

- Jim Wallis: Our nation is in deep crisis. So why isn't anybody talking about Jesus? This crisis will define our nation going forward. Will there even be a we going forward? Or will it just always be a fight between us and them? Why isn't anybody talking about Jesus?
- Jim Wallis: I just came from New York, and I remember how I used to go there when I was a young man a long time ago to visit one of my elders in New York City. Her name was Dorothy Day, founder of the Catholic Worker Movement. I'd go and see Dorothy. We were just coming into this movement of faith in public life, and she was just leaving. And I remember the building next to Mary House where she lived had this great graffiti on the side. It's gone now. Many years ago it was taken down, but I remembered that yesterday. It said this, it said, "Reporter: Mr. Gandhi, what do you think about Western civilization? Gandhi: I think it would be a good idea." So I just added something to that, "Reporter: What do you think about Christians following Jesus? Millennial: I think that would be a good idea."
- Jim Wallis: Why aren't we talking about what Jesus said, what He meant and, what He would say to a crisis like this? Even the Christians don't want to talk about Jesus. And those white evangelicals, a tradition I am from, are silent about Jesus in the midst of all this going on. Sometimes Republicans say and act like they own religion. And Democrats, even though their core base is African American women, the most religious population in the country, often are reluctant to talk about faith.
- Jim Wallis: I found that Jesus raises questions, fundamental gospel questions. I found eight of them that apply directly to this crisis, that go right to the heart of the matter that we discuss every day on the news without ever talking about Jesus. Perhaps the most pertinent question is when Jesus was asked by a lawyer, who by the way, the text suggests to me was a Washington lawyer, I guess I know that tone of voice, "Who is my neighbor?" It wasn't, "Who is my neighbor," it was exactly, "Who is my neighbor," narrowing it down.
- Jim Wallis: Jesus told the story of the good Samaritan, the parable we all know. And what that story tells us is deeper than, "Sure, whoever is you're seeing who needs your help, go and help them, and help them bind up their wounds and make sure they're better." No, He's saying in the parable, study it, the parable says, "Your neighbor is the one who's different than you." That's what the text says. That's what Jesus try and teaches us. The neighbor is the one who's different than you.
- Jim Wallis: Finally, this morning on a new show, I saw a very emotional diplomat raise this other question. Jesus was asked by Pilate, "What is truth?" What is truth? The issue is not the number of lies politicians tell, because there are many, but when we are told not to believe that there is any truth anymore, that's a deeper issue. This morning on the news, I saw this diplomat say, "But doesn't the Bible say something like you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free?" Yes it does. That's what Jesus said, "You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."
- Jim Wallis: You heard the text this morning, this text from Matthew 25 that brought me to Christ. I was in the student movements of my generation, as was suggested earlier, and I heard this text, and I went to it. I call it the "it was me" text. I was hungry. It was me. I was

thirsty. That was me. I was naked, strip everything away. I was a stranger. The word in the Greek for stranger literally means immigrant, refugee. That's what the word means. I was sick, losing all my healthcare. I was in prison, I was incarcerated. And as you did to the least of these, you did it to me. You did it to me.

Jim Wallis: So if we're going to take the text seriously, we have to say, if we're followers of this Jesus, and by the way, the text is one of the very few places that Jesus is judgmental, He's not normally judgmental, but here there are judgements, choices that have to be made. He's saying, "As you've done to the least of these, you've done to me. It was me."

Jim Wallis: So I want to say in this place, that white nationalism isn't just racist, it's antichrist. Dehumanizing, demonizing, causing people to fear immigrants and refugees isn't just a lack of compassion, it's antichrist. To mistreat women, sexual harassment, assault, trafficking isn't just sexist, it's antichrist. What does it mean for us to follow Jesus? Jesus said eight times, "Be not afraid. Be not afraid." Antichrist politics says, "Be afraid all the time."

Jim Wallis: My rabbi friends, my imam friends always say they're more comfortable and feel safer when Christians are actually talking about Jesus. The conversation I had last week in Washington, D.C. with a whole lot of students, interns who are all formally Baptist, formally Catholic, formally Presbyterian, when they heard Jesus talked about from these texts, the room lit up. The room lit up, this radical Jesus who asked us these questions.

Jim Wallis: So let's talk about Jesus again, right now, in this crisis. What did He say? What did He mean? Did He mean it? If He did, what does that say about us? The good news is that I hear a hunger inside and outside the church, especially with a new generation, a hunger to talk about this Jesus. This Jesus has miraculously survived all of us Christians. It's an amazing thing. And people still want to listen if we have the courage to ask the questions that He either asked or others prompted in Him.

Jim Wallis: And even at the end of a short sermon, we're all looking for good news. We are, in this crest, we're looking for good news. So I want to go back to Jesus' opening sermon at Nazareth. I call it His Nazareth manifesto. He announced His mission. He did His first mission statement. He did His first gig. He said, "The spirit of the Lord," quoting Isaiah, "is upon me because He has anointed me to bring good news to the poor, release the captives, recovery of sight of the blind, to set free those who have been oppressed." And the word there for good news in the Greek is evangel. Evangel, for which we get the word evangelism, evangelical. That's my tradition. It's a hard word to say in these days, but what if the evangel of Jesus was good news again?

Jim Wallis: You heard about Acts. Here were the first followers of Jesus, and they were speaking in His name. It says they were healing, teaching, preaching in His name, and they were no threat to the authorities. They were called ordinary uneducated men, not worried about them. The authorities said, "You've got to stop speaking in that name. It's stirring the people up, moving the people. Stop speaking in that name." And they said, "How can we do that? How can we not speak of what we have seen and heard in the name of Jesus?"

Jim Wallis: We need to speak again. That name has been at the heart of social movements all over the world. That name has changed our lives, and that name could change even this country in a time of crisis. Speaking that name, the name the authorities are always afraid of, is what will give us hope in a time like this. And what does hope mean? It means believing in spite of the evidence, then watching the evidence change. Amen.