

Without ever questioning the value of God's Law (cf. Matt. 5:17), Jesus constantly denounces a superficial understanding of, and outward obedience to, this Law. The dangers of legalism are many: hypocrisy, pride, activism, ritualism, a desire to justify oneself before God, among others. If the Law is good, and yet legalism exists, it must be the one who practises the Law who is evil!

Thus man cannot secure his own salvation by obedience to the Law, by his own efforts to please God. It is precisely in order to help him to become aware of this inability that the Law was given. Without understanding his, he will never be able to grasp the message of the Gospel.

3. The proclamation of the Gospel is inseparable from its outworking. Mark's gospel often shows us Jesus in action, but all the gospels recount numerous miracles performed by Jesus (cf. John 20:30). In other words, Jesus was not content to preach the Gospel; he accompanied his preaching with deeds illustrating the Gospel (cf. Matt. 11:5).

It is John's gospel that most clearly establishes the relationship between Jesus' words and his deeds. The latter are referred to as "signs" whose meaning is made clear by Jesus' words. He says that he is the light of the world before he gives the man blind from birth back his sight (John 9). He feeds the crowd before declaring that he is the bread of life (John 6). He states that he is the resurrection and the life before he brings Lazarus back to life (John 11).

In the synoptic gospels, the miracles of Jesus are rarely preceded or followed by any commentary. Thus, deeds don't necessarily need words to explain them; they speak for themselves. Conversely, preaching doesn't always need deeds to confirm it; the power of the Spirit is sufficient. However, seen as a whole, Jesus' mission consisted in proclaiming the Gospel and in putting it into practice in order to demonstrate its truth.

4. Dialogue is the preferred means of evangelism. All the gospels show Jesus in dialogue with his contemporaries. This is obvious in his personal encounters with Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman, Simon the Pharisee and others, but it is also true of his discourses. In the rare discourses recorded for us in the gospels, Jesus' teaching is related to his listeners' religion, to their experiences as human beings, or to their individual interests. He responds to their preoccupations and takes their objections into account, even if it's in a way that may be disconcerting at times.

5. Parabolic language is particularly suitable for expressing certain truths of the Gospel. In the synoptic gospels in particular, Jesus often has recourse to parables to proclaim the Gospel. His disciples were struck by this and asked why. Jesus' reply was one of his most disconcerting (cf. Matt. 13:10-17). In his frequent use of parables Jesus has two goals which are apparently (but only apparently) contradictory: to make the Gospel easier to grasp for those who are open to it and more difficult for those who have decided not to accept it. To the first group, the Gospel in fact becomes clearer when it is compared to the events of everyday life. By contrast, the

second group will always find additional reasons to reject it in such comparisons.

In John's gospel, Jesus explains his use of parables by the fact that the Holy Spirit has not yet come down on the disciples to give them the ability to understand certain truths (cf. John 16:12, 25, 29). Today, chronologically, we are in the post-Pentecost era, but aren't those who don't believe in Jesus Christ in the same situation as prior to the day of Pentecost? This is why parabolic discourse is particularly appropriate to evangelism.

6. The death and divinity of Christ which are at the centre of the Gospel are implicit in evangelism. Jesus' divinity and the necessity of his death for the salvation of men are among the truths which are at the heart of the Gospel. But they are also truths which are no easier for today's Muslims to accept than they once were for Jesus' own disciples.

It's surprising to see that Jesus only started to speak to his disciples about his death quite late, when they had already discovered that he really was the Messiah (cf. Matt. 16:13-23). In spite of their discovery, or because of it, his disciples struggled greatly with this idea. Jesus only returned to this subject twice, and his disciples still has the same difficulty imagining that their master could be nailed to a cross.

In the same way, Jesus' disciples probably didn't have a very precise idea about his divinity. The title "Son of God" that they used for him on several occasions was a messianic title and it quite possibly had no other significance for them. Moreover Jesus was as discreet about his divinity as about his being the Messiah.

However, Jesus acted and spoke in a way that made his contemporaries think. Neither Moses nor Abraham dared to do as Jesus did. This roundabout fashion of revealing who he was shows Jesus' humility, but it also demonstrates his teaching methods, since he didn't want a head-on confrontation with the passionate monotheism of his fellow Jews. Even his enemies managed to understand that Jesus implicitly claimed divine status, which motivated the sentence they passed against him.

7. The resurrection of Christ testifies to his divinity and to his superiority over all the prophets. With the crucifixion of Jesus, all the hopes and dreams of his disciples collapse in ruins. They are in complete confusion until they discover that, contrary to all expectations, his tomb is empty. Their encounter with the risen Christ fills them with joy but, more specially, it give them a new understanding of the Scriptures. Thus, the reality of the living Christ on one hand and the testimony of the Scriptures on the other combine to reveal the mystery of Christ to the disciples. From now on, and especially from the day of Pentecost onwards, all the events of Jesus' life, as well as his death, make sense in the light of this event, unprecedented in history: his resurrection. He is the promised Messiah who fulfills the hope of Israel, and the eternal Only Son sent by God to bring man back from death to life.