

JESUS CHOOSES TWELVE AND PREACHES

Matthew 5, 6, 7

STRUCTURE

Key-person: Jesus

Key-location: Mountain

Key-repetitions:

- Blessed (Mt 5:3-11; nine times).
- Father, referring to God (Mt 5:16, 45, 48; 6:1, 4, 6, 8, 9, 14, 15, 18, 26, 32; 7:11, 21).
- Don't be like others: don't disobey even the least commandment and teach others to do the same (5:19), don't love only those who love you (5:46), don't greet only your friends (5:47), don't practice charity in public in order to be seen by others (6:1), don't pray as the hypocrites do (6:5), do not use repetition in prayer like the pagans (6:7), don't fast like the hypocrites (6:16), don't store up treasures on earth (6:19), do not be like the pagans (6:25-34), do not be like the false prophets who come disguised as sheep (7:15), do not be like the foolish man who built his house upon the sand (7:24-27).
- Prayer: pray for those who persecute you (5:44); do not pray like the hypocrites (6:5); pray in secret (6:6); do not pray babbling like pagans (6:7); Model Prayer (6:9-13); ask, seek, knock (7:7-11).

Key-attitudes:

- Jesus' caution in spending the night in prayer before choosing the twelve.
- The challenge the Sermon on the Mount gives to Jesus' followers to live up to his teachings.
- The admiration of the listeners when they heard Jesus teach with authority.

Initial-situation:

When Jesus began the first year of his ministry, "The Year of Preparation", he was unknown outside of the town of Nazareth. John the Baptist was famous, and crowds were going to hear him and to be baptized by him.

Jesus began his public ministry at the Jordan River when he was baptized by John. Then, in the desert, he resisted temptations from Satan. During the first year, Andrew, Peter, Philip and Nathanael made some trips with him, and his fame was increasing.

Events that marked the end of the Year of Preparation and the beginning of the Year of Popularity were: John the Baptist was put into prison, and Jesus was expelled from Nazareth. Jesus then fixed his residence in Capernaum, but he traveled about preaching, teaching and healing. Andrew, Peter, James, John and Matthew were invited to follow him.

After Jesus disrespected Sabbath tradition, Jewish religious leaders made plans to kill him; however, large crowds sought to follow him wherever he went.

Initial-problem:

Jesus spent the night praying to God before choosing twelve men to be with him, to be sent out to preach and to have authority.

Final-situation:

The crowd was amazed at Jesus' teaching because he taught with his own authority.

BIBLE STORY

Jesus Selected Twelve Apostles Mk 3:13-19; Lk 6:12-16

Jesus climbed a mountainside and spent the night praying to God. When morning came, he summoned his disciples and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles (Lk 6:12-13).

He selected them to be with him, to be sent out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons (Mk 3:14-16).

Sermon on the Mount Mt 5, 6, 7

Jesus saw the crowds coming to him. He went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples gathered around him, and he began to teach them in the presence of multitudes (Mt 5:1-2). Jesus established the requirements for the Kingdom of Heaven.

True Happiness

Jesus described eight qualifications, or attitudes, that make his disciples people who are blessed:

- 1) "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven."
- 2) "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted."
- 3) "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth."
- 4) "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled."
- 5) "Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy."
- 6) "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God."
- 7) "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God."
- 8) "Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely accuse you because of me. Rejoice, because great is your reward in heaven. That is the way they persecuted the prophets who were before you" (Mt 5:1-12).

Responsibility

"You are the salt of the earth.

"You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. People do not light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its lampstand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven" (Mt 5:13-16).

Interpretation on How to Fulfill the True Significance of the Law of Moses

"I have not come to demolish the Law of Moses or the Prophets but to make their teachings come true. Whoever obeys and teaches others these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. You will only enter the kingdom of heaven if you are more faithful than the Pharisees and the teachers of the Law of Moses in doing what God requires" (Mt 5:17-20).

Jesus gave six examples of his fulfilling the true significance of the Law of Moses (5:21-48):

- 1) "You have heard the command, 'Do not commit murder. Anyone who murders will be judged guilty.' I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be judged guilty.
"So, if you are about to offer your gift at your place of worship and remember that your brother has a grudge against you, abandon your offering. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.
"Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Make the first move. If you leave the first move to him, you may end up in court, maybe even in jail" (Mt 5:21-26).
- 2) "You have heard the command, 'Do not commit adultery.' But I tell you that anyone who looks lustfully at a woman to fantasize sex with her has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Mt 5:27-30).
- 3) "You have heard the command, 'Anyone who divorces his wife must give her divorce papers.' However, I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, is responsible for making her an adulteress. The unfaithful wife has made herself an adulteress by sexual promiscuity. Anyone who marries her commits adultery" (Mt 5:31-32).
- 4) "You have heard, 'Do not break your oath, but keep the oaths you have made to the Lord.'

But I tell you, Do not swear at all when you make a promise. Simply say 'yes' or 'no'" (Mt 5:33-37).

- 5) "You have heard the command, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' But I tell you, Do not take revenge on an evil person who wrongs you. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if someone wants to sue you and take your shirt, let him have your coat as well. If one of the occupation soldiers forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. If someone asks for something, give it to him; if someone wants to borrow something, lend it to him" (Mt 5:38-42).
- 6) "You have heard the old saying, 'Love your friends and hate your enemies.' But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. Be perfect; therefore, just as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Mt 5:43-48).

Eliminate Hypocrisy and Be Sincere

Jesus warned against performing religious activities in public in order to call attention to oneself and win the applause of people. It might be good acting, but God will not be applauding.

"When you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you (Mt 6:1-4).

"When you pray, do not turn your prayer into a theatrical production. Go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Your Father, who sees what you do in secret, will reward you. When you pray, do not use meaningless repetitions like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them (Mt 6:5-6).

"When you fast, do not make a theatrical production out of it. Act normal outwardly. Comb your hair and wash your face, so others will not know you are fasting. Only your Father, who is unseen, will know. Your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you" (Mt 6:16-18).

Model Prayer

"This is how you should pray: 'Our Father in heaven, may your holy name be honored, may your kingdom come, may your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today the food we need. Forgive us our wrong things we have done just as we forgive the wrongs that others have done to us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one' (Mt 6:9-13).

"If you forgive others who sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins" (Mt 6:14-15).

Security

"Do not hoard for yourselves wealth on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where robbers break in and steal. Stockpile wealth in heaven, where it is safe from moth, rust and robbers. Your heart will be where your wealth is (Mt 6:19-21).

"The eye is the window into your body. If your eyes are good, your body is full of light. If your eyes are bad, your body is full of darkness (Mt 6:22-23).

"No one can serve two masters. You cannot serve both God and Money" (Mt 6:24).

Victory over Worry

"Do not worry about the food and drink you need in order to stay alive, or about the clothes you need for your body. Life is more important than food; the body is more important than clothes (Mt 6:25).

"For the pagans are concerned after all these things. Your heavenly Father knows that you need them. Instead, seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these everyday human concerns will be met as well. Therefore do not worry about what may happen tomorrow, for tomorrow will have enough worries of its own. Each day has enough trouble of its own" (Mt 6:32-34).

Judgment that Condemns Everyone except Oneself

"Do not judge, or you too will be judged. God will judge you just as you judge others.

"Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the log in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the sawdust from your brother's eye.

"Do not give dogs what is holy; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and then turn and tear you to pieces" (Mt 7:1-7).

Prayer

"Ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; everyone who seeks finds; and to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.

"If your child asks for bread, will you give him a stone? If he asks for a fish, will you give him a snake? Even though you are evil, you give good gifts to your children. How much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!" (Mt 7:7-11).

"Do to others what you want them to do to you; this sums up the meaning of the Law of Moses and of the teaching of the Prophets" (Mt 7:12).

Distinguish Between True and False

"Enter through the narrow gate. A wide gate and an easy road leads to destruction, and many travel it. But a narrow gate and a hard road leads to life, and only a few find it (Mt 7:13).

"Be on your guard for false prophets. They look like sheep on the outside, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize the false prophets.

"Not everyone who calls me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but only those who do the will of my Father who is in heaven (Mt 7:14-23).

"Therefore, everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise person who built his house upon the rock. The rain poured down, the rivers flooded, and a tornado blew against that house; yet it did not fall, because its foundation was built upon the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish person who built his house upon sand. The rain came down, the rivers flooded, a tornado blew against that house, and it fell with a great crash" (Mt 7:24-27).

The Reaction of the Crowd

The crowd was amazed at Jesus' teaching. They had never heard teaching like his. He did not teach like their teachers of the Law of Moses; he taught with authority (Mt 7:28-29).

GENERIC DIALOGUE QUESTIONS

1. What catches your attention in the story?
2. Is there anything in the story that is hard to understand?
3. Who are the main characters in the story?
4. What problems did the characters face?
5. How did the characters face their problems?
6. How have you faced similar problems?
7. Is there someone in the story who is similar to you or who is different from you?
8. What does the story tell about God?

SPECIFIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What gave Jesus the right to invite people to follow him?
2. What kind of people did Jesus describe as being blessed?
3. How are Jesus' followers supposed to be different from other people?
4. What are some of the things Jesus said about prayer?
5. What amazes you about Jesus' teaching?

LIFE-LESSONS

1. Jesus, being God, is entitled to make plans for people and to give them orders. Jesus chose twelve men, requiring them to leave their professions and families to be with him (Mk 3:13-19; Lk 6:12-16).
be put under God's control. Jesus increases those demands, teaching that thoughts and desires should also be put under God's control.
2. Jesus' followers should be entirely different from those who don't follow him. The main theme of the Sermon on the Mount is that the citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven should be entirely different from those who don't belong to God (Mt 6:8).
3. Jesus fulfills the true meaning of the Law of Moses. The Old Testament contains ethical precepts, or the moral law of God. Jesus didn't want to change or to annul the Law, but to reveal the deeper meaning intended by the Law. This is what Jesus highlighted in Mt 5:21-48. The Ten Commandments demand that a person's behavior
4. The religious person who practices religious activities in public with the purpose of receiving applause from others will only be rewarded by that applause. Those who practice religious activities with the intention of serving God will be rewarded by God (Mt 6:1-6, 16-18).
5. Jesus' disciples should not worry, because food and clothing are provided by God to those who put the Kingdom of God in first place (Mt 6:25-34).
6. Jesus wants people to build their lives on his Word. Only those who do so are wise and will be safe during the storms of life (7:24-27).