

Sermon or Lesson: How Jesus Interacted With His Disciples, Part 2a (NIV based)
[Lesson Questions included]

TITLE: Initial Job Functions or Activities - *Teaching To Reshape Their Perspective of Life*

PASSAGE: Matthew 4:23-5:12

INTRO: For those of you who are parents, do you ever have any impromptu or situational conversations with your child in which the content you are delivering, in essence, pertains to an aspect of your philosophy of life? Do you intentionally share your philosophy of life with your child? Yes, of course you do. Why? Because you want your child to adopt your philosophy, i.e. you want to shape or reshape his/her perspective of life. And the time and place of the situation seemed to you to be a good and fertile environment for teaching your philosophy to your child.

Jesus used that same objective and technique as He taught His disciples, who came from a variety of different backgrounds with corresponding variety of different perspectives of life. Let's look at how Jesus taught to reshape their perspective of life.

BACKGROUND: Jesus recently started His ministry (Matthew 4:17) and had just called ordinary fishermen Peter, Andrew, James, and John to follow Him and become His disciples (vv.18-22).

READ: Matthew 4:23-5:2

[Lesson Question: In this Scripture passage that is at the beginning of His ministry, how is Jesus interacting with His disciples and what are the situational dynamics of that interaction?]

SECTION POINT: Jesus taught His disciples while simultaneously and intentionally teaching the crowds, presumably to maximize the effectiveness of the teaching of both groups.

The way Jesus is interacting with His disciples here, at the beginning of His ministry, is:

- - His disciples are receiving teaching in the situation they are in. (vv.5:1-2)
- - Within this teaching session, initially He is addressing specifically the disciples - "when people...persecute you...because of me" (v.5:11), "you are the salt of the earth" (v. 5:13), "you are the light of the world" (v. 5:14), and etc.
- - Later in this teaching session, there are elements within His teaching that also address the crowds, such as "enter through the narrow gate" (v.7:13).
- - And because He was speaking from a mountainside presumably so that His voice will carry to the crowds as well, and their response to that teaching was recorded at the end of this session (vv.7:28-29), the evidence suggests that Jesus was simultaneously intentionally addressing the crowds too.
- - This type of teaching environment and situation came about or developed because large crowds were following Jesus, probably due to His mass healing of the sick and afflicted (vv.4:24-25). In consideration of this situation when He observed the crowd, He sat down to teach both His disciples and the crowds, evidently switching between the two groups within this teaching session even though both groups are present. (vv.5:1-2)

- - Jesus did utilize this kind of teaching technique in other environments repeatedly, for example in a similar environment and situation as cited in Matthew 9:35-38 but His teaching content to the disciples there is different even though the situation is very similar to the situation described here in Matthew 4:23-5:2.

- - Notice that Jesus did not just stay in one town and teach His disciples in a school building-like classroom every day, presumably because being in real-life situations is a more effective way of teaching and applying teaching than only teaching with just classroom lectures.

- - Also, He was doing outreach, and modeling His teaching techniques for His disciples by simultaneously teaching to the crowds.

READ: Matthew 5:3-12

[Lesson Question: What purposes does Jesus have for His disciples within the contents of His initial teaching?]

SECTION POINT: Within the initial teaching of His disciples, Jesus immediately started working on reshaping their thinking of their perspective of life.

- - Upon seeing the crowds (v.1), Jesus is situational-ly saying to the disciples that they should reshape how they view and regard any of the people who are “the poor in spirit” (v.3), “those who mourn” (v.4), “the meek” (v.5), those who pursue “righteousness” (v.6), “the merciful” (v.7), “the pure in heart” (v.8), “the peacemakers” (v.9), those “persecuted” for “righteousness” (v.10).

- - Part of His message is that these are virtues that God highly values but natural thinking and society do not.

- - Also, these virtues have spiritual qualities and spiritual repercussions - immediate and/or long-term and/or eternal.

Therefore, according to this account in Matthew, from the initial part of His teaching in verses 5:3-12 and having just called them to follow Him, Jesus has a specific purpose for teaching the disciples here in this environment with this content:

- - Jesus starts immediately to working on reshaping their natural worldly, cultural, and religious thinking and beliefs that are contrary to or counterproductive to God and His agenda.

- - Jesus wants them to see that they need to view life from a Kingdom, spiritual, and godly perspective.

Jesus switches from 3rd person “those” in verses 3-10 to 2nd person “you” in verse 11 and following because:

- - He is applying the generalized truths in verses 3-10 to His disciples personally;

- - And He is wanting them to change their value system and their perspective of life from natural worldly / humanistic / immediate, and switch to unnatural spiritual / godly / eternal - i.e. to see, regard, and act upon life from a spiritual godly perspective and position.

- - As an offshoot from the teaching of generalized truth, in verse 10 He is also telling them what they can expect in regard to how they, as disciples of Jesus, will be received and treated by some people in the future (“because of me” v.11).

- - So, Jesus' initial teaching of His disciples contains a combination of generalized truths, God-oriented principles, refuting natural or worldly thinking, nurturing a godly perspective of life, and informing what the world's reaction will be to them having a godly perspective.

BIG IDEA: In order to become a disciple, each person needs to reshape and shift his/her value system and perspective from the natural worldly / humanistic / immediate to the unnatural spiritual / godly / eternal.

APPLICATIONS:

- - What natural worldly, cultural, and religious thinking and beliefs are common today that are contrary to or counterproductive to God, His Word, and His agenda?
 - - What natural worldly, cultural, and religious thinking and beliefs do you hold that are contrary to or counterproductive to God, His Word, and His agenda?
 - - Are you willing to let God teach you through His Word in order to reshape your thinking and beliefs?
 - - For those of us who teach the Word, what does this imply about how you should teach?
 - - Do you teach the Word with a purpose of facilitating the reshaping of thinking about one's perspective of life?
 - - Within your Bible teaching, do you also have content that applies to the unsaved people in the audience?
 - - Do you ever utilize situational teaching, which can be more effective than classroom teaching?
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Works Cited:

Bible. "The Holy Bible: New International Version." *The Bible Library CD-ROM*. Oklahoma City, OK: Ellis Enterprises, 1988.

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