

Jesus: The Turn-Around Specialist

Mark 5.21-34

FUPC

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Apple Computer is a very successful, prosperous and well-known company all around the world. Not too long ago, they were the largest public corporation in the world as measured by the worth of their stock. Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak founded Apple Computer in 1976. Jobs's official biographer, [Walter Isaacson](#), described him as a "creative entrepreneur whose passion for perfection and ferocious drive revolutionized six industries: personal computers, animated movies, music, phones, tablet computing, and digital publishing."²⁴ But the company wasn't always a winner. In fact, there was a period of time when all the smart money deserted Apple because it was thought they'd lost their charm and momentum and IBM was in the driver's seat for the personal computing market.

Without getting into the details of what happened... Steve Jobs had been fired and the company had lost its magic. Another CEO was hired to save the day, but things only got worse. Finally the Apple board of directors, in a desperate move to save the company, asked Steve Jobs to return and lead the company again. He did, and through creative innovation and force of will, Apple brought to market products that made everyone ooh and ahhh and line up to buy their latest brainstorm: an iPod, the iPhone, the iPad and any music you'd want for a price.

When he returned to Apple, Steve Jobs became a "turn-around specialist". He took this company whose future was looking pretty bleak, and turned it around so that it became one of the most successful and game-changing companies in the world.

Apple's not alone. Many companies you'd recognize experienced an economic tailspin that threatened to bankrupt them and destroy them. But a "turn-around specialist" was called in to make the needed changes, and turn it all around. Here's a short list: IBM, FedEx, Ford, GM and Chrysler, Sprint, Campbell Soup, Priceline and many more. Each has a story of diminishing returns, increasing debt, and a questionable future. But today, they are profitable and growing companies thanks to some hard choices and a new vision that helped them to turn-around.

There are many important qualities required in a person who specializes in this kind of work: First, they're usually an outsider who sees everything with fresh eyes. There are no sacred cows and they aren't tied to the way "we've always done it." They're also realists who can see the big picture and what will happen if nothing changes. They are also good at making hard choices that usually upset a lot of people. They have to be tough and risk misunderstanding and judgment from people who've been in the company forever.

Would you be surprised to learn that Jesus was a turn-around specialist? Everywhere he went, he brought change.

Bartimaeus... blind – sight

Lame man with four friends – walk

Woman caught in immoral act, guilty – Forgiven

Jairus' daughter... dead – Life

Woman at Well... brokenness, hopeless – healing, fullness of joy

Disciples ... Storm on Sea of Galilee – quiet calm

Woman sick for 12 years, suffering and desperate – health

A man possessed by demons, violent and chained in a graveyard

One of his best friends, dead and buried, until Jesus showed up.

Jesus was never defeated by difficult challenges

Jesus didn't accept the status quo when it came to suffering and despair
 Jesus refused to do politically correct (safe) thing
 There was no such thing as an "Impossibility"... everything was salvageable

The Apostle Paul could tell you about Jesus' power to change people. He was a hater. He hated Christians, arrested and imprisoned them, even stood by as they were stoned to death. He wanted to destroy the early church. But God intercepted him, changed his heart, gave him a new way of seeing and he became the greatest missionary of the early church. Here's what he wrote, from personal experience: ***If anyone is in Christ, they are a new creation. The old has passed away, the new has come.*** ***II Corinthians 5.17***

The early church needed to be turned around. When he was crucified, Jesus' followers all ran away and hid for their lives. They locked themselves into an upper room, afraid to come out because they thought they'd end up on a cross too. But then God's Spirit came to them, and it all changed. Fear evaporated, courage carried them out the door into the street and they started a revolution.

So here's the important question: What situation in your life, your world, your community needs to be turned around?

Name the places...

Finances
 Relationships
 Personal problems
 Spiritual doubt and powerlessness
 Injustice
 Ignorance

How can God make a difference?

1. Accept the limitation and/or loss of the situation.
2. Acknowledge the reality that you need a power greater than your own.
3. Invite God's Spirit into the situation, issue or person.
4. Watch for signs of divine presence
 - These may not come in the form of the answer you're looking for.
 (bailing me out, healing me, opening a door for me, etc.)
 - You may get just the opposite!
 - The "turn-around" you are seeking may not be just what you expected.
 - Instead of changing a person or situation, God may be changing YOU!
5. Accept what is given... choose to learn from it, let it teach you.
 - Whether or not the situation changes... you will change. And when you change... your world will change,
 the way you see it,
 the way you make choices,
 the way you make a difference,
 the way you live and love.