

Examining Christian Doctrine

Lesson 15: The Words and Works of Jesus Part 3: – Words

There is no doubt that Jesus' teaching and words have made a huge impact in human history. Some of the greatest sayings we know of come from Jesus, such as: the Beatitudes, the golden rule, Jesus' parables, his 'I Am' statements, his interaction with Nicodemus where he gives us the most famous verse in the Bible, John 3:16, among many more statements. In this lesson we will explore the words of Jesus and see exactly what he taught and how he taught it.

Categories of Jesus' Teachings

Jesus spoke and taught in many different styles, from long discourses to simple one-sentence statements. Here is a breakdown of the categories of Jesus' words and teachings.

1. **Sermons and Long Discourses:** Jesus' long formal discourses and sermons are foundational to Jesus' teachings, encompassing profound spiritual, ethical, and eschatological themes. These discourses reveal Jesus' deep theological insights, His call to a higher moral standard, and His focus on the coming Kingdom, providing timeless guidance and hope for His followers.
 - The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7), Sermon on the Plain (Luke 6:17-49)
 - The Missionary Discourse (Matthew 10)
 - The Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24-25, Mark 13, Luke 21)
 - Discourses in John
 - New Birth - John 3
 - Living Water - John 4
 - Divine Son - John 5
 - Bread of Life - John 6
 - Light of the World - John 8
 - Good Shepherd - John 10
 - The Farewell Discourse (John 13-17)

2. **Parables:** Jesus' often used stories to illustrate a moral or spiritual point to his audience, these stories are called parables. Parables often serve as a means of calling forth a response from the hearers, to get them to think and then realize the parable is about them. Interpreting a parable is sometimes like interpreting a joke – a good joke will draw you in with the story and then hit you with the punch line. Also, to properly interpret parables, we must pay attention to the audience Jesus was speaking to (Matthew 21:43-45)
 - Parables of the Kingdom of God/Heaven
 - Parables of Wealth and Stewardship
 - Parables of Love and Forgiveness
 - Parables of Judgment and Accountability, etc. (See list of parables)

3. **Personal Encounters and Conversations:** Jesus' conversations with individuals in the Gospels are deeply personal and transformative, revealing His compassion, insight, and the inclusive nature of His ministry. These conversations demonstrate Jesus' ability to address individual needs and spiritual conditions, offering guidance, correction, and hope.
 - a. Conversation with Nicodemus (John 3:1-21)
 - b. Samaritan Woman at the Well (John 4:1-42)
 - c. Woman caught in adultery (John 8:1-11)
 - d. Man born blind (John 9:1-41)
 - e. Rich Young Ruler (Matthew 19:16-22)

4. **Religious Arguments:** Jesus' arguments with the religious leaders, particularly the Pharisees and scribes, often centered on their legalism, hypocrisy, and misunderstanding of God's laws. He criticized them for focusing on outward rituals and strict adherence to the letter of the law while neglecting the spirit of the law, such as justice, mercy, and faithfulness. Key disputes included debates over the Sabbath (e.g., healing on the Sabbath and picking grain), ritual purity, and the authority of Jesus' teachings.
 - a. With John's disciples about fasting (Matthew 9:14-17)
 - b. Arguments with Pharisees about the Sabbath (Matthew 12:1-8, 12:9-14)
 - Picking Grain on the Sabbath (Matthew 12:1-8)
 - Healing on the Sabbath (Matthew 12:9-14, John 5:1-18)
 - c. Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit (Matthew 12:22-32)
 - d. Traditions and Commandments (Matthew 15:1-20)
 - e. Denunciation of the Pharisees' Hypocrisy (Matthew 23:1-36)

5. **Teaching with His Disciples:** Jesus' private teachings with His disciples offer intimate insights into His mission, the Kingdom of God, and discipleship. Away from the crowds, He delves into deeper theological truths, preparing His followers for the challenges ahead. These private moments fostered a close bond between Jesus and His disciples, nurturing their faith and empowering them to continue His mission after His departure.
 - a. Teaching on humility and forgiveness (Matthew 18:1-35)
 - b. Prediction of His Death and Resurrection (Matthew 16:21-28, 17:22-23, 20:17-19)
 - c. The Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-13, Luke 9:28-29)
 - d. Greatness and Service (Mark 9:33-37, 10:35-45)
 - e. The Lords Prayer (Luke 11:1-4)
 - f. The Last Supper (Luke 22:14-38)
 - g. Washing the Disciples Feet and New Commandment (John 13:1-17, 34-35)
 - h. Farewell Discourse (John 14-16)

6. **Jesus' Prayers:** Jesus' prayers to the Father reveal the depth of His relationship with God and His complete dependence on Him. Whether in moments of solitude or amidst the tumult of His ministry, Jesus sought communion with the Father, pouring out His heart in supplication, thanksgiving, and surrender. Through His prayers, Jesus models for His followers a life of prayerful dependence on God, demonstrating the power and significance of communion with the Father in navigating life's challenges and fulfilling God's purposes.
 - a. Jesus would withdraw for times of prayer (Mark 1:35, Luke 5:15-16, 6:12-13, Matthew 14, 22-23)
 - b. Jesus gives thanks to God in prayer (Matt. 11:25-26; Lk. 10:21-22, Matt. 14:19; Mk. 6:41; Lk. 9:16; John 6:11, Matt. 15:36; Mk. 8:6-7, John 11:41-42)
 - c. Praying in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36-44; Mark 14:32-39; Luke 22:41-44)
 - d. High Priestly Prayer (John 17)
 - e. Jesus Prays on the Cross (Luke 23:34, Matthew 27, 46, Mark 15:34, Luke 23:46)

THE PARABLES OF JESUS BY SUBJECT

1. Parables of the Kingdom of God	Matthew	Mark	Luke
• Parable of the Sower	13:3-9, 18-23	4:3-9, 13-20	8:5-8, 11-15
• Parable of the Wheat and Tares	13:24-30, 36-43		
• Parable of the Mustard Seed	13:31-32	4:30-32	13:18-19
• Parable of the Yeast (Leaven)	13:33		13:20-21
• Parable of the Hidden Treasure	13:44		
• Parable of the Pearl of Great Price	13:45-46		
• Parable of the Net	13:47-50		
• Parable of the Growing Seed		4:26-29	
2. Parables of Grace and Forgiveness			
• Parable of the Unforgiving Servant	18:23-35		
• Parable of the Lost Sheep	18:12-14		15:3-7
• Parable of the Lost Coin			15:8-10
• Parable of the Prodigal Son			15:11-32
• Parable of the Two Debtors			7:41-43
3. Parables of Love and Compassion			
• Parable of the Good Samaritan			10:25-37
4. Parables of Prayer and Persistence			
• Parable of the Friend at Midnight			11:5-8
• Parable of the Persistent Widow			18:1-8
5. Parables of Wealth and Stewardship			
• Parable of the Rich Fool			12:16-21
• Parable of the Shrewd Manager			16:1-9
• Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus			16:19-31
• Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard	20:1-16		
6. Parables of Humility and Pride			
• Parable of the Places of Honor			14:7-11
• Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector			18:9-14
7. Parables of Judgment and Readiness			
• Parable of the Barren Fig Tree			13:6-9
• Parable of the Fig Tree	24:32-35	13:28-31	21:29-33
• Parable of the Faithful and Wise Servant	24:45-51		12:42-48
• Parable of the Ten Virgins	25:1-13		
• Parable of the Talents	25:14-30		
• Parable of the Net	13:47-50		
• Parable of the Wedding Banquet	22:1-14		14:15-24
• Parable of the Sheep and the Goats	25:31-46		
8. Parables of Obedience and Doing God's Will			
• Parable of the Two Sons	21:28-32		
• Parable of the Tenants	21:33-46	12:1-12	20:9-19
• Parable of the Wise and Foolish Builders	7:24-27		6:47-49
9. Other Parables			
• Parable of the Hidden Lamp	5:14-16	4:21-22	8:16-17, 11:33-36
• Parable of New Cloth on an Old Garment	9:16	2:21	5:36
• Parable of New Wine in Old Wineskins	9:17	2:11	5:37-38

Subject of Jesus' Teachings

Jesus' Main Subjects:

▪ Ethical and Moral Teachings

- Jesus' ethical and moral teachings form the backbone of His ministry, embodying a radical vision of righteousness rooted in love, compassion, and justice. Central to His message was the call to love God with all one's heart, soul, and mind, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, encapsulating the essence of the law and the prophets. Then instituting a 'new command' to 'love as Christ has loved us.' He challenged conventional notions of righteousness, condemning hypocrisy, self-righteousness, and the oppression of the vulnerable. Instead, Jesus emphasized humility, mercy, and forgiveness, teaching His followers to turn the other cheek, go the extra mile, and bless those who persecute them.

▪ Salvation and Eternal Life:

- Jesus' teachings on salvation and eternal life pivot on the foundational truth of God's redemptive plan for humanity. He proclaimed Himself as the way, the truth, and the life, asserting that salvation comes through faith in Him. Central to His message was the concept of repentance and belief in the Gospel, signifying a turning away from sin and a wholehearted embrace of God's grace. Jesus offered assurance of eternal life to those who put their trust in Him, promising eternal and abundant life. Furthermore, Jesus emphasized the necessity of being born again by the Spirit, indicating a spiritual rebirth that brings about transformation and newness of life. His teachings on salvation extend an open invitation to all, irrespective of background or status, affirming God's inclusive love and desire for reconciliation with humanity.

▪ Teachings on the Kingdom of God

- Jesus' teachings on the Kingdom of God stand as a central theme in His ministry, Jesus taught on the subject of the Kingdom more than anything else. His teaching encapsulated His vision for the establishment of God's reign on earth. He proclaimed that the Kingdom was at hand, he demonstrated the power of the kingdom, and he invited His followers to repent and be born again to be a part of this Kingdom. Jesus' parables vividly portrayed the nature and characteristics of the Kingdom, illustrating its growth, value, and inclusive nature. He challenged prevailing understandings of nationalistic kingdoms, power and authority, by presenting a spiritual Kingdom marked by humility, servanthood, righteousness, and defeat of spiritual enemies. Moreover, Jesus emphasized the Kingdom's transformative impact on individuals and society, offering hope for the poor and the oppressed. Through His teachings and actions, Jesus inaugurated the Kingdom, ushering in a new era of God's rule characterized by love, justice, and peace.

Other subjects:

- **The New Covenant:** Jesus instituted the New Covenant prophesied in Jeremiah 31. He did this through preaching new birth, the coming of the Spirit, the Lords Supper, a new commandment, and his death.
- **Love and Compassion:** Love for God and neighbor as the greatest commandments (Matthew 22:37-40). Compassion for the oppressed (e.g., healing the sick, befriending sinners).
- **Faith and Trust in God:** Encouragement to have faith in God's provision (e.g., teaching on worry in Matthew 6:25-34). Emphasis on belief in Jesus as the Son of God (John 3:16-18).
- **Forgiveness and Reconciliation:** Importance of forgiving others as God forgives (Matthew 6:14-15, Parable of the Unforgiving Servant in Matthew 18:21-35). Reconciliation with others before worship (Matthew 5:23-24).
- **Humility and Servanthood:** Teaching on humility and the last being first (Matthew 20:25-28). Example of servant hood in washing the disciples' feet (John 13:1-17).
- **Righteousness and Holiness:** Call to higher righteousness surpassing that of the Pharisees (Matthew 5:20). Holiness in thoughts and actions (Matthew 5:27-30).
- **Prayer and Worship:** Model of the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13). Teaching on sincere worship (John 4:23-24).
- **Eschatological Teachings (Coming Judgment):** Teachings about the end of the age and warnings of coming judgment. Examples: Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24-25), Parable of the Ten Virgins (Matt. 25:1-13).