

Neighborly Apologetics

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Neighborly Apologetics

Jesus and the Resurrection, Part 3

Del Tackett on Christ's Life & Words

(Thumbnail Sketch from Del Tackett's Webinar, [June 3, 2023](#))

The Bold Claims of Jesus: Life, Miracles, Words, and Their Enduring Challenge in Neighborly Apologetics

In Del Tackett's Neighborly Apologetics Webinar (Part 3), presented on June 3, 2023, and facilitated by Marc Fey, the focus turns squarely to the life of Christ—His words, miracles, and works—as the foundation for answering one of Christianity's three great questions: Who is Jesus? Building on earlier sessions about God's existence and the reliability of Scripture, Tackett frames the discussion within "neighborly apologetics." This approach rejects purely academic debate in favor of relational witness. God, he emphasizes, has entrusted the primary work of the kingdom to ordinary Christian families living side by side. Rooted in James's "royal law" to love one's neighbor, this method equips believers to engage those in their immediate "Jerusalem" through deep relationships, diligent prayer, and humble testimony when questions arise from observing the hope in a Christian's life.

The webinar opens by recalling the long arc of redemptive history. From the proto-evangelium in the Garden—where God promised the seed of the woman would crush the serpent's head—through centuries of prophecies and promises, the stage was set for the Messiah. These were like an alarm clock set to ring or deposits ready to be withdrawn in "the fullness of time," as Galatians describes it. The seed line was protected until Malachi's final prophecy about Elijah preceding the great day of the Lord. Then came 400 years of prophetic silence. Suddenly, heaven erupted: angelic announcements, miracles, and the birth of Jesus, named to save His people from their sins. An aged Simeon praised God for seeing the Lord's Savior. Yet after this burst, another 30 years of relative quiet followed. Luke records that Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, favored by God and man, working as a common blue-collar carpenter until age 30. Only one childhood incident in Jerusalem is noted.

The public ministry spans just three years, but Tackett portrays it as a divine countdown clock. From obscurity to world-changing impact, Jesus moved from tools to teaching, softening hearts while hardening others, dividing families, and sealing the eternal destiny of every soul. He spoke the most profound truths in history and modeled unmatched humility and love. Traveling village to village with a small band of followers, He taught in synagogues, proclaimed the kingdom, and healed "every kind of disease and sickness among the people." News spread to Syria, drawing multitudes from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan.

The miracles defy familiarity. Jesus healed the lame—those left crooked by falls or injuries in a

world without modern medicine—restoring straight limbs. He gave sight to the blind, cleansed lepers who cried “unclean,” straightened withered hands, and cured paralytics, epileptics, and demon-possessed individuals. No incantations, potions, crystals, or theatrics accompanied the acts; He simply spoke or touched. A notorious demoniac, chained and self-harming in caves, was restored calm, clothed, and sane. Lazarus, dead and decaying four days, emerged from the tomb at Jesus’ command. Even a fierce storm threatening seasoned sailors ended instantly with “Peace, be still,” leaving waters like glass. The men marveled, “Who is this man?”

These signs posed immediate problems. Lazarus became a living testimony, prompting chief priests to plot his death because crowds were turning to Jesus. Authority was slipping away; leaders appeared merely human while Jesus demonstrated divine power. Yet the greater focus of the webinar is Jesus’ words—bold, audacious, and world-upending. In the Sermon on the Mount, He declared that hearing and obeying His words builds a house on rock, surviving storms, while ignoring them leads to collapse. Crowds were astonished: “He was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.” Scribes quoted others; Jesus spoke as the Authority Himself.

In Nazareth, locals took offense at “the carpenter, Mary’s son,” despite His wisdom and works. In Jerusalem, people marveled, but chief priests and scribes plotted destruction. Pharisees and Herodians tried trapping Him with questions, only to walk away silenced. Sadducees followed suit and failed. Even their top teacher of the law received an answer that astonished everyone. Matthew 22 concludes: “No one was able to answer him a word, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions.”

Tackett shares video insights from Greg Koukl to underscore the point. Soldiers sent to arrest Jesus returned empty-handed, saying, “No man has spoken as this man speaks.” Koukl highlights Jesus’ unique personality and presence: spellbinding or infuriating. Unlike religious leaders recycling opinions, Jesus spoke with personal knowledge and inherent authority. Koukl urges readers to encounter Jesus directly in the Gospels rather than debate inspiration alone. The substance of His teaching, the quality of His character, and the manner of His life commend Him to honest seekers. Everyone must contend with this person.

Jesus’ words remain uncomfortable across centuries. He demands forgiveness of repeated offenses, love for enemies, turning the other cheek, and rejecting lukewarm faith. Followers must be salt and light, do good works, care for the needy, repent, live holy lives, and take up their cross. He insists no one is good enough; anger equals murder, lust equals adultery. Perfection is required, though unattainable apart from Him. Without belief in Jesus, people remain separated from God, condemned, and devoid of eternal life. To Nicodemus: unbelief leaves one condemned. To Martha: belief brings never-ending life. To Pharisees: they are children of the devil, dying in sins. When pressed on His messiahship, Jesus pointed to His works, then declared, “I and the Father are one.” Stones flew—not for miracles, but for words claiming deity. Blasphemy, they charged.

Rejection, Tackett and Koukl agree, centers on words, not works. People tolerate a soft, tender Jesus but recoil at bold claims. This discomfort fuels modern attempts to reinvent Him: the Jesus Seminar’s voting on authentic sayings, **The Da Vinci Code**, or “search for the historical Jesus.” Koukl notes the historical evidence for Jesus is overwhelmingly strong—one life transforming billions—yet people crave excuses to dismiss Him. Autonomy reigns: “I am the master of my own fate.” Jesus’ assertion—“I am the master of your fate”—threatens that illusion. Rejection is rarely rational; it is emotional, prejudicial, or willful. The appeal of weak alternative histories lies in providing plausible deniability.

Jesus' character, by contrast, is unassailable. Sinless, kind, humble, courageous, compassionate, bold, truthful, wise, and strong, He blends grace with unflinching honesty. Before Pilate, after silence, He declared, "For this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth." No finite person casually claims such purpose. He confronted hypocrisy yet invited the weary: "Come to me... for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."

The webinar returns to neighborly apologetics. Rejection of Jesus is spiritual, not evidential. No argument alone converts; it is a battle waged through prayer. Believers live at "ground zero" in their Jerusalem, interceding as priests for neighbors. Build trust, pray for softened hearts and granted repentance, then speak with wisdom when doors open (Colossians 4:5-6). Know Jesus intimately—His life, miracles, character, and words—so testimony flows naturally. John 21 reminds us the world could not contain books recording all Jesus did. In under an hour, the session distilled enough to show there has never been, nor will there ever be, another like Him.

The historical record astonishes still. Soldiers, crowds in Capernaum and Jerusalem, and honest seekers today stand amazed. His words turn worlds upside down. For neighborly witness, the goal is not winning arguments but loving neighbors sacrificially by pointing them to the only One who offers true life. Pray diligently. Live visibly hopeful. When questions come, testify faithfully to the man who healed the lame, calmed storms, silenced critics, and claimed divine sonship. The destiny of souls hangs on response to Him.

Tackett closed by noting the series would next examine the death and resurrection—the climactic validation of every claim. Marc Fey thanked participants, shared access details for recordings and slides, and announced a July break. Tackett's final prayer sought God's guidance for questions, that the Church might shine as light and salt in a desperate culture, all for Christ's glory.

In 1,712 words, this article captures the webinar's heart: Jesus is no mere teacher or miracle-worker. His life, works, and especially His words demand a verdict. In an age craving autonomy, neighborly apologetics calls ordinary believers to relational courage—praying, listening, and boldly yet graciously sharing the unvarnished Jesus. The evidence is powerful; the battle is spiritual; the invitation remains open. May God grant grace to know Him deeply and make Him known faithfully to those He places next door.

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Insights from Del Tackett's Neighborly Apologetics Webinar

In Del Tackett's June 3, 2023, Neighborly Apologetics Webinar (Part 3), facilitated by Marc Fey, the focus centers on answering Christianity's third great question: Who is Jesus? Tackett moves beyond academic debate to practical "neighborly apologetics"—the call for ordinary Christian families to engage neighbors through relationships, prayer, and testimony. Rooted in the royal law to love one's neighbor, this approach equips believers to share hope when God opens doors in their everyday "Jerusalem."

The session traces Jesus' life against redemptive history. After 400 years of prophetic silence following Malachi, heaven erupted with angelic announcements and miracles at His birth. Following 30 quiet years as a carpenter, Jesus' three-year ministry exploded with power. He taught in synagogues, proclaimed the kingdom, and healed every kind of disease—restoring sight to the blind, cleansing lepers, straightening paralyzed limbs, casting out demons, and raising the dead, including Lazarus after four days. No theatrics or potions; He simply spoke or touched. Even storms obeyed His command, "Peace, be still."

Yet Tackett emphasizes Jesus' words as most astonishing. He taught with divine authority, not like the scribes. In the Sermon on the Mount, He claimed obedience to His words determines eternal destiny. He demanded perfection, love for enemies, radical forgiveness, and belief in Him for eternal life. Declaring "I and the Father are one" led to blasphemy charges. His words silenced critics and provoked violent rejection—not because of miracles, but because they exposed sin and demanded surrender.

Greg Koukl's insights highlight Jesus' compelling character: sinless, humble, courageous, and authoritative. People still seek softer versions of Jesus to avoid His uncomfortable claims. Rejection is rarely evidential but spiritual, rooted in resistance to losing autonomy.

Tackett urges believers to pray diligently for neighbors, build trust, and testify faithfully. There has never been another like Jesus. His life, miracles, and words seal every soul's destiny. In neighborly apologetics, ordinary Christians simply point others to Him—the One who offers rest to the weary and life eternal.

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