

Bible study: Models

Sim Forder // Deal Christian Fellowship (dcf.church) // Sunday 1st September 2019

Good morning. This morning I want to talk to you about models – that is, something that depicts something else. That represents it. Why? Because the Bible uses them. Quite often, in fact.

So I'll talk a little more about what models are, and *how* the Bible uses them. But then we'll look at how we can relate that to our lives. First though, **let's pray**.

What are models?

They are not the actual thing – they represent it in some way. Like a model car. It isn't the Ferrari, but it looks like one – just in miniature. It may not have the power, it may not have the size, it may not have the strength, it may not be able to do everything that the actual thing can do. It might not even move, or have doors that open. Yet, despite all that – you know what it represents, and it makes you excited about seeing the real thing.



Model of a Ferrari F40

So here's where we're going with all this – you and I represent Jesus. Keep that in mind as we go through this study, because as with any Bible study – it matters less how it affects your head, than it does your heart.

Now, if a model car is a bad model, then we don't think worse of the actual car – we just know it is a bad model. It is a poor representation of something that is actually very good.

Likewise, if a fellow Christian represents Jesus poorly - we don't think less of God as a result. We don't somehow start thinking He is unloving, ungracious or unholy. However, if you have never seen a Ferrari, and in trying to tell you how beautifully styled they are, I show you a matchbox model of a Fiat Multipla - you're unlikely to be interested beyond that. In fact, you're unlikely to be interested in the Fiat Multipla either, but I digress.



Model of a Fiat Multipla

The point here, is that if you are a model, a representation of Jesus - and someone doesn't know Him - what kind of idea will they have? The one you present. That should be quite thought provoking for each of us.

Of course, someone's motivation for wanting to be a Christian should always be them responding to the gospel - not wanting to be like you or I. BUT, someone shouldn't have no interest in listening to the gospel because of how you and I represent Jesus.

Now, as mentioned, the Bible uses models. These are sometimes called Types - not types with a small t, but Types with a big T. Joseph is referred to as a Type of Christ. That doesn't mean sort of a messiah, but rather, there are aspects of his life that mirror that of Jesus, but in advance. In that sense a model - because Joseph's life and the details recorded of him point to something in the future - which God being God, already knew.

Another similar term that is used is shadows - in the sense of a person, object or event foreshadowing something else that would come later. You can understand it's coming. You have an idea of it's shape - but you're lacking on detail until you see the actual thing.

Biblical examples of models

So, let's turn our attention to models in the Bible. The Bible uses these to point to Jesus, to God. And that can help us learn more about Him, and His character. They even point us toward Heaven and Jesus sacrifice for us...

For example, the Ark of the Covenant, the Temple and sacrifices point us toward Jesus. They show us of the central necessity of God's mercy, that it would come through sacrifice, and that once that took place (and not before) the way would be open for all of us to enter into God's presence; the Holy of Holies. That is what the tearing of the veil in the Temple symbolised.

But God doesn't just use objects in the Bible to point to Him - but people too. And where I am going is that if we are willing, we can also point to Him.

The first Biblical example that we're going to look at is one of the most amazing and significant models there is - that of **Abraham and Isaac**...

In Genesis chapter 22 we see what is known as the Adekah - where Abraham follows God's instruction to sacrifice Isaac, but holds at the last moment as then instructed by God. This event is full of symbolism that points to Jesus being sacrificed for us.

Read Genesis chapter 22:1-14

What we see here is;

- A father sacrifices his only son as a sin offering
- In the exact place that Jesus would be sacrificed by His Heavenly Father (Mount Moriah = Calvary = Golgotha, which just so happens to be at 777 feet above sea level)
- Abraham is more prophetic than he may realise: God will provide Himself a lamb (it is a ram that is caught in the thicket, but Jesus is the lamb pointed to here)
- The ram is sacrificed instead of Isaac - symbolic of Jesus being sacrificed for him too
- The wood required for sacrifice is carried on the back of the son to the place of sacrifice
- Isaac is complicit in this - he is bound and laid upon the altar. He is not a boy - he is likely a grown man (some suggestion of him being 33?). He is ready to lay down his own life.
- Abraham names the place Jehovah Jireh - "It the mount of the Lord it shall be seen" - WOW!

But it goes further... there is no mention of Isaac until his bride comes to meet him. His bride, is found and brought to him by Eleazer, a servant whose name means help - symbolic of the Holy Spirit. And Rebecca, Isaac's wife, is a gentile bride - in that she was not of the line of promise from Abraham on. I'm certain that there are more details that point to Jesus and the church here, but let's move on to another example...

Our second example is **Joseph** in Genesis chapters 37 to 50. His treatment by his brothers is used as an example of Israel continually being stiff-necked by Stephen in Acts chapter 7, but Joseph himself is a model, a foreshadowing of Jesus. Here are the ways in which his life did that:

1. Had a distinctive garment (coat vs robe that was gambled for)
2. Hated by his brethren; both for who he was, and what he said (dreams)
3. His future sovereignty was foretold
4. He was sent forth by his father
5. He was conspired against
6. His words were disbelieved
7. He was insulted and stripped
8. Implied that Judah betrayed him for pieces of silver (Judas is anglicised Greek for Judah)
9. Blood presented to his father (on the coat for Joseph)
10. He was tempted, but did not sin (no sin *recorded* of Joseph)
11. He was falsely accused
12. He made no defence when accused
13. He was cast into prison without verdict
14. He suffered though innocent
15. He suffered at the hand of gentiles
16. He won the respect of his jailor (Jesus had the respect of the centurion)
17. Numbered with two transgressors (One is guilty + pays for his crime, the other is set free)
18. His predictions came true (Joseph interpreted dreams, vs [Jesus' prophecies](#))
19. Given a new name (Zaphnath-Paaneah / Revelation)
20. Seated on the throne of another (Pharaoh / David)
21. He had a gentile wife given to him
22. Joseph was thirty years old when he began his work for Pharaoh
23. Dispensed the bread of life
24. He was not recognised by his brethren the first time, but revealed himself the second

That's just 24 ways in which Joseph is a Type, or Model of Christ. Chuck Missler lists over 100 ways in his book *Cosmic Codes*, and gives credit to AW Pink's commentary for many of these. These things mirror Jesus life in advance, to a level of detail that is astonishing.

But Abraham and Joseph are not the only two examples in the Bible.

In Numbers chapter 21:4-9 we read about a situation that takes place as the children of Israel are in the **wilderness**. Let's read there together:

Read Numbers chapter 21:4-9

At first glance, you may wonder what this means! It is not explained here or elsewhere in the old testament, though later in 2 Kings 18:4 we see King Hezekiah destroys this symbol because Israel had begun worshiping it:

Read 2 Kings chapter 18:4

As a side note, the reverence for this symbol made it into Greek mythology and became known as the Rod of Aesculapius, later becoming a symbol of the medical profession - though in the US it is commonly confused with the Caduceus with it's two snakes and wings is symbolic of Hermes the god of trade or commerce, not healing.

Now, back in the Bible we read in **1 Corinthians chapter 10:9-11**

These are written for our learning, for our admonition - our warning. So what is the warning? Well, we find that Jesus himself explains the brass serpent to Nicodemus in John chapter 3, immediately before the most famous verse in the Bible:

Read John chapter 3:14-16

Snakes are symbolic of sin, brass of judgement and here Jesus has just said that he must be lifted up in the same way - that whoever believes in him may be saved. Just the same as with the brass serpent, our sin must be judged, but there are no works required because of Jesus dying on the cross in our place - yet as with the serpent, you are free to choose not to accept the certain salvation promised. That's the warning - the choice is up to you. But either your payment, or Jesus payment is required.

Now, these 3 examples - Abraham, Joseph and the Brass serpent - are good examples of models. That is, they point correctly to Jesus. However, the Bible also shows a clear example of **a model being broken** - and how that displeased God.

Read Numbers chapter 20:1-12

This is good right? No - Moses made an error. Yes, the children of Israel were provided for with water from the rock. God did not withhold his blessing to them. But Moses broke a model. You see, the first time Jesus came to this earth, He was struck - He was crucified. But the second time He comes, He will not be crucified again.

And the issue is that breaking this model suggests either Christ's death was not sufficient for all of our sin, or that He must also pay for sin He has committed - both of which are totally, completely wrong - it would be heretical to suggest either.

The result of this is that Moses sees the promised land from a distance, but does not enter it. He dies in the wilderness. There is a consequence to him personally, even though God was gracious and provided water to the Israelites.

So what do we learn from this? I would suggest it's quite clear - God cares how you represent Jesus to others. God cares what you say, how you act.

Application

So how do we represent Jesus? Well, we have had some good instruction in recent weeks. Two weeks ago our pastor taught through Ephesians chapter 4, and mentioned how we are not to take the Lord's name in vain - not simply avoiding using Jesus' name as a swear word, but not calling ourselves Christians, but acting as if we are not.

And earlier this summer Jon quoted Brennan Manning: "The single biggest cause of atheism in the world today is Christians, who acknowledge Jesus with their lips, walk out the door, and deny Him by their lifestyle. That is what the unbelieving world simply finds unbelievable".

This morning, I can't make the final application for you - you each need to do that personally, but I can show you areas where you may need to apply it.

So if we are going to be a good model of Jesus, if we are going to represent Him well, we should **imitate Him** as closely as possible. And that is what we are instructed to do:

In **John 13:15** Jesus tells us to follow His example. Is that in foot washing? No (and our pastor covered some more detail on that two weeks ago) - we are to follow His example of serving one another. Of humility. Of servant-leadership.

In **1 Corinthians 11:1** Paul writes "Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ."

So in what areas should we imitate Christ? In what areas should we be a good model of Him? Every area of our lives! So what I share now is not an exhaustive list, but I hope this provides us with a healthy start.

We should represent Jesus well in **our attitudes**. He was meek, He was patient, He was kind. Perhaps the test of our attitudes is most acute when we are under pressure. And like an Orange, when squeezed, gives out orange juice - so you and I, when squeezed, when under pressure, should exude Christ.

We should represent Jesus well in **our actions**. When tempted, do you know Scripture, do you bring that to mind? Do you represent Jesus as Joseph did and flee temptation? Or do you embrace it?

We should represent Jesus well in **our words**. Do you speak the truth in love? We know from 1 Corinthians 13 that if we are not loving, we sound like a clanging cymbal. And if we don't speak the truth, then we're not speaking in love either.

But beyond our attitudes, actions and words, I believe that we have great opportunity to represent Jesus well in how we fulfil **our roles**. The roles may change over time - but the need to faithfully point to Christ, does not.

We are to represent Jesus well as **employees**. We read in 1 Peter 2 that we are to be submissive to our masters - and not only the gentle ones. We are to be patient, even when we do good and suffer for it - that, we read, is commendable before God. We should not be the kind of employee that stirs up complaining conversations about the boss. In Titus 2:9 we are told to be obedient and not answer back.

This naturally extends to our time as **students**. If you are at school, college or uni - represent Jesus well in how you treat and speak of your teachers and lecturers. Remember that you may be the first Christian that your school friend ever meets. How you represent Jesus is really, really important in determining how open they may be to talking about Jesus. And what you say and how you act can affect the most qualified... we read in **Acts 4:13**

Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus

We are to represent Jesus well as **employers**. If you are a manager, be a good one! In Colossians 4:1 masters are instructed to give your employees what is just and fair, knowing that you have a master in heaven. I have seen this done well, and badly. And it makes a big difference in your witness.

We are to represent Jesus well in our **singleness**. Jesus lived his life single and used his time well; He served God. He made time for friendships. He valued marriage of others. He took time to talk to children. He remained pure.

We are to represent Jesus well as **parents**. This is hugely important. You are the Christian's that your child sees the most, and as such your priorities will be what they learn to be important. It has been well said, that you can determine a man's priorities by looking at their calendar and cheque book (or PayPal account) - and if you can't be bothered to go to church, or you skip church for shopping, or clubs, sports, days at the golf course, or lazy Sunday mornings at home - don't be surprised if your children grow up valuing those things more.

Naturally, being at church every Sunday, and attending mid-week meetings is no guarantee for your child's salvation, or for how they will live their lives. But if they have never seen you prioritize a men's prayer breakfast, a ladies study or a prayer meeting over something else - you probably should consider your priorities. Does this seem harsh? Remember that following Jesus comes at a cost.

Being an active part of a local Biblical church is so, so important - but please don't think representing Jesus as a parent is only to do with attending church meetings. Has your child ever seen you in the middle of reading your Bible, or caught you in the middle of praying? Don't do it for show - but you get the idea... it should be such a part of your life that they know you are serious about what you believe!

I want you to think on this question - how often do you talk with your child about Jesus? About the Bible? One recent study US suggested that parents spend about 3.5 minutes per week in meaningful conversation with their children, while every week 12-17 year olds watch 18.5 hours of television.

Source: <https://www.statista.com/topics/3980/children-and-media-in-the-us/> via <https://twitter.com/DustinBenge>

And lastly, Christian parents, you should be setting expectations for what a godly husband or wife looks like. Not only through your words, but through your actions too.

One word to **fathers**. You should represent how God loves his children as a loving, Heavenly Father. This is such a problem in the world today. Father's abandoning their duty. Don't be missing in action. Be present. Be a godly man. Be a godly father.

When it comes to models, one that is perhaps most under attack today is that of **marriage**. The Bible speaks of the church being the Bride of Christ - and as marriages become ever more broken and redefined by the world, it is hard to see the relationship between Jesus and the church modelled in them.

Husbands - you are to represent how Jesus treats the church. To lay down your life for your wife. To love her, care for her, lovingly correct, lead, and encourage her. To know her. To be willing to forgive anything. To provide for her. And to remember that all you have is hers.

Wives - you are to represent how the church treats Jesus. To willingly submit to His leadership. To follow and serve Him. To want to please Him in all things. To be faithful to Him. And to remember that all you have is His.

Again, this list is not exhaustive. But I ask you this - how well do you represent Jesus today? When others look at your life, do they see a model of Jesus? Or do they say "They're a Christian, huh?". Be a good model. Represent Jesus well. Be an ambassador for Him.

Let's pray.