACY—WHAT JESUS LEFT FOR HIS FOLLOWERS

By Bob Young

When we talk about what we are going to leave after we are gone, or what will be our impact in this world, we often use the word legacy. What will be our legacy? Jesus did not leave what many human beings seek to leave. His impact is not measured in the same ways human often measure influence. His name is not inscribed on any buildings. He did not write any books; we have no memoirs or autobiographies. He did not endow any good works. He did not win any trophies to immortalize his name or legacy even though the Bible says that he was deity in the flesh (John 1:14).

What is Jesus' legacy? What did he leave behind for those who follow him?

- He left a MISSION. He came teaching, preaching, and healing. He came to touch the hopeless, homeless and hapless. He saw the multitudes as sheep without a shepherd. He came seeking and saving the lost (Matt. 9:35-38; Luke 19:10).
- He left a MEMORIAL, but it is not a human, physical memorial. He taught his followers to remember him and his purpose in a simple meal each week (Matt. 26)
- He left a MESSAGE. He sent his disciples forth to proclaim the Good News (gospel) of his coming to gain more disciples (Matt. 28:18-20).
- He left his MESSENGERS with a MANDATE. His followers were charged with telling the Good News, making, marking, and maturing more and more disciples (Matt. 28:18-20).

Many other Bible verses could be cited to demonstrate the above truths. Of greater interest to me is that though his followers were only a few in the beginning, they were enough to carry out his redemptive mission in the world. They accepted the mission, they remembered their Master, and they shared the message everywhere they went. We are part of a chain that extends back almost 2000 years. The mission is now ours, we remember as we celebrate the memorial, the message of reconciliation has been entrusted to us, we are the messengers. This is our moment. What we do (or do not do) will determine whether Jesus' legacy continues to be known—whether the story goes on, whether more chapters are written in the lives of those who in the future will be faithful to Jesus' legacy.

Amazingly, Jesus entrusted his legacy to everyday folks, folks just like us. The people with whom Jesus can change the world are not the famous, the rich, the educated, and the prestigious. Through the centuries, Jesus has changed the world and left his stamp on human history through common people—people like us. An interesting thought is that had we been there, he would have chosen us.

Those first followers were faithful to their Master. They accepted the mission and proclaimed the message as faithful messengers. Will we?