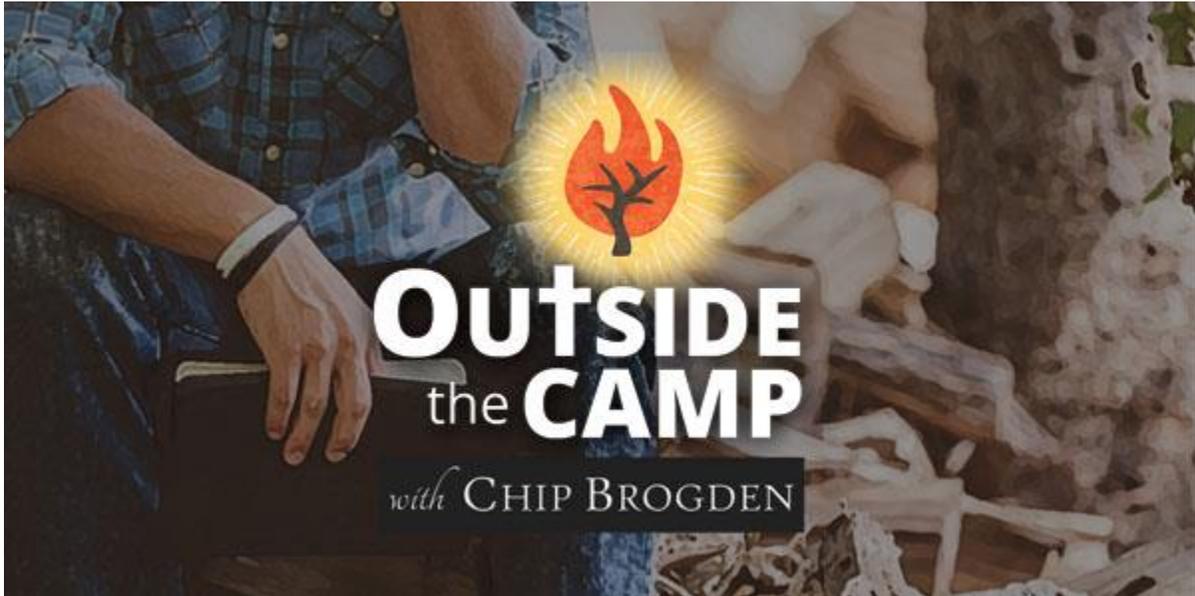


TRANSCRIPT

OUTSIDE THE CAMP WITH CHIP BROGDEN



EPISODE 2: Meeting the Real Jesus

Audio File Location:

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ANNOUNCER: Welcome to this edition of Outside the Camp with author and teacher Chip Brogden. Helping you discover the freedom and joy of a Christ-centered faith that is based on relationship, not religion. And now, with today's message, here's Chip Brogden.

CHIP: Previously we read from Philippians 3. In Paul's letter to the Philippians he describes his reputation in the Jewish religion and all the things he had going on, things he could be very proud of. Very zealous for his religion, and for the law of God, even to the point of persecuting, arresting, imprisoning, and even approving the execution of those followers of Jesus that Paul considered to be heretics to Judaism. And Paul really

thought He was doing God a favor by ridding the earth of Christians. In one place he says, “I thought it my duty.” And that is exactly what Jesus said – people like that will kill you and think they are doing the work of God. So Paul (and I really mean Saul, before he met Jesus his name was Saul) before he became a follower of Jesus, Saul was a good example of religious terrorist. He did the dirty work that the Sanhedrin wanted done. The Sanhedrin was the ruling council of Israel, the religious elders that made decisions about the community. And Paul, as a Pharisee of the Pharisees, a zealous fanatic for religion, was the perfect person to carry out their will. He provided them the muscle they needed to get rid of people who did not toe the party line. So Paul used to be an important man.

Then one day, as he was traveling to Damascus to round up another group of Christians and have them interrogated and imprisoned, possibly executed, he saw a bright light from heaven, and a voice crying out to him in Hebrew: “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” And he said, “Who are you Lord?” And the voice said, “I am Jesus, Whom you are persecuting.”

Well, that Voice said a few other things to him, and the very first thing that happened after that encounter with Jesus is Paul was made blind. That’s right – you could say he had his spiritual eyes opened but his physical eyes were blinded by the brilliance of that light. Interesting, isn’t it? The same light that opened the eyes of his heart closed his physical eyes. And after three days, a man named Ananias prayed for him, and his eyes were opened, but he was a changed man.

Now, he would say that his life changed for the better, but you could also look at his life and point to that moment and say that Jesus *ruined* his life. And what I mean is, Jesus *ruined* his religious life. Jesus *ruined* his reputation with all his religious friends. Jesus *ruined* him for the old life he used to enjoy. Jesus *ruined* him for the old, broken,

legalistic, man-centered, fleshly, carnal, hypocritical religious system. Jesus *ruined* his career as a leader of the Organized Religion of his day. And, from a natural point of view, Jesus *ruined* Paul's life. At least, that's how it must have looked to those who knew and respected him in his previous life.

Now, many years later, he is under arrest, chained to a Roman soldier and writing from prison, and he begins to reflect on that day that changed everything – the meeting with the Risen Lord that triggered this spiritual revolution, that turned his world upside down. His body is broken from years of traveling around, preaching the Good News about Jesus, and getting beat up, stoned, whipped, chased all over Asia Minor, and imprisoned.

What does he say now? Was it worth it? The terrible price you paid for that revelation that ruined your life? What do you say Paul? Well, here is what he said, in Philippians 3:7 and 8, I'll read them again:

“But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ.”

Previously, I asked you a few questions, and I'd like to ask them again. Has Jesus ruined your life? Has He revealed Himself to you in such a way that everything you thought you knew before now just seems like crap by comparison? And if not, why not?

For some people it is has been the easiest thing in the world for them to become a Christian. They went to church a few times, they heard the preacher, they prayed a prayer, maybe even joined the church. Maybe they go every week. Then again, maybe

they don't. At some point they prayed a prayer and said some things and believed some things, and maybe they got a nice warm feeling on the inside, or their conscience was clean, and maybe after that they just went on as before without a lot of change. Time passes and they are pretty much the way there were before.

Is that what it means to be a Christian? I mean, that revolution is supposed to happen when you first begin to follow Jesus. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, "If anyone is in Christ, they are a new creation – old things are passed away and all things have become new!" *That* is a spiritual revolution. Jesus said to Nicodemus, "You must be born again." *That* is a spiritual revolution. Following Jesus was a revolutionary act in those days. It meant repudiating the religious system – Judaism – and following in the footsteps of a Man Who spoke the truth and performed miracles yet He was always in some kind of conflict with the religious system.

Now today I think it is very possible that large numbers of people are just Christians by default. They don't have any revelation, so they have never experienced a revolution. Maybe they went to church, got convicted, cried some tears and now they go to preaching on Sundays, but have they really met the Lord?

Is it possible that there were some folks there in Ephesus who were tagging along, going to meetings, talking about God, but they didn't really know Who they were talking about? And that's why Paul says I'm praying for you (in Ephesians 1) that God would give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him. Was it possible that they were saved, in the sense of being genuine believers in Jesus, but they had just stopped growing? They were content just to go to meetings and break bread and listen to the sermon but they weren't going anywhere beyond that?

Now if that's you, I'm not judging you or condemning you. I'm not saying you need to get your act together and start doing more for God. I'm saying it's time for you to meet the same Jesus that Paul met, the kind of Jesus that changes you from the inside out, that creates such a spiritual revolution in your life that it *ruins* you – in a good way. I'm talking about a relationship, not a religion.

Are you interested in that? Is there a way to go deeper into the Lord? Do you just have to sit around and wait for Jesus to reveal Himself to you in a powerful way like Paul, or is there something you can be doing in the meantime? Is this deeper revelation of Christ something to seek, or is it something that just happens?

Whatever the case, Paul prayed for God to give them wisdom, revelation, a deeper knowledge of Christ, and an open mind and heart. I certainly pray that for you, and for all of God's people, as well as for all seekers of truth, whether they are believers or not. In one of his letters to Timothy, Paul said that God desires that all people would be saved and would come to the full-knowledge of the Truth. Paul is not some kind of freak of nature, a spiritual giant, an extraordinarily gifted person who had this remarkable encounter with Jesus that will never be repeated. No! He says God wants all people to come to the full-knowledge of the Truth, and Jesus is that Truth. Getting saved is the Gate, but coming to the full-knowledge of the truth is the Path, and at the end of that Path is Christ-centered spiritual maturity. It only takes a moment to walk through the Gate, but it takes the rest of your life to walk down the Path.

There is a depth of Christ we have yet to experience. I want to know Him the way Paul did. If that is your heart as well, then the first thing to do is pray for God to give *you* the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, to open the eyes of your understanding so you can *know*. He says, "If you seek Me, you will find Me, if you search

for Me with all your heart.” He says, “Ask, and you will receive; seek, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you.”

Don't try to duplicate my experience or compare your experience with mine or with anyone else. That is between you and the Lord, and He will give you as much revelation as He thinks you can handle - plus a little bit more, just enough to blow your mind a little bit without actually losing your mind!

ANNOUNCER: Celebrating the simplicity of a Christ-centered faith. You're listening to Outside the Camp with Chip Brogden. www.ChipBrogden.com.

CHIP: It's a lot like Peter walking on the water to Jesus. You have to get down out of the boat, out of what is comfortable and safe and familiar, and go completely outside of your normal experience. Walking on the water to get to Jesus – that's impossible of course, and yet Peter did it, didn't he? Yet Peter struggled – he got his eyes off of Jesus, started looking around at the waves and worried about the storm, and Peter began to sink. Well, Jesus didn't let him drown, but Peter certainly had the sense that he was sinking, that he was in over his head, right?

I said all of that to say this: if you want to know the truth, you have to be willing to follow the truth *wherever it may lead*. This is the primary thing I believe prevents people from receiving more from the Lord. They aren't willing to follow the truth wherever it may lead. They want Jesus to get into their little boat and give them a little teaching. Jesus says no, I want you to get down out of the boat in the middle of this storm and walk on the water to get to Me. Twelve men in that boat, and only one of them walked on the water.

What's the point? Well, the point is this: don't tell me you're hungry and thirsty for more of the Lord, and you really want this deep revelation, and you want this teaching, and then as soon as God begins to show you something, you shrivel up like an old prune and say, "Sorry, that offends me. That's too far out for me. That's not what I was expecting. That doesn't fit in with my preconceived ideas and beliefs. It's too radical. People will make fun of me. What will the pastor say? What will my friends think?" Blah blah blah.

Well, just forget it. God is not going to force truth upon you. He invites you to walk with Him, to come out into the depths, to forsake the safety and security of the little boat you've been sailing around in. That's kind of the concept behind *Outside the Camp*. We're going to go *outside* the camp to be with Him where He is. But if you are willing to follow the truth wherever it may lead you – no matter what – then you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free. But as I have learned, the truth will make you free – but first, it will make you *mad!*

For me, the truth that was revealed to me did make me free, but it led me to places that I didn't want to go. I didn't know it at the time, but that day - that day when God opened my eyes to see the things that I'm talking about there in my backyard - when He opened my eyes to see these things that was the beginning of the end of my career as a preacher for Organized Religion. It caused me to question everything I had learned in church. I had to read the Bible all over again with a new pair of eyes, and I saw things in there that I had never seen before. Imagine that! It seemed like for every new, wonderful thing I discovered I saw a glaring contradiction in what the religious system was doing, and what I had always done in the religious system.

So, in my naivety, I thought that what I should do is go back to church and try to show them the things the Lord had shown me – to fix what's wrong with the church. Maybe God would use me to be the next Martin Luther, to bring a great reformation and

revival. I just assumed that when people saw and heard the truth that they would respond to it just like I did – embrace it, be thankful for it, make whatever changes needed to be made, and basically just enjoy it. Now, without me even telling you the rest of the story, you know how it’s going to end up, don’t you?

So many people say to me, “Oh, brother Chip, you’re wasting your gifts, you should go back to church and help them see the light.” And I’m telling I’ve already tried that. I’ve already been there. I didn’t leave the church, the church left me! They had a big meeting and they voted me out. They evicted me from the parsonage. Someone wanted to take up an offering for me, so they did, but they would not give me the offering until I had left the parsonage. That’s right!

Occasionally people will say, “Oh, brother Chip, I can tell you still have a lot of hurt and bitterness, and that’s why you are against the church.” [Laughing.] Do I sound like a bitter, angry person to you? Do you know how ridiculous that is? In the first place, this happened in 1999. 1999! I’m over it, O.K.? Second, it was the best thing that could have ever happened to me! If not for the grace of God to call me out of church and be with Jesus outside the camp, I would still be there today, trying to save and reform and repair and defend a religious system that God never told me to save, reform, repair, or defend – and I would not be here outside the camp speaking with you right no. I would not have a voice to the nations.

But the biggest thing people don’t understand about my story is that getting kicked out of church didn’t open my eyes to the truth; it was getting my eyes opened to the truth that got me kicked out of church! God had already shown me the harlot church system, the counterfeit church, the hypocrisy, the fakery. But most importantly, He showed me the *Ekklesia*: the Bride of Christ, the spiritual house of living stones, the fellowship of the SON, and that fellowship is spiritual and heavenly. It’s not about where you meet,

when you meet, who you meet, how you meet, and what you do when you meet. It's not about meetings and church services and programs and all the "stuff" we call "church." Now to be clear, I think that does have some value, some social significance, some place in society. It serves a purpose. But the issue is that a religion *about* Jesus keeps getting in the way of relationship *with* Jesus. That's the issue! Go to church, do whatever you like, have your meetings, or whatever. But once this religious machine gets in the way of Jesus then I have a problem with it. When the world can't come to Jesus because it looks to the church and says, "If that's what it means to be a Christian then I don't want anything to do with it," then I have a problem with it. I have a problem with people who claim to speak for God when they don't know God. I have a problem with pastors, preachers, prophets, or Popes who lead God's people astray. The reason I have a problem with religion is because Jesus has a problem with religion, because religion gets in the way of relationship.

Who gave Jesus all the problems in His ministry? Who resisted Him and tried to turn the people against Him? Who argued against His teaching? Who accused Him of blasphemy and of doing miracles by the power of satan rather than God? Who else? The religious leaders, the scribes and Pharisees, the teachers of religious law.

And who are the ones Jesus said would not escape the damnation of hell? He didn't say this to women caught in adultery, to the soldiers who crucified Him, to tax collectors, to all the those really bad, terrible sinners out in the world. No! Jesus called the scribes and Pharisees hypocrites, and He said *they* would not escape the damnation of hell. The strongest language, the loudest rebuke of all from Jesus was directed, not to sinners, but to hypocrites. Religious folk quoting Scripture and claiming to speak for God. Makes you think, doesn't it?

Jesus was a friend of sinners, He ate and drank with them and they listened and were saved, and healed and delivered. Then Jesus goes to the Temple – the very center of religious worship – makes a whip, and starts driving out the moneychangers, knocking over tables, and saying they have turned God’s House into a “den of thieves.” Makes you think, doesn’t it?

So if you’re telling me you can’t follow Jesus because the church is full of hypocrites, I’m telling you following Jesus doesn’t have anything to do with going to church, and Jesus knows all about those hypocrites; they’ve been a problem from the very beginning, and one day He’s going to straighten it all out once and for all. In the meantime, let’s talk get off of this religion about Jesus and let’s talk about your relationship with Jesus. Because the only thing standing in the way is you. Forget about church, forget about hypocrites, it’s between you and the Lord. And that’s just the way it should be.

If you really want to experience Jesus in a deeper way, the bottom line is this: don’t let church, or the pastor, or anyone else come in between you and God, but seek Him and know Him for yourself. Do not take their word or my word for anything, but take God’s Word for everything. Get by yourself, read His Word, talk to Him in prayer, and see what happens. And my prayer for you is that God would grant you that spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him.

That’s what God did for me. Jesus ruined my life... and I am so glad that He did!

Until next time, this is Chip Brogden. Thank you so much for listening, God bless you, make it a GOOD day, and remember that GREATER is He that is in you than he that is in the world!

ANNOUNCER: You've been listening to Outside the Camp with author and teacher Chip Brogden. We hope you enjoyed today's broadcast and found it helpful and encouraging. If you'd like to get additional teachings, audio recordings, books and other Christ-centered resources to help you grow spiritually, visit us online at ChipBrogden.com. Outside the Camp is made possible by the prayers and financial support of listeners like you. Until next time, on behalf of Chip Brogden, I'm Kathy Smith, reminding you that you can do all things through Christ Who strengthens you!