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Intentions of Jesus Paper

Jesus understood his earthly ministry primarily in terms of what He himself was sent to do. Across the four Gospels, he repeatedly described His mission through direct statements about preaching, calling, serving, suffering, saving, revealing, gathering, and giving life. When Jesus' words and actions are examined inductively, a consistent picture emerges: He believed He had been sent by the Father to announce the Kingdom of God, to call sinners to repentance and discipleship, to reveal God truly, to fulfill His assigned work through suffering and death, and to establish a continuing mission through His followers.

In the Synoptic Gospels, Jesus consistently described His mission as proclaiming the Kingdom of God. Early in His ministry, He explained that He must preach the kingdom in other towns because that was why He was sent (Mark 1:38; Luke 4:43). His preaching centered on the arrival of God's reign and the demand for repentance and faith (Matt. 4:17; Mark 1:14–15). Jesus viewed His miracles as part of this mission as well. He sent out disciples to proclaim the kingdom and heal (Matt. 10:5–8; Luke 9:1–2), and He connected His exorcisms to the arrival of God's reign (Matt. 12:28; Luke 11:20). In Matthew, Jesus repeatedly taught about the kingdom through parables because He intended to reveal its nature, growth, value, and coming judgment (Matt. 13:1–52). His ministry therefore aimed not merely at teaching ethics, but at announcing and demonstrating that God's reign was arriving through His work.

Jesus also repeatedly explained that He came specifically for sinners and outsiders. In Matthew, Mark, and Luke, He defended his association with tax collectors and sinners by saying that He came to call sinners, not the righteous (Matt. 9:12–13; Mark 2:17; Luke 5:31–32). Luke especially emphasizes this dimension of Jesus' mission. Jesus stated that the Son of Man came to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10). His parables in Luke 15 portray His ministry as intentionally directed toward recovering the lost, restoring the excluded, and producing repentance. Jesus' table fellowship, healings, and willingness to receive socially unclean people were not accidental features of His ministry. They reflected what He believed He had been sent to accomplish (Luke 4:18–19; 7:22–23; 14:12–24).

At the same time, Jesus understood His ministry as one of revealing God rightly. In John's Gospel especially, Jesus repeatedly described Himself as having been sent by the Father (John 3:17; 5:36–38; 6:38; 7:16–18; 8:16–18). He insisted that His teaching was not merely His own, but came from the Father who sent Him (John 7:16; 12:49–50). Jesus claimed that seeing Him was equivalent to seeing the Father because He perfectly represented and revealed Him (John 12:44–45; 14:7–11). He also described His works as evidence that the Father was acting through Him (John 5:19–20; 10:25, 37–38). Much of Jesus' ministry in John involves explaining His identity and mission directly. He came as the "Bread of Life" to give life to the world (John 6:35, 51), as the "Light of the World" to overcome darkness (John 8:12; 9:5), as the "Good Shepherd" to gather and protect His sheep (John

10:11–18), and as the “Resurrection and the Life” (John 11:25–26). Jesus therefore viewed His ministry as revelatory: He intended to make God known through both His words and actions.

Jesus also consistently believed that suffering and death were necessary parts of His mission. In all four Gospels, He spoke about His coming death beforehand and treated it as divinely appointed rather than accidental (Matt. 16:21; 17:22–23; 20:17–19; Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:33–34; Luke 9:22; John 12:27–33). After Peter’s confession, Jesus immediately began teaching that the Son of Man must suffer, be rejected, be killed, and rise again (Matt. 16:21; Mark 8:31; Luke 9:22). He repeatedly described this suffering as necessary. In Mark and Matthew, Jesus interpreted His death as a ransom given for many (Matt. 20:28; Mark 10:45). In John, Jesus described Himself as the shepherd who lays down His life willingly for the sheep (John 10:11, 15, 17–18). During the Last Supper traditions, Jesus connected His impending death with covenantal and sacrificial significance, identifying His blood as poured out for many (Matt. 26:26–29; Mark 14:22–25; Luke 22:19–20). Thus, Jesus believed that His mission required not only teaching and healing, but also suffering and death.

At several points, Jesus spoke of His mission in terms of accomplishing a specific work entrusted to Him by the Father. This language appears most clearly in John. Jesus stated that He had come not to do His own will, but the will of the one who sent Him (John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38). He referred repeatedly to “the works” the Father had given Him to complete (John 5:36; 9:4; 17:4). Near the conclusion of his ministry, Jesus declared that He had finished the work given to Him (John 17:4), and at His crucifixion He announced that it was finished (John 19:30). This emphasis suggests that Jesus understood His earthly ministry as a defined mission entrusted by the Father, with a clear goal and completion.

Jesus further understood His ministry as forming a continuing community of disciples who would extend His mission after His departure. He called followers not simply to hear Him, but to follow Him, imitate Him, and participate in His work (Matt. 4:18–22; Mark 1:16–20; Luke 9:23–24; John 1:35–51). He appointed the Twelve for preaching and ministry (Mark 3:13–19; Luke 6:12–16), trained them privately (Matt. 13:10–17; Mark 4:33–34), and eventually sent them out with delegated authority (Matt. 10:1–15; Luke 10:1–20). Following the resurrection, all four Gospels conclude with Jesus commissioning His disciples for ongoing mission (Matt. 28:18–20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46–49; John 20:21). Jesus therefore understood His own ministry as foundational to a continuing proclamation that would extend beyond His earthly life.

Taken inductively, the Gospels present Jesus as understanding His mission in direct and practical terms. He believed He had been sent to proclaim the kingdom of God, call sinners to repentance, reveal the Father, perform the works entrusted to him, suffer and die purposefully, rise again, and establish the church that would continue His mission to the nations.