

Bullying: A Problem of the Heart

Intro: *We have come from very far to visit you today. We are pleased to share with you a positive message about a very important topic: Bullying.*

Bullying is the mistreatment that one person does to another person. This can be psychological or emotional (with words or the silent treatment), or physical (with pushes, punches, gestures, and so on). The problem with bullying is the source is the same as what others struggle with, an evil heart that desires to do harm to others.

Bullies have always existed. Joseph dealt with his brothers in the book of Genesis. Jesus had to deal with bullies. The difference is that he chose to allow himself to be mistreated to achieve a higher purpose, however, Jesus understands bullying very well.

Jesus' focus was not to rescue people from social injustices, economic poverty, or political powers but He was sent by God, His Father to save sinners from their sin. Jesus stands against all evil and wickedness that all sin, like bullying, comes from.

GOSPEL STORY: God's Plan to Restore Hearts

1. **God became man and came to earth to restore His relationship with humans, which was broken because of the wickedness of people.**
2. God became man in Jesus, who by this point in history had traveled throughout various cities to teach people to repent, turn away from evil, and begin a new life in which they could have a closer relationship with Him.
3. The religious leaders of the time hated Jesus because they had evil hearts and they feared that Jesus would take away their power over the people.
4. They did nothing to Jesus because legally there was nothing to accuse him of since he lived a perfect life.
5. One day they made a plan to capture him and kill him. The Bible passage we will look at today tells us of the interaction between Jesus and those who had unjustly arrested Him.

Share the Mark 14:55-65

Bullying is not too different from what Jesus' enemies tried very hard to damage Jesus' reputation, but they couldn't find anything wrong. (v 55-59)

- **Bullies utilize lies and insults to damage the hearts and reputations of others.**

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The mistreatment of Jesus was unjust because he was telling the truth. (v 60-64)

- **Bullying, even on the internet, is unfair because although we are not perfect like Jesus, there is no good reason why one person should hurt another.**

Bullying was just the beginning of Jesus' suffering. In Jesus' case, the end result of this type of violence led to his death. (v 65)

- **Bullies can cause physical harm to others.**

Whose side are you on in this story?

Do you agree with the words and actions of Jesus or do you agree with the words and actions of the religious leaders? Now raise your hand if you side with Jesus... When people stay neutral they are almost siding with those who are the ones bullying and creating injustice. When it comes to following Jesus in action and obeying Jesus in word, then every person must side with Christ, letting our Yes be yes and our No be no.

Gospel Reminder: *Romans 3:23 says "All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God".*

Every person struggles with sin, because the Bible says our hearts are wicked and unclean. God must act on His justice fairly and appropriately for everyone who sins. *Romans 6:23* tells us *"The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is through Jesus Christ our Lord."*

We could never do enough good to make our hearts right with God. We needed someone to save us and that's why Jesus came to restore our relationship with him through His sacrifice on the cross. Romans 5:8 also says "But God demonstrates His love toward us, while we were still sinners Christ died for us." So you and I do have a choice to have a relationship with God if you choose to. God is not going to force you but He is revealing the truth to you as He is right now.

How does one start a relationship with Jesus? *You must repent (turn away from sin and yourself to start living your life for the Lord) of your sins and place your trust in Him, recognizing that Christ will rule in your life from here on out."*

"That if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord and believe in your heart God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." Romans 10:9-10 **I invite you to trust in Jesus as Lord, that Jesus is the one and only God and He is the only "way, the truth and the life; no one will get to the Father except through Him."**

I want to remind us all of making sure that their hearts are not inclined to harm others and to always seek a personal relationship with Jesus. The best way to stop bullying, either online or in-person, is to pick a side to stand with those who bring peace. The ultimate problem is not a person's actions and words, but it is a person's heart. How we all can have a new and pure heart is for Jesus to restore and renew our hearts by trusting in Him as Lord.