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Jesus – The Activist

He lived during one of the most decadent times in history. The value of human life was at an all-time low. People were sometimes held in less esteem than cattle – literal slaves with no rights at all.

The will of the ruler was absolute law. Evil laws cast in stone by evil-hearted men, controlled by lusts for earthly power and gain, were the rule, not the exception. In fact, even at His birth, countless numbers of children were killed, because of the command given by one ruthless man. The oppression, torture and murder had reached such a magnitude that fevered cries for a Messiah were continually on the lips of those caught in this Satanic web.

Small pockets of resistance would arise in opposition, only to be crushed under the iron-fisted rulers. “How long, Lord?” was the cry of people oppressed. How long before things would change, before deliverance would come, before the enemy would be crushed and justice would prevail?

Bands of zealots secretly plotted reactionary tactics, knowing that the Messiah – their deliverer, their Savior, their leader – must come soon. He would set things straight. It made sense to them that the Messiah would fight as they had always fought. He would be a king, a ruler who would need armies to overthrow the corrupt with force and establish a new covenant. Peace would reign – no more oppression, no more evil in the land. Good would prevail, and it would stay that way forever. No one would rebel against what is good, righteous and fair. There would be peace at last.

Who *is* this man, this carpenter from Nazareth, talking of warfare of a different nature? Warfare fought in the spiritual realm, not on an earthly level. Warfare so violent that His enemies are overthrown *for eternity*, not temporarily, only to rise again in a different form at another time. Warfare that wins when it looks by all outward appearances as though all has been lost.

To the carnal man, this makes no sense. To love those who hate you? To do good to those who wrongfully use and persecute you? To allow the evil to continue, seemingly unabated, while the only weapon used against it is a living example of righteousness? The “weapons” of forgiveness, patience, understanding, servant-hood, going the extra mile, and love seem ineffective at best and downright powerless against the very visible weapons of steel the enemy has.

How could the practice of giving up all I claim as mine defeat those who willingly and joyfully take it all? How does the surrender of my riches, even the laying down of my own life, win against such decadence?

In times past, the only way to defeat an enemy was through his death, or to overcome him. Now this man, this Jesus, is saying that if I die to myself, if I lay down my own life for the good of others, I have overcome my enemies. What nonsense! What foolishness! There must be something more I must do. I should at least repay them for all they have done. I need to show them how wrong they are. I must demand my rights, help change the laws so we can live in peace and freedom, and make sure that all adopt the moral standards that I have. Somehow these evil people must recognize and pay for all of their wrongdoing, shouldn't they? I can do that, can't I? Who better than me? I am good and moral. I don't murder – at least not outside the law. (Anyway, we have right on our side.)

If I don't do something, how will I be able to live with myself? What will I tell my children, or future generations? That I stood by and just did nothing? I know I'm not perfect, but look at them! Look at all the evil Look at I mean ...If I don't How can ? You mean? Not physical warfare? Me, evil? *My heart wrong?* Clean outside, same as them inside? What does He mean, consider the beam in my own eye rather than the speck in my brother's eye?

But look at Him! Everyone hates Him – this man called Jesus. They hate what He stands for; it shows them their hearts. When I see His love, it shows me what is evil in me. When I see and hear Him, I feel the violent war against all I've ever held as mine. Some of those I hate feel it too. Could I be the same as they are, after all? How can this be?

He is peaceful, yet such warfare is evident. He is so poor, and still I know He has wealth beyond measure. When I am near Him and when I hear Him talk, I feel like I want to be as loving and trustful as when I was a little child. All the violence in me fades when I kneel with my enemy who is experiencing the same changes I am. What kind of warfare is this?

He prays, and I see a need to change. He stands and allows them to spit on Him, and I realize that He has overcome them. He bleeds, and I and those around me realize the world will never be the same. He forgives, and I know the worst of us has found what we have been looking for. I also know that now I must do the same.

Such a violent man, this man Jesus. Annihilating the enemy with weapons of spiritual might, fought on battlefields that cannot be seen, won by the One Who is holy. Such violence in these weapons, such decisive victories when seen with spiritual eyes. Such foolishness to fight in the flesh when the battle is won only in the spirit.

Such a warrior this activist – this Jesus. This man on His knees.

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Attempting not to finish in the flesh what has
Begun in the Spirit,

Jim Corbett