

The Ministry of Christ, Part 7

Immediately after Jesus healed the man with the withered hand on the Sabbath, He again faced severe opposition from the Pharisees. They concluded that Jesus was attempting to overthrow the entire Mosaic system and everything they believed, taught and promoted, and as a result He had to be destroyed.

The Pharisees Oppose Christ – Matthew 12:14; Mark 3:6; Luke 6:11

Watch what they did.

Matthew 12:14 NKJV Then the Pharisees went out and plotted against Him, how they might destroy Him.

Although the man who had a withered hand had been healed, all they could see was Jesus' actions went against their understanding of the Sabbath. Rather than rejoicing that the man had been healed, they plotted to destroy Jesus.

Matthew 12:15 NKJV But when Jesus knew it, He withdrew from there. And great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them all.

Instead of confronting them, Jesus withdrew. It is important to remind ourselves that Jesus had the authority and power to completely destroy those who opposed Him. Instead of exacting judgment, in humility, meekness and patience, He withdrew from there. Watch the response of the multitudes after Jesus healed the man with the withered hand and stepped away from the Pharisees. They found in Jesus exactly what they needed and great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them all.

The Lord's actions perfectly fulfilled what the prophets spoke about Him.

Matthew 12:18-21 NKJV "Behold! My Servant whom I have chosen, My Beloved in whom My soul is well pleased! I will put My Spirit upon Him, And He will declare justice to the Gentiles. He will not quarrel nor cry out, Nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets. A bruised reed He will not break, And smoking flax He will not quench, Till He sends forth justice to victory; And in His name Gentiles will trust."

The Lord's actions amplify the purpose of His coming to bring salvation, healing, and deliverance. Jesus gave His disciples a similar instruction for action when they were persecuted and rejected.

Matthew 10:23 NKJV When they persecute you in this city, flee to another. For assuredly, I say to you, you will not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes.

Why did Jesus give His disciples this kind of message instead of telling them to confront their critics and troublemakers? This recognizes the fundamental reason for Jesus coming into this world. Instead of

spending time and energy in endless debates and arguments, Jesus turned to people who were hurting, wounded, bruised. The purpose for the Son of Man coming was to seek and save those who are lost and bring relief and healing to those who are in need. As a result of staying true to the purpose for their coming, supernatural events happened in the disciples' ministries and in Christ's ministry. The power of the Gospel transforms lives.

Many Healed Near Galilee – Matthew 12:15; Mark 3:7-12

Mark 3:7–10 NKJV But Jesus withdrew with His disciples to the sea. And a great multitude from Galilee followed Him, and from Judea and Jerusalem and Idumea and beyond the Jordan; and those from Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they heard how many things He was doing, came to Him. So He told His disciples that a small boat should be kept ready for Him because of the multitude, lest they should crush Him. For He healed many, so that as many as had afflictions pressed about Him to touch Him.

This was an amazing time when the numbers of miracles and healings increased among the multitudes.

Matthew 12:16 says *“He healed them all.”*

Mark 3:11–12 NKJV And the unclean spirits, whenever they saw Him, fell down before Him and cried out, saying, “You are the Son of God.” But He sternly warned them that they should not make Him known.

It is important to note that unbelief is more destructive and debilitating to ministry, miracles and healing than the presence of the demon possessed. Jesus made it clear that His ministry and ability to do miracles was hindered when people did not believe. Throughout the Gospel of Mark, Jesus told others—those He healed or raised from the dead, the disciples who recognized Him as the Christ, and the demons who had a correct understanding of His true identity—not to reveal Who He was (Mark 1:34, 44; 3:11–12; 5:43; 7:36; 8:29–30; 9:9, 26, 30). Jesus was not seeking the acclaim of a popular opinion or fame, He was looking for the faith and earnest and true commitment of people who were seeking God.

The Twelve Ordained –Matthew 10:1-4; Mark 3:13-19; Luke 6:12-16

This ordination included the appointment of the disciples to do ministry and their equipping to accomplish the assignment.

Matthew 10:2-4 ESV The names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon, who is called **Peter**, and **Andrew** his brother; **James** the son of Zebedee, and **John** his brother; **Philip** and **Bartholomew**; **Thomas** and

Matthew the tax collector; **James** the son of Alphaeus, and **Thaddaeus**; **Simon** the Zealot, and **Judas Iscariot**, who betrayed him.

Mark 3:13–15 NKJV And He went up on the mountain and called to Him those He Himself wanted. And they came to Him. Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons:

Matthew 10:1 NKJV And when He had called His twelve disciples to Him, He gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease.

When Jesus appointed the twelve, He gave them power and authority to carry out their assignments. This kind of authority carried with it the equipping to do the same things Jesus was anointed by the Holy Spirit and by God the Father to do. It was somewhat similar to what happened when Elisha received the mantle and spirit of Elijah. This kind of ordination and appointment brought the twelve into the Lord's ministry. It appears that He is sharing His anointing of the Holy Spirit that was upon Christ and brought Him into ministry.

Matthew 10:5-42 records the detailed ordination charge.

This text goes into great detail about their ministry and what they were to go and do.

- They should go and minister to Israel.
- They should preach the kingdom of heaven is at hand, heal the sick, raise dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons, and freely give.
- They should take no money, supplies, or extra clothes because a workman is worthy of his hire. This not only indicates God's blessings and supply, but also the care that should be given to them.
- When they enter a home, if it is a worthy place, they should let their peace rest on it, but if they are rejected or face opposition, they should shake the dust from their feet and it will be worse for that place than Sodom and Gomorrah.
- They were restricted to accepting hospitality from those who received their message.
- They should be innocent and harmless as doves, but they should be wise and cautious because they were going out like sheep in the midst of wolves.
- They should be on guard because they will be challenged before councils, synagogues, governors and kings for their testimony of Christ and would be hated and treated no better than their Lord.
- They should not be anxious about how they should speak for they

would be given what to say by the Holy Spirit.

- When they are persecuted they should flee to another town.
- He ended their ordination by telling them they would be rewarded and those who received them would be rewarded.

Matthew 11:1 NKJV Now it came to pass, when Jesus finished commanding His twelve disciples, that He departed from there to teach and to preach in their cities.

After appointing the twelve, Jesus gave His longest recorded discourse to the multitudes.

The Sermon on the Mount — Matthew 5–7; Luke 6:20–49

This is such an important discourse, we will spend some time looking at details of the message.

The Beatitudes

Matthew 5:1–2 NKJV And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying:

This sermon on the mount is addressed to all who believe and come to Him. Luke 6:17-20 tells us that a large crowd of His disciples were present and a great number from all over Judea, Jerusalem and from the coast of Tyre and Sidon. Matthew 4:24-25 includes people from all Syria, Galilee, Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan. They had come to hear Him and to be healed of their diseases. Those who were troubled by evil spirits were cured and everyone was trying to touch Him because power was coming from Him to heal them all.

Luke 6:20 – “He lifted His eyes toward His disciples.”

The beatitudes convey a spiritual state of happiness and well-being.

This blessedness refers to the deep joy of the soul and describes the condition of those who share in salvation and the kingdom of God. The attitude of kingdom citizens is different from the attitude of the citizen of the world. The first four beatitudes portray the condition of those who belong to God. The last five demonstrate the actions that result from this inner attitude. Together they stress being and living rather than doing. This blessedness demonstrates how the true child of God instinctively responds to various situations. The beatitudes are character traits of citizens of God’s kingdom. Like the fruit of the Spirit, the beatitudes portray the single virtue of God’s people.

Matthew 5:3 NKJV Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Poor in spirit - is God’s blessing on the humble and those who recognize

their need of God and salvation. Poor in spirit is not material poverty but an attitude of utter dependence on God. Poor in spirit indicates there is no refuge but God. Poor in spirit is an attitude of grief over sin and spiritual inadequacy and dependence on God. The poor and needy rely on God's mercy.

Matthew 5:4 NKJV Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted.

To mourn usually refers to intense grieving for the dead. Here mourn refers specifically to an attitude of grief over personal sin and disobedience, and loss of innocence, righteousness. They will find comfort in God's compassion. This mourning is not only recognition of one's condition but confession and distress over personal sin.

Matthew 5:5 NKJV Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth. *Meek – is humility toward God that relies on His mercy. Meekness is not weakness; it is strength in conflict, humility or gentleness. Those who humble themselves before God will inherit blessings in heaven and in His kingdom on earth. Meekness is a true view of oneself and expressing it with gentleness, humility, and patience.*

Matthew 5:6 NKJV Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled.

Hunger and thirst for righteousness represents intense spiritual desire beyond physical needs. Legal righteousness is justification and a right relationship with God. Moral righteousness is a character and conduct that pleases God. Biblical and social righteousness is integrity, honor, and right living. If those who recognize their spiritual poverty and need hunger and thirst for what only God can give, they shall be satisfied.

Matthew 5:7 NKJV Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy. *Merciful is compassion that extends relief, pardon, help, and forgiveness to others. God will show mercy to those who have been merciful. The mercy we receive from God exceeds the mercy and forgiveness we give to others.*

Matthew 5:8 NKJV Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God. *Pure in heart denotes one who loves God with all their heart. "Pure in heart" comes from the Greek word (katharos) which means to be clean, blameless, and unstained from guilt. Pure in heart should not be restricted to moral or sexual purity. Pure in heart is different than ceremonial purity or cleanness, it refers to the soul, thoughts, desires, will and character. The pure in heart have been cleansed inwardly not just outwardly or ceremonially.*

Matthew 5:9 NKJV Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God.

Peacemakers are individuals who strive to create, maintain and restore peace. We are to strive to pursue peace with all men so far as it depends on us.

Matthew 5:10 NKJV Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Persecuted for righteousness – harassed, treated with hostility, for righteousness – when you do what is right. Righteousness indicates a life wholly given to God. This is not self-righteousness but that which is attained by proper relationship with Christ. This beatitude is associated with the next one.

Matthew 5:11 NKJV Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake.

Notice these are false accusations when we practice Christianity.

Believers should not be surprised by suffering for doing good. The fellowship of Christ's sufferings is a process of being conformed to Christ's death and resurrection. How should we respond when we are persecuted, reviled and treated poorly for Christ's sake?

Matthew 5:12 NKJV Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

It is impossible to have these attitudes amid these situations without being transformed into kingdom people. These attitudes are a direct result of an inward change. The concept of a “peacemaker” refers to conflict. “Persecuted for righteousness' sake” depicts an unpleasant experience. Being “reviled, persecuted, and spoken evil against” does not sound blessed. According to what Jesus is saying, when you choose to follow Him, some people will not accept you and some will reject you and turn against you. How can we rejoice when we face these kinds of things?

Matthew 5:12 NKJV Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Do you recognize the fact that this behavior (blessed life) only happens if you have this kind of attitude? This kind of attitude is a result of a complete change in our spiritual condition by being born again. When you become a new creation in Christ you will have a new “attitude” in Christ.