

8. Jesus Showed How to Develop Their Doctrine

In our last two topics, we have seen that Christ showed the disciples how to develop their relationship with Him, and how to develop their relationship with one another as they obeyed Him. Today, we see that Christ also helped the disciples learn how to help others develop their doctrine. Paul did the same thing with the leaders he developed. Paul told Timothy, in 1 Timothy 4:16, “Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.” Both Christ and Paul wanted to make sure that the leaders they developed understood their doctrine, so they knew what they believed.

Today, many Christian leaders do not know what they believe about many of the major doctrines of the Bible. Since they do not know what they believe, they fail to teach those key doctrines to those they are leading. As a result, they provide very confusing teaching to those they are leading, and, in many cases, are leading people astray from the truth. In contrast, Christ took time to teach and show the disciples how to develop their doctrine. That way Christ knew that the disciples would be effective teachers as the church began to develop.

Immediately after Christ called His first disciples, Christ took them with Him as He went to teach in the synagogue at Capernaum. Mark 1:21-22 says, “Then they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath He entered the synagogue and taught. And they were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.” The disciples saw that Christ taught with authority, instead of quoting everyone else as the scribes did.

The next morning, Christ spoke to the disciples, in Mark 1:38-39, “‘Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth.’ And He was preaching in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and casting out demons.” Christ took the disciples with Him throughout Galilee, so they could hear what He taught. Matthew 4:23 also tells us about this ministry trip. That verse says, “And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.” The disciples heard Christ preach and teach about the gospel of the kingdom in many different towns and villages.

Christ began helping the disciples develop their doctrine right from the beginning of His ministry. In the Sermon on the Mount, in Matthew chapters 5-7, we see that Christ focused on teaching His disciples the meaning of many things that were taught in the Old Testament. Especially in Matthew 5, several sections begin, “You have heard that it was said to those of old...” Then, the next verse will begin, “But I say to you...” In each case, Christ helped them learn to understand and apply the teaching from the Old Testament.

When Christ first sent out the twelve to preach, He gave them very specific instructions about what to preach. We see that they were to preach exactly what they had heard Christ preach. Luke 9:1-2 says, “Then He called His twelve disciples together and gave them power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases. He sent them to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.” When the disciples went out, they knew exactly what they were to preach and teach. When they

returned, Mark 6:30 says, “Then the apostles gathered to Jesus and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught.” Christ listened to them as they told what they had taught.

In Luke 10, Christ sent out the seventy in teams of two. Again, He gave them very specific instructions about what to teach. Luke 10:9 says, “‘And heal the sick there, and say to them, “The kingdom of God has come near to you.”’” They knew that they were to preach the kingdom of God. When the seventy returned from their ministry trip, they gave Christ a report about their ministry. After hearing their report, Christ said, in Luke 10:21, “In that hour Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit and said, ‘I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight.’” Christ made sure that the disciples knew what to preach and teach when He sent them to the nation of Israel.

As a result of the teaching ministry of Christ to the disciples, they also knew what to teach when the church began. Because of what Christ said, in Mark 16:15, the disciples knew that they were to preach the Gospel (defined more completely in 1 Corinthians 15:1-6), “And He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.’” The sermon of Peter, in Acts 2, shows that they knew that they were to preach about the death and resurrection of Christ. Acts 2:41-42 says, “Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.” The focus of the teaching in the early church was the apostles' doctrine. They made sure that these new believers learned the things Christ had taught.

The disciples not only knew what to teach, they also knew how to teach what they taught in the power of the Holy Spirit. When Peter and John were brought before the religious leaders, Acts 4:8 and 4:12-13 tell us, “Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, ‘Rulers of the people and elders of Israel... ¹²Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.’ 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.” Because they were depending on the Holy Spirit, they were able to teach the doctrine with boldness.

The religious leaders were not happy with their teaching and threatened them. Acts 4:18 says, “And they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.” Because the apostles knew both what to teach, and how to teach in the power of the Holy Spirit, they replied, in Acts 4:19-20, “‘Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.’” Christ had shown them what to teach, and how to teach, and nothing could stop them.

The next time the religious leaders arrested the disciples, they put them in jail until the next morning. However, the Lord had other plans. Acts 5:19-20 tell us, “But at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said, Go, stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life.” Suddenly, this message in Acts 5:25 was delivered to the

Growing Christian Leaders Series – Developing Leaders Who Are Becoming Like Their Teacher 8. “Jesus Showed How to Develop Their Doctrine”

Updated October 2025

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religious leaders, “So one came and told them, saying, ‘Look, the men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people!’” They knew what to teach and were obedient to the instructions of Christ.

We see what happened next, in Acts 5:28-32, when they were again brought before the religious leaders where the high priest questioned them, “Saying, ‘Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man's blood on us!’ But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: ‘We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree. Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him.’” When they were accused of filling Jerusalem with their doctrine, instead of defending themselves, they just taught what Christ had told them to teach.

Their teaching was so clear that the whole early church knew what to preach, and how to preach in the power of the Holy Spirit. Acts 8:4 says, “Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word.” Verse one tells us that the apostles stayed in Jerusalem, however, the rest of the Christians knew what to teach wherever they went. They scattered, taught what Christ had taught, and then gathered believers into churches. Acts 9:31 says, “Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied.” In Acts 6, we read that the disciples multiplied, and in Acts 9, we read that the churches multiplied throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria.

Several years later, Luke joined Paul at Troas. He also learned to teach the doctrine of Christ. Acts 16:10 says, “Now after he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go to Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them.” Luke later made it clear that many had learned to teach the doctrine of Christ with authority. Luke 1:1-4 says, “Inasmuch as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us, it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent Theophilus, that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed.” Here, we see that every leader was teaching developing leaders what to teach, and showing them how to teach in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Today, the Lord has given us the privilege of showing developing leaders how to teach the doctrine of Christ. We are to show them what to teach as we take them with us, so they know what to teach. Then, we are to show them how to teach in the power of the Holy Spirit, so they will be able to speak with authority. May the Lord richly bless you as you show developing leaders what to teach, and show them how to teach in the power of the Holy Spirit.