

15. Jesus Taught to Equip for Ministry

In our last two lessons, we saw that Moses was told how to transform lives through his teaching. Exodus 18:20 says, “And you shall teach them the statutes and the laws, and show them the way in which they must walk and the work they must do.” We saw that balanced teaching and equipping transforms the head (knowledge), the heart (character), and the hands (ministry). Today, we will see how Christ showed us that effective teaching transforms the hands by equipping people for effective ministry.

In the time of Christ, there were two main models of teaching. One was the Greek model. The other was the Hebrew model. The Greek model is teaching by telling. The Greek model has become the model that is most commonly used around the world. That is the classroom model of teaching. Students are gathered in a classroom and given instruction. In many colleges, people talk about the classroom lectures, because the teacher does all the talking, while the students take notes. This helps students grow in knowledge, but it does not develop godly character or equip people for ministry.

As a result, Christ used the Hebrew model. The Hebrew model is teaching by showing. In Matthew 4:18-20, we read, “And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. Then He said to them, ‘Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.’ They immediately left their nets and followed Him.” Instead of having a class on how to share the Gospel with others, Christ invited the disciples to follow Him as He carried out His ministry. Christ promised them that, as they followed Him, He would change them from fishermen to fishers of men.

Immediately after calling Peter, Andrew, James, and John, Matthew 4:23 says, “And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.” Here, we see that Jesus took the disciples with Him as He taught in the synagogues throughout Galilee. As a result, the disciples were being shown how to share the Word of God with people.

They were being shown in the synagogues and many other places. Matthew 5:1-2 says, “‘And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. Then He opened His mouth, and taught them saying.’” Here, we see that Christ was showing them how to teach in places other than the synagogue. The disciples were being shown that they could teach the Word of God at any place and at any time. They were being shown that they did not need to limit their teaching to the synagogues. This was important because the time would come when they would be rejected in the synagogues, but that did not need to stop them from teaching. Because they had been shown, by Christ, that they could teach anywhere, the ministry of the disciples was not hindered when they were rejected in the synagogues. As a result, they were never limited by a lack of buildings.

However, Christ did more than just show the disciples where to teach. He also showed them how

to interpret the Word of God. One of the key things Christ showed the disciples was the fact that the Bible is the best interpreter of itself. One day, Christ was talking about John the Baptist. Instead of just talking about John the Baptist, Christ quoted the Old Testament to explain the ministry of John the Baptist. Luke 7:27 says, ““This is he of whom it is written: “Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You.””” This was a quotation from Isaiah 40:3. Today, many people quote what others say about the Bible, but they often fail to quote what the Bible says about itself.

Christ wanted to equip the disciples to teach the Word of God with authority. He knew that would only happen as they saw Him use the Word of God to explain the Word of God. As a result, Christ backed up many of His statements by quoting from the Old Testament. The Word of God has power to change lives, while the words of men do not have that power. Hebrews 4:12 says, “For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” The words of people speak to the mind of man. In contrast, the Word of God speaks to the spirit.

The disciples learned to use the authority of the Word of God to effectively communicate the message Christ gave them to teach. This is illustrated over and over again in the book of Acts. In the sermon of Peter, on the day of Pentecost, recorded in Acts 2, we see that he backed up nearly every statement he made with quotations from the Old Testament. During the time Peter and the others had walked with Christ, and listened to Him teach, they had been shown how to use the Old Testament to back up everything they said.

Peter and John illustrated this so well when they were questioned by the Jewish religious leaders. Acts 4:10-12 says, ““...let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. This is the “stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.” Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”” Peter was able to illustrate both the fact of who Christ is as well as the rejection of the religious leaders, because he knew the Word of God and was able to use the Word of God to interpret what was happening. This had a great impact on the religious leaders, because Acts 4:13 says, “Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.”

The disciples had learned, from the example of Christ, that the Holy Spirit would help them to understand spiritual truth. In Luke 24:45-48, we read, “And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. Then He said to them, ‘Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things.’” Christ took time, after His resurrection, to show the disciples what the Old Testament taught about His death and resurrection and how that was the key to the forgiveness of sins.

After opening their understanding of the Old Testament Scriptures, Christ told them that the Holy Spirit would give them the power to interpret the Scriptures. Acts 24:49 says, “Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.” Christ had earlier given them the promise in John 14:26, “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.” The disciples showed that they were depending on the power of the Holy Spirit when they spoke to the religious leaders with boldness. 1 Corinthians 2:13 reminds us that the Holy Spirit will also give all Christians wisdom to interpret the Scriptures. That verse says, “These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.”

In addition to showing the disciples where to teach and how to interpret and explain the Scriptures, Christ also showed them how to apply the Scriptures. Christ often showed the disciples how to apply the Scripture to the lives of those with whom He was talking. When a lawyer questioned Christ about how to inherit eternal life, Christ answered by telling the parable of the Good Samaritan. The disciples listened as Christ showed them how to apply what He had taught. Luke 10:37 says, “And he said, ‘He who showed mercy on him.’ Then Jesus said to him, ‘Go and do likewise.’” Christ showed the disciples how to apply the teachings of Christ to the lives of those who were listening.

Peter showed that he had learned from the example of Christ by the way He concluded his sermon in Acts 2. Acts 2:37-38 says, “Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Men and brethren, what shall we do?’ Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’” Peter, and the rest of the apostles, told them that the way to apply what they had heard was to repent and their sins would be forgiven. The apostles showed that they had learned from Scripture.

Jesus showed us how to help developing leaders learn the Word of God, learn to interpret and explain the Word of God, and learn how to apply the Word of God. In the same way, we are to show developing leaders how to learn, interpret, explain, and apply the Word of God as they see our example of how to share the Word of God in a way that people can apply the Word to their lives so that the Word is transforming them. May the Lord richly bless you as you equip developing leaders to interpret and explain the Word of God to others and help them learn to apply the Word of God to their own lives.