

Jesus the Master Teacher: How Jesus Taught Discipleship through Parables and Sermons
[2 lessons]
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LESSON ONE: Jesus the Master Teacher Describes Discipleship in a Parable

Introduction

JESUS. To focus on Jesus is a great focus. Jesus was many things. What shall we say in this sermon? In Matthew, Jesus came teaching, preaching, and healing.

DISCIPLE. Disciple is a good NT word—used many times (97). Mostly in Gospels, Acts. Why? How have we ended up focused on the word Christian which occurs only 3 times. Default—disciple was already taken? Alexander Campbell preferred disciple.

Who is a disciple? Why don't we focus on being disciples? What does it mean? How can we be disciples? Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, is still a popular book almost a century later.

JESUS—MASTER TEACHER

I want to present Jesus as the master teacher. Master's degree; schoolmaster. Master = teacher, master = Lord. John 15. When master is Lord, then we are servants, or friends. When master is teacher, we are disciples (Luke 14; Mt. 10). We must learn to read in context. "Cannot be my disciple" in Luke is "is not worthy of me" in Matthew.

Jesus came as a teacher, rabbi; yes, many other things are true—creator, goodness vs. Satan, sacrifice remembered in Supper, coming king, divine and human, mediator, Christ. In a practical way, is he your rabbi? Matt. 23:7 in context. Call no man rabbi, for one is your teacher, and that makes you brothers. Interesting passage. If we follow one teacher, that makes us brothers.

We may not understand discipleship until we understand the relationship between master and disciple, teacher and learner. We must also understand the relationship between learners.

Teachers have disciples. We must study discipleship. Jesus uses a parable to illustrate genuine discipleship.

Disciples are learners. We know certain things about learning. Back to the school of discipleship.

- Learning is not easy—there is a struggle.
- Learning is not instant—there is a process.
- Learning requires change—there is transformation.
- Learning is not inexpensive, cheap, but it is worth it.

Discipleship is the key to this kind of growth. 2 Pet. 3:18. Peter, the disciple, says when all is said and done, here is the summary. Grow. This is the heart of a disciple. Peter spoke also of growth in 1 Pet. 2:1-3. The same theme is clear in 2 Pet. 1:5-7. I mention Peter because he knows what discipleship is all about. He had seen the ups and downs.

Growth is not an option for the disciple—it is not an elective in the Christian curriculum. Every disciple of Jesus must grow. Growth (learning) is the essence of discipleship.

Certain changes occur when we are genuine disciples. We grow, our personality is transformed. The young disciple sees these changes and perceives growth. As we mature, get closer to the goal, growth slows down. We may not be able to see the changes as well; they are not as visible, not as rapid. We may even resist change because it is uncomfortable, painful. It requires we break free from our comfort zone.

Jesus was a master teacher. What makes a teacher great? Jesus teaches discipleship through a parable.

A great teacher is involved, modeling, helping, sharing. Jesus teaches by doing. Lk 11, teach us to pray. The value is in what is taught. I want you to be impressed with the teachings of Jesus. What does Jesus teach us? Jesus uses a parable (Matt. 13:45-46). The parable is simple: Find, Sell, Buy! What does the parable say about discipleship?

FIND

Discipleship is not easy. Jesus models the struggle toward all that is valuable. The struggle says it is not easy, but it was not easy for Jesus. Determining what is of value, finding the pearl or the field, finding the gift to be used in his service—none of this is easy.

Discipleship is not instant, instantaneous. Jesus models the search, the process is continuous, Heb. 5:9, even Jesus learned. The process is not instant. Progress is little by little.

Discipleship is a struggle.

First there is the struggle to know scripture, the word and will of God. It is not easy, but it is important. Most Christians learn more scripture during the first 5 years of being a Christian than at any other time. This is one important aspect of learning.

Another part of the struggle is in conduct. Most Christians see an immediate measurable change in conduct, and genuine disciples experience the struggle to continue the transformation.

To continue the struggle requires discipline. The lives of non-disciples are characterized by lack of discipline—disciples are disciplined. Makes sense, doesn't it?

Knowledge of God, God's Word and God's will and way; morality, discipline are worthy goals. An atheist can gain knowledge of God's word; many non-religious people live moral lives, and self-discipline is the subject of many popular books.

But the struggle is really seen in the Christian growth reflected in Micah 6:6-8: act justly, love mercy, walk humbly. What does the Lord require of us?

Ultimately, discipleship is a struggle between what you are and what you should be. There is no growth when the struggle stops. When we quit learning, we quit growing. This must not be a struggle with past mistakes or sins already forgiven. A Christian who struggles with forgiveness will never have peace and security.

The struggle is real: 1 Cor. 9:24-27; Phil. 3:12-14. Think of the words of Jesus. Lk. 14. Matt. 10. The Bible says we should welcome such struggles, Jas. 1:2.

Discipleship is a process.

Christian discipleship is a process of becoming something better, not just acting better. Discipleship is defined by what we are not by how we act.

One great example of this challenge is the continued interaction of Jesus with the Pharisees during his ministry. They were separatists. They measured life by the outside standards. Discipleship that fails to change the inside isn't genuine. You can clean up your act without cleaning up your attitude. Would you be willing to let others see your inside, to wear yourself inside out?

But the real point of the process we must understand is that we will not get there tomorrow. It takes patience. We live in a world of instant gratification, self-gratification. The trouble with instant gratification is that it takes too long.

We must avoid two problems: we must expect too much too soon. We must not be satisfied with too little too long.

SELL

Discipleship is not inexpensive. The price to be paid is seen in the choices to be made. Discipleship is not cheap if we are to select the priorities that really matter.

We sell all that seems to have value, that which is fleeting value, for that which is of lasting value. This is the lesson of Luke 14, paralleled in Matt 10 as we have seen.

Luke 14 (|| Mt 10): Sell personal priorities; Sell position—power, prominence; Sell possessions. Discipleship requires change, new priorities. We must be transformed.

Luke 14 says we must study followship. How do you follow? How are you following? What will it take for you to follow? What are the obstacles? What is keeping you from looking like Jesus? What is keeping you from reflecting Jesus? Do others see Jesus when they see you?

Discipleship requires change—transformation.

Disciples are changed people. We are transformed, renewed. Newness characterizes our lives.

Discipleship is becoming what God intends us to be, what God has called us to be. This is God's grace. Knowing who we are and whose we are changes our lives. Dogs do doggy things, Christians do Christ-like things.

BUY

Discipleship is not automatic. I am baptized, I have only admitted my find and committed to my sell. It is now mine to buy in to what Jesus has bought in my life through his blood. Discipleship sacrifices all for that which is of greatest value. Jesus models the victory. In Jesus victory is certain.

Discipleship is worth it.

Discipleship is learning which issues in obedience and more learning. Making disciples is a process of teaching/learning, disciples are marked, disciples continue to mature.

LESSON TWO: Jesus the Master Teacher Describes Discipleship in a Sermon

Introduction

Discipleship--I want you to learn about Jesus, yes, but I want you to "learn Jesus." To know about Jesus is good, but even better is to know Jesus, Phil. 3.

Discipleship is not constant—there are times of doubt. How can we overcome discouragements in our desire to be disciples?

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A DISCIPLE OF JESUS?

- First—to see Jesus, the master, the model, the ultimate goal. Maturity in Christ, fullness.
- Second—to hear Jesus.
- Third—to understand Jesus (this is our common goal)
- Fourth—to accept Jesus and his message. (most have done this previously)
- Fifth—to commit to Jesus. (most have done some version of this previously)
- Sixth—to follow Jesus. (this is our great need)

IT IS NOT EASY TO BE A DISCIPLE OF JESUS

- Find
- Sell
- Buy

BEING A DISCIPLE OF JESUS IS WORTH IT—IT WILL REMOLD YOUR LIFE

Matthew 5-7 shows how disciples live transformed lives. This is the longest narrative in Matthew.

We typically break down the teaching of into triads with 3-fold structure. I call these traditional righteousness, the vicious cycle, transforming teaching.

→The traditional righteousness (ritual righteousness) is based on Jewish tradition and is the first part of the triad. "You have heard it said." This is the first column in the table below.

→The judgment cycle is presented as Jesus' authoritative teaching, showing how the traditional practice will ultimately lead to judgment. This is the second part of the triad. "Therefore, I say to you" (but not an imperative). This is the second column.

→The transforming teaching is Jesus' teaching with authority, a positive imperative, an initiative, not a prohibition. This is deliverance from the judgment cycle and participation in the kingdom of God. Not the traditional view, not the judgmental downward spiral, but an understanding of the principle and what is really important. This is the third column.

Look at Jesus the Master Teacher with fresh eyes. Look at the results. Evaluate these teachings. See their power, see their practicality, see the possibility.

TABLE: TRIADS IN THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Don't kill	Being angry...	Go be reconciled
Don't commit adultery	Looking with lust	Remove cause of temptation
Give certificate/divorce	Divorcing=adultery	Be reconciled
Don't swear falsely	Swearing=false claim	Yes be yes, no be no
Eye for eye, tooth for tooth	Resist by evil means	Turn other cheek, give
Love neighbor/hate enemy	Only as Gentiles?	All-inclusive, as Father in heaven
When give	Blow trumpet	Give in secret
When pray	Make show	Pray in secret
When pray	Babbling as others	Therefore pray....
When fast	Appear gloomy	Father rewards
Don't amass treasures	Destruction-stealing	Amass treasures in heaven
Don't serve two masters	Not able to do it	Seek God's reign
Don't judge	Judged by own measure	Take log from own eye
Don't cast holy to pigs	Trampling/tearing	Trust Father

What then is the message of the Sermon on the Mount as it relates to discipleship?

Be reconciled, avoid temptation, be reconciled martially, speak clearly, turn other cheek, love all, be devoted personally in your spiritual life of prayer, giving and fasting, establish eternal priorities, seek kingdom things here, watch yourself first, trust God.

Conclusion

You can be a disciple. You can be a follower.