

Wayne T. Galloway
www.fortloganchurchofchrist.com

3 Following the Messiah Episode 7 (0.00-9:45) No One Taught Like Jesus

Opening:

1. You have viewed the video "Following the Messiah Episode 7 at www.appianmedia.org and have worked through the study guide Lesson Three available by request at wtg2@hughes.net.
2. In this study we will focus our attention on two major examples of Jesus's teaching, the Sermon on the Mount and the Parable of the Sower.

Into the Text:

1. Reading Matt. 5:13-20.
2. In the video you have been able to experience the traditional site associated with the Sermon on the Mount. Matthew 8:1 has Jesus coming down from the mountain. 8:5 has Him entering Capernaum (cf. also Lk. 7:1). So the traditional site fits the geography.
3. The Sermon on the Mount is recorded in Matthew 5-6-7. An abbreviated version of the sermon is recorded in Lk. 6:20-49. The observation is made in Matt. 7:28-29 that "the crowds were amazed at His teaching; for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as their scribes."

This statement reminds us of what Jesus said early on in the sermon. "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven" (5:7-20).

Jesus' teaching was not different than the Law and the Prophets, but it was different than the disoriented interpretations of the scribes and Pharisees. And His authority comes across in His contrasts, "You have heard . . . but I say to you."

4. The Sermon on the Mount identifies the attitudes, the actions and the approach associated with the kingdom. And these stand generally in contrast to those attitudes, actions and approaches typical of the scribes and Pharisees. They also stand in contrast to the attitudes, actions and approaches typically taken by men. For example, it is not generally thought that the earth is inherited by the gentle, but

by the forceful. It is not generally thought that one should love their enemies and pray for their persecutors. Such uncommon behaviors are however the norm for citizens of the heavenly kingdom. Its citizens are sons of their heavenly Father and are therefore like Him.

5. While the things of this life may be important, they pale in significance when compared to the kingdom of God. All of life is lived in acknowledgement of the presence of God and is disciplined accordingly. Prayer, fasting and giving are not for show, but stem from single-minded devotion to God. Dependence is completely upon Him and His directions, and so one builds their life upon what Jesus describes as, "these words of mine." Such an approach determines one's whole direction in life and becomes an immovable foundation against the winds and floods that slam against us.

6. Jesus taught many things through the use of parables. The word "parable" refers to a story that is used to illustrate a moral or spiritual lesson. One of the most fundamental and primary parables of Jesus has become known as the Parable of the Sower. It is recorded in Matt. 13:1-23; Mk. 4:1-20 and Lk. 8:4-15.

In the video you were taken to the Cove of the Sower, the traditional site of where Jesus got into a boat and pushed out from the shore to speak to the crowd. The acoustics are naturally suitable for communicating to a large crowd.

Jesus said some seed fell beside the road. The birds came and ate it up. Some seed fell on rocky places. It sprang up but did not have much soil and withered in the sun. Some seed fell among the thorns. It was choked. Some fell on good soil. It produced a crop.

7. Jesus' explanation was that the seed beside the road represented those who hear the word of the kingdom and do not understand and the evil one comes and snatches the word sown in their hearts. The seed on the rocky places represents those who hear the word and receive it with joy but since it has no firm root, affliction and persecution results in this person falling away. The seed among the thorns is the man who hears but the worry of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word and it becomes unfruitful. The good soil is the one who hears the word and understands it and bears fruit.

The meaning is clear.

Jesus told this parable in light of Isa. 6:9-10 (cf. Matt. 13:14ff). In Isaiah's day there were those who heard but did not understand, saw but did not perceive. Their hearts were dull and they closed their eyes to the truth that God was revealing to them and so they were not healed. Jesus' parable of the sower is a clear illustration of this truth. Woe to us, if we are like them! Which soil most represents your heart? I am glad you are listening to the word, but it takes more than just hearing it. What do you need to do to produce the fruit that characterized the good soil?

Applications:

1. When you read the Sermon on the Mount what impresses you most? What challenges to your own perspective and your own manner of life are presented?
2. Select a series of verses or a paragraph from the Sermon on the Mount that convicts you. Why these verses, this paragraph? Share your thoughts with the class.
3. As you hide the word of God in your heart what tends to take it away, scorch it, choke it out?
4. What would it take for the word to take a firmer root in your heart? What would the fruit look like?