

'THE REST OF THE STORY'

Life of Christ Series

Luke's Gospel

Training the 12

Like students preparing in stages of academic progress for a life vocation, disciples matriculate from believers (*freshmen*), to followers (*sophomores*), to disciples (*juniors*), to ministers of the Lord Jesus Christ (*seniors*). With the twelve, Jesus' curriculum of God's Word combined with on the job field trips for three years empowered and equipped them to be His apostolic and prophetic foundation of the New Testament Scriptures and the Church (*Ephesians 2:20-22*).

Upon the passing of the first century AD and the Apostolic Era, the transitional offices of *apostles* and *prophets* were replaced by *evangelists* and *pastor-teachers* (*Ephesians 4:11-12*). Now with the Lord Jesus interceding for believers in heaven and the Holy Spirit mentoring them on earth through the stages of discipleship, it seems reasonable that new Christians should also matriculate quickly into strong, functional servants in some regular area of ministry in a local church in about the same 3½ year time period.

Jesus' training of the twelve began after His baptism in probably AD 28 (*John 1*). After His time in the wilderness, their training resumed in Galilee with Christ's call for them to '*follow Him*'. For several months into AD 29 they followed the Lord as He taught and healed throughout Galilee.

In probably summertime of AD 29 Jesus gave the Sermon on the Mount (*Matthew 5-7*) affirming His offer of the kingdom of God to Israel. This sermon was an elaboration on the Old Testament Law which made obedience from the heart, not just outward superficial compliance the standard of the coming kingdom of God on earth (*the millennial kingdom*). And although absolute conformity to the SOM will only happen in that future era when Christ returns, it is the goal of Church Age Christians to live that way in this present life before His second coming.

Shortly after that, Jesus officially chose the twelve publicly and preached about their mission as His disciples (*Matthew 10*). Later in the house (Capernaum) (*Mark 3:19b*), the Lord taught again from the SOM with various changes fitting for the disciples then (and now) to understand as they go out to minister in His Name (*Luke 6:20-49*).

It is important, therefore, to understand the purpose of the differences seen in these 3 speeches of Jesus primarily spoken to *matriculating disciples*. The *Matthew* SOM was given to the first official disciples, the others probably there listening intently and the larger mass of people in attendance (*multitude* / *Matthew 5:1*). The second *disciple job description* speech by Jesus is given in *Matthew 10* immediately after the official public recognition of the twelve.

In the house back in Capernaum, Jesus repeats a shorter version of the original SOM with notable omissions and additions (only 4 beatitudes, but 4 new 'woe' statements; no statement about having come to fulfill the law / *Matthew 5:17-20*; nothing about 'no murder', 'no adultery', 'no divorce', 'no oaths'. Nor does Luke's account record instructions about public good works, prayer and fasting or not worrying about material desires (*most of Matthew 6*).

The *Matthew 7* conclusion to the SOM has a similar beginning about *not judging* and similar ending like *Luke 6* about the wise and foolish man, but Luke doesn't include the '*ask and it shall be given you*' passage (*Matthew 7:7-11*), *the broad way and the narrow way to life* (*Matthew 7:13-14*), *knowing false teachers by their lifestyle* (*Matthew 7: 15-20*) and *those who say Lord, Lord and perish anyway* (*Matthew 7:21-23*). Both include *the golden rule* verse. In *Matthew 5-7 Sermon on the Mount* by Jesus, there are 111 verses but only 29 verses by Jesus in the *Luke 6 Sermon in the House*.

Obviously then, *Luke* is not the same speech of Jesus in *Matthew* only paraphrased or simplified (by *Luke 6*) things have changed – it appears to be a much different message given in a different place, months later, to a different audience.

- But the question remains, why the specific omissions and additions?
- What are the possible reasons Jesus speaks differently to the 12 later, than to them and the crowds in the beginning?
 - Later in *Luke 6* Christ and the kingdom have essentially been rejected by the official religious leadership of Israel (*it's becoming clear the kingdom isn't going to be established at Jesus' 1st coming*). Thus, although the *Matthew 5-7 SOM* remains the best biblical lifestyle of Christians, it's global millennial kingdom age application will not soon become a reality in this fallen world.
 - The twelve in having become official disciples of Christ now have greater ability to overcome and are living victoriously in the areas not reiterated in *Luke 6*. The closer you are in following Jesus, the less need there is for warnings about failure in the Christian life (*James 4:7-10*).

Discussion Group Questions:

- Talk about the statement: '*Being a Christian disciple is SO HARD!*' (*agree or disagree?*) (*explain*)
- Discuss why the above way of 'rightly dividing the Word of God' about the Sermon on the Mount is important to study of any passage of Scripture to get the right understanding of it.
- How can you tell when you have progressed (*spiritually matriculated*) from believer to follower of Jesus Christ? How can you tell when you have graduated to *disciple* from *follower*?
- Discuss *Luke 6:46* and the many today who 'say' Jesus is Lord, but they sure don't live like He is.