

Jesus Taught What It Means to Be a Disciple

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that Jesus is the One who has all authority in heaven and earth. That authority gave Him the ability to cast out demons and heal the sick. It is also the authority that He showed when He commissioned us to make disciples. In our topic today, we are going to see what it means to be a disciple.

Jesus had come down from the mountain, had healed a leper and had healed the servant of a Roman centurion as He came into the city of Capernaum. He then went to the home of Peter. Matthew 8:14-15 says, “Now when Jesus had come into Peter’s house, He saw his wife’s mother lying sick with a fever. So He touched her hand, and the fever left her. And she arose and served them.” Luke gives us a few details about this miracle that are not mentioned in Matthew. Luke 4:38-39 says, “Now He arose from the synagogue and entered Simon’s house. But Simon’s wife’s mother was sick with a high fever, and they made request of Him concerning her. So He stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. And immediately she arose and served them.” Luke was a doctor and so he mentioned the fact that the mother-in-law of Peter had a high fever. We also see that the family of Peter made a request to Jesus for the mother-in-law.

Jesus responded to the request to heal the mother-in-law of Peter. Jesus stood over her and rebuked the fever. Then, Mark 1:31 says, “So He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and immediately the fever left her. And she served them.” Here, we see that Jesus then took her hand and lifted her up. When Jesus touched her, we see that immediately the fever left her. Normally, when people have a high fever, they are weak for a day or two following the fever. Instead, the mother-in-law was made completely well and regained her full strength.

Then, she arose and immediately began to serve Jesus and His disciples. Jesus had first met Peter about a year earlier so He had probably been to this home several times during that year. As a result, the mother-in-law knew Jesus and His disciples and was eager for the privilege to serve them. Galatians 5:13 says, “For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not *use* liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.” Although that verse was not yet written, she saw her opportunity to serve Jesus and immediately began to serve Him and the disciples.

Many people had seen Jesus heal the leper. Others had heard how Jesus just spoke the word and the servant of the centurion was healed. As a result, we see that many people came to the house of Peter. Matthew 8:16-17 says, “When evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed. And He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: ‘He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses.’” Then, Mark 1:33 adds, “And the whole city was gathered together at the door.” Here, we see that many people of the city came and gathered around the house of Peter because they knew that Jesus was there.

These verses say that the people brought many that were demon-possessed. The word translated “demon-possessed” is used thirteen times in the Gospels. The first use is in Matthew 4:24, where we read, “Then His fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them.” From just these two verses, we see that Jesus set many people free from demons. Then, in Luke 7:21, we read,

“And that very hour He cured many of infirmities, afflictions, and evil spirits; and to many blind He gave sight.” In this verse, at a later time, Luke used the term “evil spirits” to refer to demons. Jesus always showed His power over demons.

It is important for new Christians to learn that Jesus has all power over demons because some new Christians have been involved in demonic activity before they became Christians. That is why John warned, in 1 John 4:1, “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.” Then, John said, in 1 John 4:4, “You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.” New Christians need to understand that they have the Holy Spirit in their lives and that His power is much greater than the power of Satan or the demons.

We also see that Jesus healed all of the sick that were brought to Him. We see the reason that Jesus cast out all of the demons and healed all of the sick that evening. This was done to fulfill the prophecy that Isaiah had given. Isaiah 53:4-5 says, “Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He *was* wounded for our transgressions, *He was* bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace *was* upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.” The word translated “fulfilled” means *to fill or to complete*. It is used four times in the first two chapters of Matthew to show how the various things that were prophesied in the Old Testament were fulfilled by things that happened around the birth of Jesus. Then, in Matthew 5:17-18, we read, “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.” Jesus fulfilled the Law perfectly because He was without sin in order to bring us to God. That is why Galatians 3:24-25 says, “Therefore the law was our tutor *to bring us* to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.” We come to God through Christ.

Jesus went on to say, in Matthew 8:18-22, “And when Jesus saw great multitudes about Him, He gave a command to depart to the other side. Then a certain scribe came and said to Him, ‘Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go.’ And Jesus said to him, ‘Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.’ Then another of His disciples said to Him, ‘Lord, let me first go and bury my father.’ But Jesus said to him, ‘Follow Me, and let the dead bury their own dead.’” In these verses, we see that Jesus told a scribe to consider the cost before saying that he would follow Jesus.

Jesus saw the crowds and gave a command to His disciples to go to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. Before He and the disciples left to cross the Sea of Galilee, two men came and said that they wanted to follow Jesus. As they were preparing to leave, a scribe came and spoke to Jesus. The scribe told Jesus that he would follow Jesus wherever Jesus went. He came and said, “Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go.” Jesus knew his heart, so Jesus answered him based on that knowledge. Jesus just said, “Foxes have holes and birds of the air *have* nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay *His* head.” This answer reminded the man that the animals have their places where they stay and the birds have their nests. The animals and birds have the basic necessities.

In contrast, Jesus made it clear by this answer that He did not even have a place to sleep that night. That meant if the scribe went with Jesus, he would have to learn to live by faith. 2 Corinthians 5:7 says, “For we walk by faith, not by sight.” Suddenly, this scribe faced a choice. He was a scribe and so there were always things to be copied and that was how he earned his living. As a result, this scribe had to choose whether he was willing to trust the Lord or whether he wanted the security of knowing where he would get his next meal and where he

would sleep that night. When he saw that following Jesus meant that he would have to live by faith, he changed his mind about following Jesus.

One of the others who had said that he wanted to follow Jesus and be his disciple apparently heard what Jesus said. He then said to Jesus, “Lord, let me first go and bury my father.” This did not mean that his father had just died. Instead, it meant that he would wait to follow Jesus until after his father died, because then he would have his inheritance. Jesus also knew his heart. Sometime later, Jesus said to His disciples in Matthew 16:24-26, “Then Jesus said to His disciples, ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?’” Jesus knew that this man had his focus on the things of this world, instead of the things that are eternal. 2 Corinthians 4:17-18 says, “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen *are* temporary, but the things which are not seen *are* eternal.” Jesus wants disciples who have eternal values.

As a result, Jesus told this man, “Follow Me, and let the dead bury their own dead.” By this statement, Jesus was saying to let those who are spiritually dead bury those who are physically dead. Luke 9:60 is this same event but adds one additional thought. That verse says, “Jesus said to him, ‘Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God.’” Anyone can take care of the daily things of life. However, Jesus wanted disciples who looked at the things which were eternal and not just at the things of this world. This is a key lesson that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand. The Lord will greatly use their lives if they will focus on the things that are eternal rather than the things of this world. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children by your example the importance of the things that are eternal.