



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

## **New Testament Survey**

### **Lesson 8 – Jesus Withdraws from Galilee**

#### **Jesus Withdraws**

As soon as Jesus' apostles returned from their preaching tour, Jesus wanted to give them a little vacation, but the crowds made this impossible as long as they stayed in Galilee. Therefore, after Jesus fed the five thousand and did some other healing and teaching in Galilee, He and His disciples went far away to the region of Tyre and Sidon in the north-west. From there they went all the way to the Ten Towns (Decapolis) in the east. Near the Sea of Galilee Jesus fed the four thousand. He then went across the lake to Magdala, and then across the lake again to Bethsaida. Then He and His disciples went far north to the region around Caesarea of Philip (Caesarea Philippi). Since Mt. Hermon, which is over 2750 meters (9000 feet) above sea level, is in that region, it is likely that Mt. Hermon was the scene of Jesus' transfiguration, which was witnessed by Peter, James, and John. Meanwhile the other nine disciples were unable to help a father who was concerned about his son who was afflicted in his body by Satan. During this time Jesus was spending less time with the crowds and more time training His apostles and instructing them concerning His coming suffering, death, and resurrection.

#### **Jesus' Teaching Concerning His Church**

In the Bible the word "church" does not refer to a building or to an organization. It refers to a gathering of people – almost always a group who believe in Jesus. Jesus told His disciples that He would build His Church on the rock of Peter's confession of Christ.

The Roman Catholic Church has tried to use these words to prove that Jesus named Peter the head of His Church on earth, and that Jesus intended Peter to pass on this authority to others after him, thus establishing the office of the pope as ruler of the Church. But Peter did not act as such a head during his lifetime, nor did any of his so-called successors (the pastors in Rome) until several hundreds of years later.

It is true that Jesus gave the keys of the kingdom of heaven to Peter, but He also gave these same keys to all of His disciples (see Matthew 18). The ministry of the keys is the authority to forgive sins and retain sins in the name of Christ.

The Roman Catholic Church promotes and tolerates false teachings of all kinds, and the pope himself is the foretold Antichrist, as we shall see when we study the second chapter of 2 Thessalonians.

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

***Unclean hands*** (Matthew 15:1-20; Mark 7:1-23)

The Jews elders passed down the tradition of washing one's hands up to the wrist before every meal. The most famous the Jewish elders, Shammai and Hillel, disagreed on many things, but they agreed on the necessity of this hand-washing. The Jews criticized Jesus' disciples for not following this tradition.

Jesus then pointed out to them that their tradition of Corban (promising a gift to God) was annulling the Fourth Commandment of God.

Jesus also explained that food cannot make a man unclean; what comes out of the mouth makes a man unclean, or rather, reveals one's unclean heart.

***The Syrophenician Woman*** (Matthew 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30)

A heathen woman asked Jesus to heal her daughter. Jesus' refusal appeared cruel, but He did this to draw out her faith. She confessed her unworthiness. She agreed with Jesus that she was but a house dog, but even as such a house dog she could eat the crumbs from the master's table. Her faith was great, and Jesus healed her daughter.

***A deaf man with a speech impediment*** (Matthew 15:29-31; Mark 7:31-37)

Jesus did many miracles in Decapolis. Jesus healed a deaf man who had trouble talking by saying the word "**Ephphatha**" (Mark 7:34).

***Jesus feeds four thousand*** (Matthew 15:32-39; Mark 8:1-9)

This time Jesus used 7 loaves and a few fish, and there were 7 baskets of leftovers.

***A proof from heaven*** (Matthew 15:39-16:4; Mark 8:10-13)

Jesus gave His enemies no sign other than the sign of Jonah (His coming resurrection).

***The yeast of the Pharisees*** (Matthew 16:5-12; Mark 8:13-21)

The disciples forgot to bring bread with them on their trip across the lake. When Jesus warned them of the yeast (leaven) of false teaching, the disciples thought that Jesus was scolding them for having forgotten to bring bread, but they should have realized that He who had fed the five thousand and the four thousand would not be concerned about their lack of earthly bread. Jesus was concerned about the false teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

***A blind man*** (Mark 8:22-26)

Jesus used outward means to carry out this healing, and He did it in two steps. Jesus had no set pattern for healing, so that He would not be suspected of using some kind of magical spell.

***"You are the Son of God"*** (Matthew 16:13-20; Mark 8:27-30; Luke 9:18-21)

Jesus now went far north to the Caesarea of Philip in order to be alone with His disciples. In response to Jesus' questioning Peter confessed his faith in Jesus as the Christ and Savior. Jesus then called the confession of Peter (which means "a piece rock") the bedrock on which He would build His church<sup>1</sup> and said He would give him the keys of the kingdom of heaven, that is, the ministry of the keys to open or close heaven. Later Jesus promised these same keys to all of His disciples (see Matthew 18). In fact, they have been given to all Christians even to this very day (John 20:23).

***"I will die and rise again"*** (Matthew 16:21-23; Mark 8:31-33; Luke 9:22)

For the first time Jesus plainly foretold His coming suffering, death, and resurrection. Previously He had talked about His death and resurrection like the temple that would be rebuilt in three days, the lifting up of the Son of Man like the bronze serpent, and the experience of Jonah in the fish's belly (the sign of Jonah). Peter rebuked Jesus for wanting to carry out this plan, but Jesus then called Peter Satan for trying to get Jesus to give up God's eternal plan for man's salvation.

***Take up your cross*** (Matthew 16:24-28; Mark 8:34-9:1; Luke 9:23-27)

This is the second time Jesus spoke of the cross of Christians<sup>2</sup>. This cross is the suffering that comes to us just because we are Christians – the slander, persecution, and possibly even death we face because of our faith. We must all expect such a cross, but eternal life is more precious than the whole world: **"What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"** (Matthew 16:26, Mark 8:36, compare to Luke 9:25).

Jesus then said that some of His disciples would see Him come in power. This probably refers to Pentecost, the spread of the Gospel in the early church, and the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD.

***Jesus shows His glory (the Transfiguration)*** (Matthew 17:1-13; Mark 9:2-13; Luke 9:28-36)

There are two trios: first Jesus, talking with Moses and Elijah; then also Peter, James, and John. On this high mountain the Father said of Jesus: **"This is My beloved Son... Hear Him!"** (Matthew 17:5, Mark 9:7, Luke 9:35).

Jesus again foretold His resurrection and explained that John the Baptist was the Elijah that was promised as the forerunner of the Messiah.

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<sup>1</sup> The name "Peter" comes from the masculine Greek noun *Petros* (Πέτρος), which refers to a separate *piece* of rock. Jesus said He would build His church on "this *petra* (πέτρα)", a feminine noun that refers to a *mass* of rock or bedrock, and not to a separate piece of rock. This difference shows that Jesus was not saying that He would build His church on Peter (and his successors), as the Roman Catholic Church falsely claims, but on Peter's confession of who Jesus is. Jesus is the only foundation (or bedrock) of the church (1 Corinthians 3:11).

<sup>2</sup> see ***Jesus sends out the twelve*** (Matthew 10:1,5-11:1; Mark 6:7-13; Luke 9:1-6) in lesson 7

***The epileptic boy*** (Matthew 17:14-21; Mark 9:14-29; Luke 9:37-43)

Even though Jesus had given His apostles power to drive out evil spirits, Jesus' nine disciples failed to heal this epileptic boy because of their lack of faith in Jesus' promise. Because of our own weaknesses, we should remember these words of the boy's father: **"Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!"** (Mark 9:24).

***"I will die and rise again"*** (Matthew 17:22-23; Mark 9:30-32; Luke 9:43-45)

Jesus solemnly repeated His prediction (see above), but the apostles did not understand.

***A coin in a fish's mouth*** (Matthew 17:24-27)

Jesus produced the required Temple tax money in a highly unusual way.

***"Who is the greatest?"*** (Matthew 18:1-5; Mark 9:33-37; Luke 9:46-48)

Why do Christians argue about who is better than the other? The greatest of all is the child and the childlike – the simple humble believer who is willing to serve his neighbor.

***"He is for us"*** (Mark 9:38-41; Luke 9:49-50)

Jesus did not forbid the casting out of devils in His name, even when it was done by someone who was not one of the apostles.

***Do I lead others to sin?*** (Matthew 18:6-14; Mark 9:42-50; Luke 17:1-3)

Jesus talked about offenses. Causing offense means causing someone to stumble in his faith. Causing little children to lose their faith is certainly a horrible sin.

***Tell him his fault*** (Matthew 18:15-20)

Jesus presents the Christian way to deal with those who continue to sin. He gives four steps of brotherly admonition:

1. Talk to the person privately. Your aim is to have them acknowledge their sin so that you can forgive him.
2. If they continue in their sin, take one or two witnesses with you.
3. If they continue in their sin, present the matter to the larger group of Christians (the church).
4. If they continue in their sin, regard the person as a heathen.

***Forgive*** (Matthew 18:21-35; Luke 17:3-4)

Jesus forgave our huge debt of 10 000 talents (a talent was the pay for about 20 years of work). Therefore, we should forgive others the small debts of 100 denarii (a denarius was the pay for a day of work). Whenever we say the Fifth Petition of the Lord's Prayer, we should remember this parable.

## Questions

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1. Whose rules were Jesus and His disciples transgressing when they did not wash their hands in the prescribed way?
2. Whose rules were the Pharisees transgressing with their teaching about Corban?
3. Why did Jesus deal as He did with the Syro-Phoenician woman?
4. What mistake did Jesus' disciples make when Jesus talked about leaven?
5. In what way is false teaching like leaven?
6. What did Jesus mean by saying He would give the keys to Peter?
7. In what way is the Roman Catholic teaching about the keys a false doctrine?
8. Why did Jesus refer to Peter as Satan?
9. What was special about the Transfiguration of Jesus?
10. What incident led Jesus to set up a child as an example?
11. What are some actions that might cause a believer to lose his faith?
12. What is the purpose of brotherly admonition?
13. Why should we be willing to forgive the faults of our neighbor?