

# THE LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST

## WEEK FIVE – JESUS CHRIST’S MINISTRY IN GALILEE CONTINUES

### IN GALILEE – Spring and Summer AD 29 (late in Jesus’ second year of ministry)

#### 1) The sinful woman is forgiven – Luke 7:36-50

Jesus is invited to the house of a Pharisee named Simon. The motivation for this invitation is not given. Simon could have been looking for a reason to add new accusations against Christ. He could have been interested in hearing for himself what Jesus had to say. Or he was just extending hospitality to a visiting Rabbi. He apparently had a larger home where guests were entertained in a pavilion inner court with open walls. This allowed people not invited to the meal to stand just outside where they could listen to the conversation. Among the people in the crowd is a woman who works as a prostitute.

- a) This woman has a reputation that is known in the town. When she hears Jesus is in town she goes to Simon’s house with the intention of anointing him with fragrant ointment.
- b) Jesus would have been reclining at the table, leaning on one elbow with his feet away from the table. This gave the woman the opportunity to wash and anoint them.
- c) The actions of the woman show a deep, heart-felt repentance. ‘Weeping’ in verse 38 pictures sobbing with tears flowing so quickly that she was able to use them to wash His feet. Washing feet was deeply humbling. Letting down her hair in public was a scandal. Anointing Him with ointment was a show of deep respect. The fact that Jesus allowed her to touch Him and minister to Him communicated acceptance.
- d) Simon on the other hand responds with pride, arrogance and a dismissive attitude. He would have been horrified with the presence of a woman that defiled his house according to the traditions he was committed to. He is convinced Jesus is a fraud, for any true prophet would have known who she was. In addition her touching and anointing him could have led to some assuming Jesus knew her as a client.
- e) The reception Simon had given to Jesus communicated that he did not accept Jesus as a friend or honored guest. Simon would have been expected to have the feet of any guest at least washed. An honored Rabbi would have then had his feet anointed with perfumed ointment. Simon had done neither for Jesus; an intentional snub.
- f) Jesus then confronts Simon’s self-righteousness with a story and a question. The point Jesus is making is that both the woman and Simon needed forgiveness. Simon’s refusal to see that made his situation direr than the woman’s! Her heartfelt response to Jesus rose out of her faith and gratitude which Jesus acknowledges.

#### 2) The women accompanying Jesus are acknowledged – Luke 8:1-3

As we enter Luke 8 Jesus begins the final phase of this Galilean ministry. Soon He will reach the peak of His popularity as the opposition from Jewish leaders will become more determined.

- a) The specific towns Jesus goes to are not identified in these three verses, but the phrasing indicates a widespread ministry. As He travels He continues to proclaim the good news of the Kingdom. Perhaps the Sermon on the Mount contains elements of this teaching and preaching.
- b) In addition to the 12, Jesus is accompanied by a number of women. This would have been highly unusual for a first century Rabbi! Some are identified:
  - Mary called Magdalene – Delivered from demon possession
  - Joanna wife of Chuza – Her husband was a member of King Herod’s staff. She will be a witness of the death and burial of Jesus
  - Susanna – The only mention of her in Scripture

These women financially support Jesus and His ministry.

#### 3) The Parables of the Kingdom – Matthew 13

One of the tools Jesus uses to teach are Parables. The word means, ‘to place alongside’. The purpose of a parable was to place a spiritual or theological truth alongside a story or object with the goal of explanation and illustration. In the case of Jesus, they were designed to develop interest and questions that revealed a seeker’s heart. Only those motivated to ask Jesus for clarity received the additional teaching required to understand them. In Matthew 13 these parables reveal the characteristics of the Church age – the time between the two comings of Jesus that we are presently living in.



a) **Parable of the Sower and the Seed – vs. 1-9;18-23**

This parable deals with the condition of the hearts that hear the Gospel. There are 'stony' hearts that reject the Gospel; 'shallow hearts' that initially respond but whose faith withers away under pressure; cluttered hearts that receive the Gospel and begin to grow, but the distractions of life prevent any real fruit; 'good hearts' where the seed not only takes root but produces fruit. As we share the Gospel, it will be received with one of these four hearts and responses.

b) **Parable of the Weeds – vs. 24-30; 36-43**

This parable deals with the fact that Believers are planted throughout the world, where we intermingle with non-believers. This is not the age for judgement, but of grace through the Gospel. However, at the end of this age the wheat and weeds (believers and non-believers) will be separated; the wheat to eternal life and the weeds to eternal punishment. Note that the difference between the two is the existence of fruit and that God will do the judging, not His people.

c) **Parables of the Mustard Seed and Leaven – vs. 31-33**

As Jesus is ministering He has a very small following. However, like the mustard seed becoming a small tree and the leaven permeating through the whole loaf, the church of Jesus Christ would grow and encompass the whole earth, gathering believers from every tribe and tongue. In addition, the parable of the leaven points out the influence and impact of the Gospel.

d) **Parables of the Hidden Treasure and Pearl of Great Price – vs. 44 - 46**

As Jesus tells these two Parables He moves from describing the Kingdom to how one enters or gains the Kingdom (salvation). These two Parables reveal that:

- The Kingdom must be personally obtained. One is not born into it.
- The Kingdom is priceless
- The Kingdom is a source of joy
- Entering the Kingdom requires a transaction. In the case of our salvation, that transaction took place through Saving Faith as Jesus took on our sin and we received His righteousness.

e) **Parable of the net – vs. 47-50**

The net being described here was a large one that required two boats and several men to use. It would move along the bottom of the lake, catching up everything in its path. The men would then separate the good fish from everything else. The point being made is of the judgement that will take place at the end of this age.

f) **Parable of the New and Old Treasure – vs. 51-52**

Jesus asks the 12 if they understand the parables, though their understanding is far from complete, Jesus accepts their affirmative answer. Then teaches that they will be given the responsibility to oversee the Church and spread the Gospel. They will use the old (what Jesus taught them) and new (what the Holy Spirit would teach them) to accomplish what Jesus had taught through the previous parables.

**4) Jesus calms the storm and heals the demonic – Mark 4:35-5:20**

On the same day Jesus taught the parables on the Kingdom, Jesus instructs the 12 to join him in sailing across the Sea of Galilee. As a fierce storm rises the frightened disciples find Jesus asleep. Waking Him, Jesus calms the storm, rebukes them for their lack of faith and leaves them speechless in wonder. As they arrive across the lake they encounter a demonic.

- a. They have landed across from Galilee in a mostly Gentile region called Gerasenes. There they meet a demon possessed man who has been living amongst the tombs. He is unclothed, extremely strong and mentally insane. The locals had tried binding him with chains, but not even those could hold him. His sudden appearance must have been as frightening as the storm the night before!
- b. As the demonic runs towards the group of men coming ashore, undoubtedly yelling with the intent of terrifying them, he recognizes Jesus for who He is. The words, 'falling down before him' pictures an act



of worship. This is not the worship of a repentant sinner, but of an acknowledgement that Christ was his sovereign. While the men from the nearby town had been unable to subdue the demonic with chains, Jesus was able to subdue him with just His presence.

- c. Jesus commands the demon (actually demons, for there were many possessing this man) to come out. The demon addresses Jesus as 'Son of the Most High God'. 'Most High God' was a name that revealed God as Lord over all creation and created. He is acknowledging the high position of Christ. All demons will be judged with Satan at the end of time, so the demon wants to know if Jesus is there to judge him before that time. As an alternative they ask to be cast into a herd of swine. Jesus does so, freeing the man.
- d. It is revealing that the herdsmen and towns people are more concerned with the pigs than the man. They see the man, 'clothed and in his right mind', which verifies his healing. However, they still beg Jesus to leave.
- e. The delivered man asks to go with Jesus. Jesus has other plans, and send the man back to his family and friends (OIKOS) to be a witness for Christ. Many of these people were undoubtedly Gentiles.

### **5) Jesus' healing ministry and final visit to Nazareth – Mark 5:21-6:16**

As Jesus returns to Galilean side of the Sea of Galilee He is greeted by the usual large crowd. In Mark's account two lives are changed forever as Jesus heals a woman with a hemorrhage and raises a young girl from the dead. He then heads for a final visit to His hometown of Nazareth.

- a. Jairus, as the ruler over the local Synagogue, was a very influential man. John MacArthur writes:  
"The synagogue officials were a group of men (usually numbering between three and seven) in each local synagogue who acted as the caretakers and administrators of synagogue life. They safeguarded the scrolls, cared for the facility, organized the synagogue school, and supervised the readers, teachers, and those who prayed. As such, Jairus would have been both religiously devout and highly respected in the community."
- b. Jairus shows humility and faith as he falls before Jesus. This was an act of pleading and of paying homage. He has a very simple faith in Jesus' ability to heal.
- c. Verse 42 tells us his daughter is 12 years old. She was now in her first year of womanhood and was eligible to get married. What should have been an exciting time of life was being turned to tragedy by her illness. Jesus agrees to go to her.
- d. As they are walking to the house of Jairus, a woman who had been hemorrhaging for 12 years, the same time the daughter had been alive. This bleeding made this woman an outcast and unable to worship in the Synagogue or the Temple. In her desperation she too went to Jesus. As He walked by she reached out and touched the bottom of His outer garment, convinced this would be enough to heal her. Jesus' question, 'who touched me' was not asked for information, but to draw the woman out.
- e. As they proceed, word reaches Jairus that his daughter has died. Jesus assures him and they proceed to the house. It was customary for all of the women of the community to come wail with the family, which is noted in verse 38-39. Jesus dismisses everyone but the parents and the 'Inner Three' disciples; Peter, James and John (Luke 8:51). Jesus raises the girl from the dead, instructing them to feed her to prove she was alive, and not a ghost.
- f. Jesus then proceeds to Nazareth, where once again He is rejected by the people, in much the same way and language as earlier in His ministry. Mark 6:3 identifies the names of the half -brothers of Jesus along with stating He also had half-sisters. This is His last recorded visit to Nazareth.



## **6) The feeding of the 5000 and Jesus' walking on the water – Mark 6:30-46; Matthew 14:23-36**

Of all of the miracles performed by Jesus, only two are recorded in all four Gospels: His resurrection and this one, the feeding of the 5000. Matthew's account reveals there were 5000 men in addition to women and children. With this in mind, scholars estimate that there were between 15,000 and 20,000 people fed. This makes it the most extensive miracle of Christ's ministry.

- a. Prior to this miracle Jesus had sent out the 12 by twos to go across Galilee ministering and preaching. After a period of several weeks they have returned to give a report of all they had done. On top of their exhausting travels, the crowds had once again gathered around Jesus so it was difficult to find time to even eat. So Jesus plans a retreat across the Lake.
- b. The people see where they are sailing to and travel there by foot. As the boat approaches the shore the crowd is there to greet them. As is recorded elsewhere, the response of Jesus to seeing them is compassion. This is remarkable seeing that within a couple of days most of these people will have walked away from Jesus. In addition John 6 tells us that many of these people went to see Jesus because of the miracles they had seen and heard about. They were being motivated by the desire to see and perhaps even experience the next extraordinary act.
- c. After a full day of healing the sick and teaching them about The Kingdom, the 12 encourage Jesus to send the crowd home. Perhaps they saw this as an opportunity to clear the area of people so they could begin their aborted vacation. Jesus replies, 'You give them something to eat'. This brings the expected reply...we do not have the resources to meet this need. Jesus now has them right where He wants them...acknowledging their need.
- d. In this huge crowd, one young man had thought to bring a lunch! The fish were likely the size of sardines and the 'loaves' like large crackers. Jesus turns this small lunch into enough food so that the people eat until they are 'satisfied'. This word means to eat enough to be full, not wanting any more.
- e. This miracle marks the high point in Jesus' popularity and crowd size. Within 24 hours that will all change.

## **7) Jesus walks on water – Matthew 14:23-36**

Having learned an important lesson about faith with the feeding of the 5000, it is time for the 12 to be tested on the subject. While Peter is given a bad grade for his 'sinking' faith, he actually should be given credit for his step of faith.

- a. Right after the feeding of the crowd Jesus sends the 12 across the Sea of Galilee by themselves. He stays behind, and after dismissing the crowd to go home, He goes up on a mountain nearby to pray. Two of the possible reasons He does this are:
  1. The crowd had started to talk about forcing Jesus to become their King (John 6:15). He may have been praying for wisdom on how to handle this, as well as to prepare for the next day when His teaching on being the Bread of Life would result in most deserting Him.
  2. He may have been praying for the 12, knowing the stormy test they were about to enter.
- b. Not long after they left the Disciples found themselves in the midst of a severe storm. Verse 25 says they were still at it when the fourth watch came, which was around 3am. If they had left shortly before sunset at 6pm, they have been battling for some 9 hours, and were undoubtedly exhausted. It is at this moment they see Jesus walking on the water towards them.
- c. After crying out in fear they hear the calming voice of Jesus. Peter responds by expressing a desire to go out onto the water with Him. Jesus bids him to come, and for a few steps Peter does fine. It is only after he shifts his focus from Jesus to the water that he begins to sink.
- d. After a mild rebuke directed at the 12 through Peter, Jesus calms the storm. Even though this is not the first time they have seen Jesus do this, the Disciples are still amazed, and are led to worship Jesus. The fact He does not stop them shows He is God the Son, worthy of our worship!



## 8) Jesus teaches on being the Bread of Life – John 6:22-71

This extended discourse of Jesus is complex and a challenge to understand. As a result of the feeding the day before, the crowd is still focused on bread, and desire to see Jesus do more miracles like the one they had been part of. Let's see a repeat! After all, Moses had fed almost 3 million people manna for 40 years. Using this focus on bread, Jesus teaches that He is the true bread that brings life. While He was clearly speaking about spiritual faith in Him as Messiah, the people mistakenly hear Him say they are to eat His actual flesh. The result is that Jesus starts the day with some 10,000 people surrounding Him. At the end of the day there will be 12.

- a. As the crowd gets up the next morning, Jesus is gone. They decide to head to His headquarters in Capernaum, where they find Him. Rather than answer their question on how He got there, Jesus goes to the heart of the issue – their desire to seek Him out to force Him to become their King. However, this desire does not rise out of a faith in Him as Messiah, but the desire for their temporal needs to be met (vs.26). Jesus challenges them to seek the food that brings eternal life – 'Believe in Him whom He (God) has sent'. This is a call to Saving Faith in Christ. It is important to remember this phrase, for it helps explain some of the difficult imagery Jesus uses later.
- b. As they hear Jesus, they push back – feeding 15,000 people is no big deal compared to what Moses did in providing manna for 40 years! What sign are you going to give next? Jesus now carries through with this illustration of bread with several key points:
  - Moses did not provide manna, God did! And God has now provided true bread from Heaven – me.
  - In verse 35 Jesus clarifies that those who come to Him in faith will receive life. This is the second time Jesus emphasizes faith in this passage.
  - Jesus will receive everyone the Father gives Him. Jesus has not come to do His own will, but to do the will of the Father. Vs.37-38
  - The Father's will is that everyone who looks to Jesus in Faith will receive eternal life. (vs. 40) This is the third time Jesus emphasizes belief/faitth. Then in verse 44 He reveals no one can come to Him unless the Father draws them.
  - As Jesus speaks of 'eating this bread' in verse 50-51 and 53-59, it is already clear from the previous verses He is speaking figuratively. The crowd however, because their faith in Jesus is shallow and self-seeking, misunderstand Jesus and think He is speaking literally. (52)
  - The reference to 'disciples' in verse 60 refers to people who had been following Jesus as students outside of the 12. As time will tell, not all of the people who associated with Jesus as a Rabbi placed faith in Him as Messiah.
  - In verses 61-65 Jesus shares two key truths:
    1. Only the Holy Spirit gives people the ability to comprehend spiritual truth (1Cor.2:14-16)
    2. No one comes to Jesus in Saving Faith unless drawn by the Father
- c. As a result of this teaching, many of those who had been following Jesus walked away (vs.66). However, after being asked their intention by Jesus, Peter, speaking for the 12, affirms that they believe Jesus is the way to eternal life and is indeed the Holy One of God. Jesus, even as He affirms them, reveals that one of their number 'is a devil', referring to Judas.

## 9) Healings and the feeding of the 4000 – Mark 7:24-8:9

This passage marks a significant moment and shift in the ministry of Jesus. John MacArthur writes:

*After more than a year in Galilee, Jesus' extended ministry there had come to an end. Though some believed, the majority of people rejected Him (John 6: 66; cf. Matt. 11: 20– 24), including the residents of His hometown of Nazareth (cf. Mark 6: 1– 6). The Jewish religious leaders had grown increasingly antagonistic (3: 20– 30) and sought to kill Him (3: 6; cf. Matt. 12: 14). King Herod, fearful that Jesus posed a threat to his political power, also wanted to execute Him (cf. Luke 13: 31). Aware of the mounting opposition against Him, and knowing the cross was still months away, Jesus left Galilee for a concentrated time of training with His apostles. He did not withdraw out of fear (cf. Luke 9: 51; cf. 19: 28) but out of a deliberate desire to prepare the Twelve for their coming apostolic challenges.*

- a. Jesus and the 12 travel north to Tyre and Sidon, located in present day Syria. While there Jesus interacts with a local woman, a Gentile. His response seems very cold (vs. 27), but He had come primarily as the Jewish Messiah.

After their rejecting Him, the Gospel would indeed go out to the Gentiles, but only after the nation of Israel had her opportunity to respond. The woman's wise reply shows both faith and persistence. Jesus responds by healing her daughter.

- b. Jesus then travels down the east side of the Sea of Galilee to an area known as the Decapolis – since there were 10 cities located there. Again, this area is primarily occupied by Gentiles. Here, Jesus heals a man who is deaf and whose speech was impaired (a common combination).
- c. Then Jesus repeats the miracle of feeding a crowd, only this time there are 4000 people. It is remarkable that the 12 have almost the same response as before! Faith does indeed take time to deepen and grow.

#### **10) Jesus heals a blind man – Mark 8:22-26**

Bethsaida was the hometown of Peter and Andrew and was close to where Jesus had fed the 5000. Perhaps many of the people present on that day were from this area. Jesus takes the man out of the village, making this a private moment with only the 12 as witnesses.