CHRIST'S INTERACTION WITH OPPOSITION

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Preparation

- Read through the Gospels and mark passages where Jesus experienced opposition.
- What I Found: Jesus experienced constant opposition.
- Led me to questions:
  - “How did Jesus response to opposition?”
  - “Why so much opposition?”
  - “Is opposition always good?” “Should I seek more opposition?”
  - “How do we apply what we learn from Christ?”

Cautions

- Looking solely at Christ’s interactions with opposition can cast an incomplete view of Christ’s approach with others.
- Looking at Jesus’ behavior is not nearly as helpful as knowing who He is.
  - We can easily justify our behavior no matter what it is.
  - Knowing Jesus helps us understand His behavior.
- Goals:
  - Look at what drove Jesus’ behavior and get more of that in me.
  - Gain a Biblical view of opposition

Examples of Christ’s Response to Opposition

Directly Challenge
Matthew 16:1-4 “The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting desired him that he would shew them a sign from heaven. He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red. And in the morning, It will be foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowering, O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky, but can ye not discern the signs of the times? A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. And he left them, and departed.”

Questions
Matthew 9:3-6 “And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth. And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house.”

Examples of Christ’s Response to Opposition

Teaching
John 8:3-7 “And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst. They said unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not. So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.”

Silence
Matthew 27:11-14 “And Jesus stood before the governor: and the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest: And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing. Then said Pilate unto him, Hearkest thou not how many things they witness against thee? And he answered him to never a word; insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly.”

Clarifying Question:

- Is it the Right Type of Opposition?
- Jesus did not go looking for opposition.
- Experiencing opposition is not always a sign of spiritual maturity.
- Realize the difference between opposition and relational conflict
  - Ex. - Discussion with an atheist vs. fighting over a parking spot
Responding to Opposition: Spirit vs. Flesh responses

**Spirit**
- Mission: Bring Glory to God
- Message: We need Christ
- Faithful to scripture
- Willingness to Seek Godly Counsel
- Motivated by caring for others

**Flesh**
- I will win / Want others to like me
- I am right / It doesn’t matter
- Use scripture to support what you believe
- Unwilling to seek or listen to counsel
- Motivated by selfishness

Christ’s Example: “Why So Much Opposition?”

**Six Observations:**
1. He knew His mission
2. He knew our need
3. He knew scripture
4. He had discernment
5. He sought the heart
6. People were drawn to Him

Christ Knew His Mission

*Matthew 20:28* “Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

He always had an intense focus on His mission...

Our Mission:
*Matthew 5:16* “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”

Christ Knew Our Need

*John 14:6* “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”

Jesus was full of passion toward his message...
- Christ’s Message “You Need Me”
  - He cared deeply about individuals
  - He was passionate about His mission/message
- Our Message “We Need Jesus”
  - Demonstrate that you see yourself needing a savior just as much as anyone else.

Realize This Biblical Message Will Have Opposition

*John 3:19* “And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.”

- Truth is under attack
- Spirituality and tolerance is on the rise
- USA Today (Sept. 2013)
  - More Americans tailoring religion to fit their needs
  - This is likely our most prevalent opposition

Christ Knew Scripture

- Referenced “It is written” multiple times...
  - *Matthew 22:29* “Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.”

- We need to have a high regard for scripture.
- We need to know Scripture.
- Our answers should shift from: “I think”, “I feel”, “I believe” to “God says.”
Christ Had Discernment

- Christ interacts with different individuals in different ways.
- When His opposition was from those opposed to His mission or His message (truth), He engaged them very directly.
- Christ knew their heart.

**Matthew 9:11-13** “And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners? But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”

People Were Drawn To Christ

**Matthew 11:28-30** “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

- Give a message of hope and “Let Your Light So Shine”

Application: Responding to Opposition

**Daily Preparation:**
1. Know your mission
2. Know your message
3. Study the Scripture
4. Grow in wisdom/seek Godly counsel
5. Care for the other’s eternal soul
6. Be someone that other’s respect and are drawn to

Opposition will lead to struggle and at times we yield to the flesh. This does not mean we are to avoid or retreat, we are instead to repeat the process and strive to do better.

- Be aware of current events and items which can start/engage in discussions.
- Ask Questions
  - Demonstrate that you care
  - Seek to understand
  - Realize that the battle front is the validity of the Bible
  - Point to the Scripture as your authority
- Be aware of your emotions so you can stay engaged in conversation.
  - Don’t be ruled by anger or fear.
  - It is ok not to know an answer to every question.
  - Realize the source of their emotion:
    - Fear, Anger, Opposition to Truth

Christ Sought to Address the Heart

**Matthew 23:26-28** “Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whitened sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.”

**Mark 8:27-29** “And Jesus went out, and his disciples, into the towns of Caesarea Philippi: and by the way he asked his disciples, saying unto them, Whom do men say that I am? And they answered, John the Baptist: but some say, Elias; and others, One of the prophets. And he saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Peter answereth and saith unto him, Thou art the Christ.”

Application: Responding to Opposition

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Summary: Interaction with Opposition

- There will be opposition to truth
- We have the pleasure of sharing truth
- This will not always be popular
- Prepare daily
- There will be times to engage, to be present, and to disengage
- Engage in a manner that leads to dialogue
- Remember: you and those in opposition both need Jesus