### **DAY 2:**

# That's Why I Came



#### **Main Text**

"When day came, Jesus left and went to a secluded place; and the crowds were searching for Him, and came to Him and tried to keep Him from going away from them. But He said to them, "I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, for I was sent for this purpose" (Luke 4:42,43).

When I read those text messages I kind of just put my phone down and froze, and I just basically cried. I cried in my mom's arms."

"And I didn't know what to think about it. It just kind of hit me hard, like why would some person want to send another person these types of texts? And then I realized that maybe they are trying to get the reaction from me, and trying to make themselves feel better for them, because maybe they did not have that type of warmth from their parents, where they may need that. Or, I don't know."

With those kind words, Shea Shahan melted the hearts of millions of people as she spoke about possibly the most challenging moment in her life. Shea is 18 years old, and looks like many other 18-year-olds, except for one important difference: She has cerebral palsy, "the result of a severe brain injury that she suffered at birth." Cerebral palsy is a disorder of the brain that may affect the way a person talks, moves, eats, or speaks. Depending on what part of the brain is affected, people suffering from this disorder cannot control certain body movements. Their legs may flutter or suddenly move, some muscles don't relax, and their speech is often impaired. All of this makes people with cerebral palsy easy targets for ridicule, and Shea Shahan was no different.

Shea, who has the mental capacity of an 8-yearold, is a junior in high school. One day she began receiving hateful text messages that called her "ugly" and urged her to "kill urself." "U need to blame yourself for everyone hating you," wrote one teen. "I'm pretty sure you're going to hell," said another. And those are the ones that I can actually tell you about. Most of the messages are too vulgar and horrifying to mention in your hearing.\*

#### **Heart Trouble**

In case you have missed it, we are living in a very messed up world. Yes, there are a lot of good things happening on earth—new scientific discoveries are happening almost daily, new technologies are revolutionizing the way we live—but one thing seems to be getting worse: the ability to hate. The teen prophet Jeremiah captured it best when he wrote, "The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it?" (Jeremiah 17:9, NASB).

In our fallen condition, we humans will do things to hurt each other and scarcely ever give it a second thought. Like the children aiming their hatred at Shea Shahan, we seem to be losing all sense of right and wrong. The biggest problem we humans have is a heart problem, and I'm not referring to heart disease. By heart I mean the seat of our thinking, our brains, the "CPU" (Central Processing Unit) of our bodies. Like some alien computer virus, sin has infected our thinking and changed the way we operate. No wonder God sent Jesus from the "Help Desk" in Hheaven to earth. We needed fixing!

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## **The Kingdom Comes**

Jesus was keenly aware of our human dilemma when He began His public ministry. In fact, why don't we look at Jesus' "mission statement" to see exactly what He came to earth to do. Let's read together from Luke 4:14 to 19.

"And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and as was His custom, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up to read. And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. And He opened the book and found the place where it was written, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and the recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed, to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord."

Jesus came to help the Shea Shahans of the world, and the classmates who bullied her. He came to set oppressed people free, to give sight to blind people—both physical and spiritual eyesight, and to preach that this was the time when God was pouring out His favor on the planet to all who would accept it. This mission statement helps to form the very core of Jesus' Kingdom message. Why? Because it expresses the very heart of God, His wonderful love for us, in spite of our "messed up" condition.

When Jesus spoke this truth, it deeply affected His hearers: "Jesus stood before the people as a living expositor of the prophecies concerning Himself. Explaining the words He had read, He spoke of the Messiah as a reliever of the oppressed, a liberator of captives, a healer of the afflicted, restoring sight to the blind, and revealing to the world the light of truth. His impressive manner and the wonderful significance of His words thrilled the hearers with a power they had never felt

before. The tide of divine influence broke every barrier down; like Moses, they beheld the Invisible. As their hearts were moved upon by the Holy Spirit, they responded with fervent amens and praises to the Lord" ( <i>The Desire of Ages</i> , p. 237).	
Why He Came	
Jesus didn't stop at His mission statement. If you continue reading Luke 4 you will also see that shortly after sharing these words about His mission, Jesus left the surging crowds in Galilee, telling them: "I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, for I was sent for this purpose" (Luke 4:43, NASB).	
Don't miss a very important word mentioned in Jesus' statement. That word is "also." Why is this word important? It is important because it connects Jesus' mission statement (Luke 4:14-19) to the kingdom of God spoken of in Luke 4:43. Jesus is saying, in effect, the good news that I shared with you guys at the synagogue yesterday is all about the kingdom of God. So, I've got to go preach this good news about the kingdom of God in other places too. This was the main reason why Jesus came to earth!	
"But why should we care?" I hear you say. "So what if Jesus came to earth to preach good news about the kingdom of God. The world is still messed up. If the kingdom of God is	
so great, why aren't more people into it?"  Those are valid questions. The answers are suggested by the response that Jesus got on the day when He first spoke about the kingdom of God. Jesus told the people at the synagogue that they were looking at the fulfillment of Isaiah's	

prophecy—which He quoted in Luke 4:14-19—about the one who would come to set captives free, give sight to the blind, heal the brokenhearted, and proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. The people of His hometown said, "but aren't you Joseph's son? All of a sudden you think you're the Messiah?"
When Jesus rebuked them for their failure to believe in Him (Luke 4:24-27), all the people "were filled with rage as they heard these things; and they got up and drove Him out of the city, and led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city had been built, in order to throw Him down the cliff" (verse 28). They liked the message, but they rejected the Messenger. That was a pattern that was repeated many times during the short span of Jesus' public ministry, and it's a pattern that still repeats itself today.
Yet, the words of Jesus spoken that day at the synagogue still ring true today, especially when those who follow Him are living examples of God's love in a broken world.
In a world where Shea Shahan suffers ridicule for a condition that she did not choose and cannot control, God needs you and me to be the kingdom of God so others can see that it is real! The kingdom of God is not without power to affect our lives, but it is only as we live for God that the kingdom of God begins to make sense to people who question whether it's real or not.
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Can you make a difference in the world? Can you reveal God's kingdom to a broken world? Savanna Bukant believes you can
 [Share the following story in your own words.]

"As a high school senior in Vancouver, Wash., Savannah Bukant was faced with the task of completing a community	
experience project. Savannah chose to funnel her passion	
for orphans into the project and contacted Compassion	
International to see how she could help. She decided to raise the funds to start a cottage for orphaned children in	
Ethiopia. The amount needed was daunting, and the time	
needed to raise it was almost enough to make Savannah	
consider a different project. But she said yes—to raising	
\$15,000 in three months!	
"I was definitely apprehensive to begin with," says	
Savannah. "But the one thing that held me together was	
the truth that God had called me to this project."	
Savannah dove into the project, and during the next	
three months she held a walk-a-thon, benefit concert, car wash, letter campaign, and church presentation! At the	
end of those three months, she had raised \$18,000 to help	
orphans in Ethiopia!	
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Savannah is realistic about the challenges of changing the	
world. But she maintains that with passion, support, and	
hard work, anyone can make a difference.	-
"If you want to change the world, go ahead and change	
the world," she says. "Nobody is stopping you. You	
may encounter dilemmas or opposition, but push past them. God will remain by your side." **	
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(*Source: http://www.theblaze.com/stories/2013/10/16/i-have-a-few-	
things-to-say-to-those-kids-glenn-becks-passionate-and-emotional-	
message-to-the-students-who-bullied-a-special-needs-teen/	

\*\*http://ecmagazine.org/2011/06/24/teens-whove-made-a-difference/)

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[Close by saying the following]

If you want to share the kingdom of God with the world as Jesus did, but you're not quite sure what you can do, would you raise your hands? Jesus chose to live in complete dependence on how His Father would lead and guide Him from day to day. That's why He prayed so much. He needed God's guidance through the person of the Holy Spirit. Let us pause right now and ask God to show us how to reveal His kingdom to the world.

Form groups of two or three and pray, asking God to reveal His love through us in practical ways every day. After two to three minutes, close this special moment with a prayer of your own, thanking Jesus for coming to earth and showing us the love of God at the center of His kingdom.

#### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. We have heard for many years that Jesus died to save us from our sins. How did Jesus' death on the cross reveal the kingdom of God? Was this a part of the mission Jesus spoke of in Luke 4:43?
- 2. The Jews reacted harshly to Jesus that day in the synagogue in Nazareth. What are some of the ways that people today

react to the teachings of Jesus? What are some of the parallels between the reaction in Jesus' day and the reaction today?

- 3. For what kind of kingdom were the Jews in Jesus' day looking?
- 4. If God sent Jesus to tell the world about His kingdom, that's a sure sign that the kingdom of God is a big deal. It is very important to know what it is and understand it. If God didn't send Jesus, how might He have revealed to us the truth about the kingdom of God?

Did you know that covenant groups can help grow your youth ministry in many ways?

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