
Discussion The Teaching Ministry Of Jesus

To discuss the teaching ministry of Jesus, I have chosen to use the Gospel of Matthew. It is one of my personal favourite books of the Bible however I feel that it provides solid ground which will allow me to make a substantial and purposeful exploration of the teaching ministry of Jesus as presented in Matthew.

Matthew also contains what has become known as the five discourses which appear in Matthew, these are large sections of scripture that focus on Jesus' teaching and exactly what He said I will be looking at some of these sections of teaching as well as how His life demonstrated active application of everything that He taught. I am also going to explore how those that he taught responded.

Why is this important? Charles Spurgeon once stated "He who tries to learn of Jesus Himself, taking the very words from the Lord's own lips, binding himself to believe whatsoever the Lord hath taught and to do whatsoever He hath commanded, he I say, is the stable Christian." As someone who claims to be a disciple of Jesus I think it important I possess an excellent knowledge of His teachings, they help us see; what Jesus really valued, His expectations, The Kingdom of God which we will see was a huge subject that Jesus taught on, the fact that He really is the promised Messiah and key to humanities' salvation.

Biblical commentator Michael J. Wilkins writing about the book of Matthew observes "The most notable literary feature of the book's format is the alternating pattern around which the book is organised. The material in Matthew's Gospel is based on rhythmic back and forth movement between blocks of narrative material and blocks of discourse material." This is of paramount importance as it proves that Jesus literally practiced what He preached, an example to all those who proclaim His message. As we shall see the teaching of Jesus makes it clear that we cannot just say things or proclaim messages our lives must be examples that glorify God.

One of the most famous examples of Jesus teaching is the Sermon on the Mount found in Matthew Chapters 5-7 Matthew 5:1 states Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. There are two separate groups of people mentioned here; disciples and the crowds, the disciples would have been those who had made a commitment to Jesus and decided to follow Him. The Greek word used here is the word *mathétés* this translates as learner or pupil. This strongly implies that those who were present had a desire to learn from and adhere to the things Jesus was teaching. It is also likely that these people fully believed He was the promised Messiah.

The second group of people are simply mentioned as the crowds, these people are likely to have been those who were often impressed by Jesus ministry and the signs and wonders that He performed. Sadly it is reasonable to assume that many in this category were never fully committed to following Jesus.

Sometimes Jesus used direct statements as we see at the Start of the Sermon on the Mount as He begins with a series of statements known as the Beatitudes. Whilst they are simple for many of the listeners they would have been challenging ideas. Jesus clearly points out that we need

to have a desire for pure hearts and a hunger and thirst for righteousness, He also goes on to say that living this lifestyle will lead to persecution and revile, a challenge for disciples back then and us today.

Much of Jesus teaching was challenging and stark. If correctly absorbed it demanded that the listener look at themselves and if understood it demanded that they changed often having to realign themselves and their lives with the teachings of Christ. There are many examples of Jesus of expounding a radical idea or new way of thinking. These ideas transcend religion, culture and tradition all of which on occasion Jesus had to tear down in order educate people about the Ideals and values of the Kingdom of God.

The Kingdom of God was a very important subject in Jesus' teaching. One of the key statements Jesus makes about the Kingdom of God can be found in Matthew 13:44 "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field." The next few verses of the chapter also reiterate this theme in a different way but there are many occasions on which Jesus makes this point clear. There is nothing more valuable than being part of the Kingdom of God however the only way to enter it is to be fully committed to Christ (in the parable this is represented by selling all that one has).

Jesus often used parables to teach people, it could be argued that initially when explaining simple truths and ideas such as those found in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus pictorial language was enough to illustrate the point. When He told the disciples they were the "Salt" and "light" of the Earth this was something that would have been fairly easy to grasp and the imagery used highlighted the point. However we arrive at a point where Jesus begins to teach almost entirely in parables.