



Provided by the Church of the Lutheran Confession - Board of Missions

New Testament Survey

Lesson 5 – The Twelve Apostles and Jesus' Sermon on the Mount

Read the listed passages as you study each of the events below:

Many are healed (Matthew 4:25; Matthew 12:15-21; Mark 3:7-12; Luke 6:17-19)

Although the Pharisees were already planning to kill Jesus, Jesus was very popular with the common people. They came from Galilee, Judea, Idumea, Perea, the Ten Towns (the Decapolis), and the regions of Tyre and Sidon. Jesus healed all who came to Him for help.

The twelve apostles (Matthew 5:1; Matthew 10:2-4; Mark 3:13-19; Luke 6:12-17)

Jesus prayed all night on a mountain. In the morning He chose some of His disciples to be His apostles. Disciples are followers of Jesus. Apostles are those *sent out* by Jesus on some spiritual mission. The word “apostle” comes from the Greek word meaning “sent”.

Peter/Simon/Cephas – Peter and Cephas both mean “Rock”. He was a natural leader and spokesman for the apostles. He was a fisherman from Bethsaida, a son of Jonah, the brother of Andrew. He was impulsive by nature. He was one of the inner three disciples (along with James and John). He was married. He denied Jesus. He was the preacher on Pentecost. He worked in Jerusalem, Lydda, Joppa, Antioch of Syria – chiefly among the Jews. Most likely he spent his last days in Rome and was crucified there by Nero. Tradition said he was crucified upside down because he did not feel worthy to suffer the same death as his Lord Jesus. Peter wrote two Bible letters, and He probably was involved with writing of the Gospel of Mark. The Roman Catholic Church falsely claims (based on Matthew 16:19) that Peter was the first pope.

Andrew – Peter’s brother. He was at first a disciple of John the Baptist. He introduced Peter to Jesus. He was a fisherman from Bethsaida with his brother Peter.

James – the son of Zebedee and Salome (most likely the sister of Jesus’ mother Mary). He was the brother of John. He was a fisherman and one of the inner three disciples (along with Peter and John). Jesus called him and his brother John “the Sons of Thunder” (Boanerges). He was the first apostle to die as a martyr, killed by Herod Agrippa I (see Acts 12:1-2).

John – the son of Zebedee and Salome and the brother of James. He was a fisherman and one of the inner three disciples (along with Peter and James). He was perhaps the closest friend of Jesus on earth (in his Gospel, he calls himself “**that disciple whom Jesus loved**” John 21:7). He was at first a disciple of John the Baptist. He took care of Jesus’ mother Mary after Jesus died at Jesus’ request. He outlived all the other apostles. He

worked in Jerusalem and later in Ephesus. He wrote his Gospel and three Bible letters in his old age. He was exiled to the island of Patmos where he received Revelation in 95 AD.

Philip – from Bethsaida. He was a close friend of Nathanael (also known as Bartholomew). He is different from the deacon Philip who baptized the Ethiopian eunuch.

Bartholomew/Nathanael – a good friend of Philip. He was from Cana of Galilee. Jesus called him a genuine Israelite without any deceit (John 1:47).

Matthew/Levi – a tax collector (also called “publican”). He was probably well-educated. He is the author of the first Gospel, which he wrote especially for the Jews.

Thomas – his name means “Twin” (Didymus). He was the one who did not believe that Jesus rose from the dead when the other disciples told him. There is strong evidence that Thomas later brought the Gospel to India, where some believers are known as “Thomas Christians”.

James the Less – the son of Alphaeus and Mary. He is not James, the brother of the Jesus, who did not believe in Him until after His resurrection.

Thaddaeus/Lebbaeus/Judas (Jude) – the son of a man named James. He is not Jude (who wrote the Bible letter), the brother of James and Jesus.

Simon – known as Simon the Zealot, probably because he once belonged to the group of Jewish patriots known as Zealots who were plotting the overthrow of the Roman government.

Judas Iscariot – from Kerieth in Judea. He was the treasurer of the apostles and a thief who stole from their money. He was the one who betrayed Jesus and hanged himself in despair.

The Sermon on the Mount

This sermon is found in chapters 5 through 7 in the Gospel of Matthew. Luke presents the same sermon in condensed form in his 6th chapter. As any good teacher would do, Jesus repeated certain parts of His sermon at various other times. We see this repetition in Luke chapter 11. The Sermon on the Mount is one of the best-known parts of the Bible, but it is very often misunderstood as a moral code for the world. It is important to remember that this sermon was addressed to persons who were already believers in Jesus (to His disciples). It is only believers in Christ to whom the blessings apply. It is only believers in Christ who are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. It is only Christians who can begin to live the kind of life and have the kind of attitude that Jesus describes in this sermon.

The Sermon on the Mount: Blessings and Woes – The Beatitudes (Matthew 5:2-12; Luke 6:20-26)

We should not think of Jesus as describing eight different classes of believers in these verses; all Christians are really the poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, the merciful, etc., at least imperfectly in this life. God gives all the blessings listed in these verses to every believer.

The Sermon on the Mount: Salt and Light (Matthew 5:13-16; Luke 11:33)

Our Christianity should be evident in the way we act, what we say, and what is important to us. We are not to hide our Christian faith when we are with others.

The Sermon on the Mount: Jesus and the Law (Matthew 5:17-20)

Much of the Sermon on the Mount is a discussion of the Law of God. Jesus kept the law perfectly for us. God enables us, who are righteous by faith in Jesus, to keep the Law to some extent, but only imperfectly, because of our sinful flesh.

The Sermon on the Mount: Murder (Matthew 5:21-26)

Anger is murder. Name-calling is murder. We are to bring no gifts to God with anger in our hearts. We are to hold no grudges but settle quarrels quickly.

The Sermon on the Mount: Adultery (Matthew 5:27-32)

Lust in the heart is already adultery. Our soul's salvation is more important even than our bodily members, like our eyes or hands.

The government may make laws about sexual matters, marriage, and divorce that are contrary to God's plan for marriage, but a Christian should continue to regard marriage as a lifelong union between one man and one woman.

The Sermon on the Mount: Swearing (Matthew 5:33-36)

Swearing is using God's name to strengthen what you are saying. Our simple "Yes" or "No" should be trustworthy and sufficient without needing swearing an oath in God's name.

The Sermon on the Mount: Love of Enemies (Matthew 5:38-48; Luke 6:27-30, 32-36)

Christians should not be interested in revenge or getting even. Christians should try to imitate God, who is good to both good and evil. We are to love our enemies, not just those who love us. True love for God and man is the perfection that we should strive for.

The Sermon on the Mount: Self-Praise (Matthew 6:1-4; Matthew 6:16-18)

We should not do good works in order to be seen by others and to be praised by them. We should not be "do-gooders" like Boy Scouts, who make a big deal of their good works and strive to earn merit badges. We should not imitate Roman Catholic monks and nuns, who want to be known as being holier than others because of their vows, such as their vows of poverty and celibacy.

We should not put on a show of suffering, as Pharisees did when they fasted.

The Sermon on the Mount: Prayer (Matthew 6:5-15; Matthew 7:7-11; Luke 11:5-13)

Prayer is not meant to be a way of showing off your godliness and devotion. The best prayer is between God and the individual.

Vain repetitions such as the recital of the Rosary are worthless. Jesus gave His disciples a prayer to use as a model: the Lord's Prayer. Jesus wants us to pray.

God gives good gifts to those who ask Him.

The Sermon on the Mount: True Treasures (Matthew 6:19-24; Luke 11:34-36)

Who is our Master, God or Money? Where is our treasure, in heaven or on earth?

The Sermon on the Mount: Worrying (Matthew 6:25-34)

If God takes care of birds and flowers, will He not also take care of us?

The Sermon on the Mount: Self-Criticism (Matthew 7:1-5; Luke 6:37-42)

It is easy to find fault with others, but we should be more concerned with the log in our own eye than with the speck in someone else's eye. And we should show love to our neighbor in every way.

The Sermon on the Mount: Pearls to Pigs (Matthew 7:6)

When men resist the Word of God consistently, we should not bother to argue with them.

The Sermon on the Mount: The Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12; Luke 6:31)

This is perhaps the best-known of all Jesus' teachings. It provides a good summary of the Second Table of the Law: Love your neighbor as yourself.

The Sermon on the Mount: The Narrow Gate (Matthew 7:13-14)

There is a broad way that leads to hell. The road to heaven is more difficult but infinitely better.

The Sermon on the Mount: False Teachers (Matthew 7:15-23; Luke 6:43-46)

Don't be fooled by the disguise of false teachers. Their teachings give them away. Don't be taken in by hypocritical words. There are those who say many things to the Lord, but who do not do His will.

The Sermon on the Mount: The Foundation (Matthew 7:24-27; Luke 6:47-49)

Will you build on rock or sand? One will last, and one will not.

The Sermon on the Mount: The Audience (Matthew 7:28-8:1; Luke 7:1)

Jesus spoke with authority, which amazed the people.

Questions

1. What did Jesus do on the night before He chose His twelve apostles?
2. Which of the twelve apostles wrote portions of the New Testament?
3. To whom was Jesus speaking in His Sermon on the Mount?
4. How did Jesus explain the Fifth and Sixth Commandments in His Sermon?
5. In what way are we to love others? And who is to be our example?
6. What instructions did Jesus give concerning prayer?
7. What lesson can we learn from the birds and the flowers?
8. What is the so-called "Golden Rule"?
9. How did Jesus describe false teachers?
10. How can a person "build his house on rock rather than sand"?
11. In what way was the preaching of Jesus different from that of the Jewish scribes?