



A Systematic Expository Study of the Word of God

Special Study

LEARNING TO GROW IN HIS PRESENCE

Matthew 5:1,2

The last Old Testament prophet, Malachi, spoke 400 years before the advent of Jesus Christ. It was His coming that broke the inter-testament period of silence between the books of Malachi and Matthew, between the close of the Old Testament and the opening of the New Testament. He came to reveal God's Word and will to man. He came to save and to lead us into the fullness that we can have in God. He is the Saviour, Lord and Teacher. His teaching brought spiritual life and growth to His hearers. Prior to this chapter, Jesus Christ had been calling people to repentance and discipleship; and many people had responded to His call (Matthew 4:17-25).

Until a sinner repents, there is nothing Christ can teach him because he is dead in sins and trespasses. When the sinner answers Christ's call and comes out of darkness into the light, out of sin unto the Saviour, out of spiritual death unto eternal life, then he could be taught by the Lord. When the Lord calls anyone, He makes the individual to forsake his past to follow Him wherever He leads. During His earthly ministry, He taught the people, preached to them and healed those who were sick among them. He enlightened them and showed them the way of the Lord. Multitudes were attracted to His ministry. He taught three categories of people – His disciples, the multitudes and the people (Matthew 5:1,2; 7:28,29). Disciples are learners who can become apostles; none can be an apostle overnight; you must first be born again, go through discipleship before becoming an apostle – the sent out ones. In His presence, we learn all that we need to live and to grow into Him.

LEARNING IN HIS PRESENCE

Matthew 5:1,2; John 3:2; Matthew 22:16; John 8:2,28; Matthew 26:55; Acts 3:22-26; 22:14,15; Matthew 11:29; Isaiah 50:4-7.

There is no secret meaning about Jesus' going to the mountain to teach the people. Seeing the audience was a large crowd, teaching on the plain like the rest of the people would not afford the listeners the opportunity to see Him. He needed to stay on an elevated plain so that everyone could see Him just like we use platforms today. There was orderliness in His congregation: He was set, settled, well-placed. He had His disciples as well as the multitudes in His audience but His disciples came out of the multitudes to the Lord because they wanted to learn.

Jesus is not only a Saviour and Lord, He is also a Teacher. People in His time knew Him to be a Teacher of a higher level: ***"Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men"***. What kind of teacher can draw you closer to God, link you with God and channel your faith to God but a teacher come from God? He was a Teacher come from God because He was teachable before the Father. Likewise, we cannot be effective teachers unless we are teachable. Jesus taught so much in His three years of ministry because He did not limit His teachings to a day of the week but He made it a daily affair. He taught daily ***"in the temple"*** in the power of God. Any day not given to teaching was considered lost.

From the ministry of Jesus, we learn that (i) He taught without fear, without favour (ii) He taught with focus and freshness (iii) He taught with firmness and finality (iv) He taught with faith and forbearance (v) He taught freely and fully (vi) He taught frequently and fervently (Luke 23:5) (vii) He taught faithfully and fearlessly.

LEANING ON HIS PROMISE

Matthew 5:1,2; Deuteronomy 31:12; Philippians 4:9; John 13:17; 15:4,5; Philippians 4:13; Romans 8:3,4; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; Ephesians 3:20.

Christ is ***"a teacher come from God"*** indeed. The difference between Him (Christ, the great Teacher) and other teachers like Moses, David and Daniel was that His Words proceed with transforming power to accomplish in His hearers His good purpose. These Old Testament saints could not transform the people they taught but Christ had the power to teach and transform His hearers. While the audience of these Old Testament teachers could not find grace to obey the truth they were taught, the audience He taught received enabling grace to obey His Words. This happened as they listened and leaned upon the Lord for grace to obey Him. As they relied on Him, they received the power to practise what Christ taught them. Thus, they received the fulfilment of His promises in their lives. We also

need to lean on the promise of God to be able to practise the Word of God. The purpose of teaching or listening to the teaching of the Word of God is not just to acquire head knowledge. It is so that the Word can bear fruit in our lives and characters. It is so that the Word we hear can become principles in our hearts by which we live. ***“Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you”*** (Philippians 4:9). What we know must correspond with our practice because knowledge is a means to an end. ***“If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them”*** (John 13:17).

Believers must endeavour to receive grace from God to be able to obey His Word. This is because Christ’s teachings are supernatural; and we need supernatural power to be able to do them. People are not able to practise the Word of God when they do not rely on Him. They find certain truths in the Word of God too hard to obey. But the truth is, believers can obey every Word of God because it is through it that He strengthens us. The indwelling Christ enables us to obey the Word of God. It is possible to obey every Word of the Lord. Against rising doubts, every believer must in faith reassure himself that: ***“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me”*** (Philippians 4:13). The power of the Word of God works in our hearts by faith to activate us to do His will. The purpose of learning is doing and the power for doing is Christ in us.

LIVING BY HIS PRECEPTS

Matthew 5:1,2; 7:24-27; John 8:30-32; Luke 8:15; John 14:21; Revelation 22:14; Matthew 7:21-23; James 1:21-25.

We know what, when and where Christ taught. But why did He teach them? Christ taught His audience so that they will live by His teachings. Why do you teach the Word of God or listen to the teaching of God’s Word? We teach people so they can practise the Word. We attend church services to listen to the Word of God to be able to practise, grow and live by His precepts. ***“Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock ... and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock”*** (Matthew 7:24,25). Those who live by the Word of God are blessed because they receive the grace to do them through earnest prayer to God. The second group listens to Christ’s Word but is ***“foolish”*** and porous because they hear and would not do it. Christ ***“likened [them] unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it”*** (Matthew 7:26,27).

It is he who keeps Christ’s commandments that truly loves Him. If the Lord is precious and dear to us, His Word will be precious to us. Commitment to continuously obey His precepts guarantees, not only abundance of blessings on earth, but also entrance into heaven. It is our Christian lifestyle (not signs and wonders in ministry) that qualifies us for heaven. We must first enter heaven through obedience and holy lifestyle before we can be rewarded for service.

If you are blessed by these bible study outlines, we’d like to hear from you.
You can email the pastor@dclm-liverpool.org.uk with your comments