

The Story of the Life of Christ – Lesson 18

Date: 28 AD

The Ministry of Christ in Galilee – Spring 28 AD

In the last lesson, we began the study of what is called the Sermon on the Mount. I pointed out at that time that what is recorded as the Sermon on the Mount is really a short summary of what Jesus taught in many of His teachings during His 3½ year ministry. Some sayings of what is recorded of the “Sermon on the Mount” in Matthew appear at other times and places. The whole sermon can be read aloud in thirteen minutes, so it is clearly a condensed version of what Jesus said on that occasion. In this lesson we will continue with what the Holy Spirit inspired Matthew to record of that message.

We left the narrative in the last lesson as Jesus continued trying to teach those who had come to hear Him about the futility of trying to save themselves by their own righteousness.

Matthew 6:1 “Be careful not to do your ‘acts of righteousness’ before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.

One of the traps of the self-righteous was that their righteousness wasn’t really directed toward pleasing God, but toward building their own self esteem before men.

Matthew 6:2 “So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full.

This described the common practice where a giver made sure that all the people knew who gave a gift. That revealed that the true purpose of the gift was to receive the admiration of people. A true gift is given to honor the LORD, not oneself.

Matthew 6:3 But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

A truly righteous man would give his gifts anonymously to God. He would know that his gift wasn’t unknown to God who was the only one he wanted to please. It should be remembered, that the only truly righteous man was Jesus Christ. We will note that Jesus asked those he helped to tell no one.

Matthew 6:5-6 And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into

your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

A similar statement was made about those who prayed in public for admiration. Very few of Jesus' prayers were made in public, so much so that His disciples had to ask Him how to pray.

Matthew 6:7-8 **And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.**

God isn't impressed by grandiloquence. He already knows the longing of our hearts. It should also be noted that Jesus always withdrew to be by Himself to pray.

Matthew 6:9-13 **“This, then, is how you should pray: ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread.¹ Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. ~~And lead us not into temptation~~ Do not allow us to be led into temptation,² but deliver us from the evil one.³ For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.”**

This is often called “The Lord’s Prayer” although it should be more accurately called “The Believer’s Prayer.” It is a classic example of the principal that the purpose of prayer is not to change God, but to change the believer. Almost every petition in this prayer which can be granted by God has already been guaranteed by God. The one item that is not guaranteed is our forgiveness of others and this is to remind us do that very thing. Jesus gave a shortened version of this prayer on another occasion in Galilee as recorded in Luke 11:1-4.

The last part of the prayer, beginning with “For thine” and ending in “Amen” is in the Textus Receptus but not in the flawed Codex Sinaiticus. As we see in most such differences between the manuscripts, the Codex Sinaiticus has omitted a passage. This is another evidence of the faulty copying which runs throughout the Codex Sinaiticus and disqualifies it as a faithful copy of the original autograph.

The phrase which the NIV has translated as “lead us not into temptation” should be correctly translated as “Do not allow us to be led into temptation.” It expresses the fact that we need the

¹ *This concept is also taught in Proverbs 30:9.*

² *“Here we have a ‘Permissive imperative’ as grammarians term it. The idea is then: ‘Do not allow us to be led into temptation.’” A. T. Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1930), I, p. 54.*

³ *The Greek here is the nominative case of “evil” and is therefore considered to be speaking of “the evil one” i.e. Satan.*

Father's help in resisting temptation. The idea that the wrong translation seems to suggest cannot be true. In his epistle James expressly rejected that possibility:

James 1:13-14 "When tempted, no one should say, 'God is tempting me.' For God cannot be tempted by evil, **nor does he tempt anyone**; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed.

Matthew 6:14-15 **For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.**

Having finished the recitation of the recommended prayer, Jesus then commented on the part of it which said "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." This basically says that if we are living in a state of unforgiveness, we are living in sin. For the believer to be restored to fellowship with God requires confession. However, if that confession is followed by a continued state of unforgiveness it is impossible for us to commune with God who has forgiven us. Jesus epitomized this attitude of forgiveness toward those who sinned against Him, which was everyone.

Matthew 6:16-18 **When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.**

This repeated the warning about giving and prayer for the benefit of men's admiration. This time it was applied to fasting. God has no use for that which is done for the eyes of men.

Matthew 6:19-21 **Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.**

This not only applied to materialistic treasure, but to the "treasure" of men's approbation for giving, praying, and fasting. We should carefully guard our hearts to make sure our "treasure" is of the right kind.

Matthew 6:22-23 **"The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!**

The power of a truly righteous life depends on how one sees life and the world. The way in which we see the path ahead will determine how we will walk. We need to see the way God sees. That way is revealed in His Word. Jesus was the Living Word.

Matthew 6:24 “**No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.**

There are two ways to see the world which are antithetical to each other. You can either pursue material or worldly gain or you can pursue a relationship with God. You can't pursue both. The one who pursues material gain will eventually lose everything he thought he had gained. The one who pursues a relationship with God will gain the key to real eternal wealth.

Matthew 6:25a “**Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear.**

We should see that the great gift God has given us is life. Every moment of that life is a precious opportunity to invest in eternity. Every soul, rich or poor, has the same amount of eternal capital to invest in each moment.

Matthew 6:25b **Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes?**

The things we tend to worry about are food and clothes. They can be provided by the efforts of men. Nobody but God can give us our life and our body. If God has already provided us that miraculously hard part, providing us with the food and clothes we need is easy.

Matthew 6:26 **Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?**

God will provide for the day to day needs of the hours He has given us to live if we live according to His Word. We are commanded not to worry.

Matthew 6:27 **Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?**

This doesn't rule out taking action, it just points out the futility of worry. Rather we should trust in God.

Matthew 6:28-30 “**And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?**

Those who insist on worrying are, in effect, refusing to believe in the power of God to provide any real need. Furthermore, God will dress all who believe in Him with white robes of eternal righteousness to live with Him forever.

Matthew 6:31-33 **So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first ~~his kingdom~~ the Kingdom of God ⁴ and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.**

If we seek a relationship with God as a first priority, God will give us everything we need to sustain our life in this world.

Matthew 6:34 **So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today. NRSV**

We should live day by day and moment by moment. We are to trust future days and moments to God's providence.

Matthew 7:1-2 **“Do not judge, so that you may not be judged. For with the judgment you make you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get.”**

We must never set ourselves up as the standard of righteousness. We must recognize that we all fall short of the mark. When we compare ourselves with others for the purpose of justifying ourselves we deceive ourselves. We are all measured against the righteousness of God and we all fall short.

Matthew 7:3-5 **“Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.**

This merely points out that those who are self-righteous and are blind to their own sinfulness are far blinder than those who suffer from other kinds of sin. It is a dangerous blindness that is likely to make them fail to see their own need for salvation.

Matthew 7:6 **“Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and then turn and tear you to pieces.**

⁴ *The words “of God” appear in the Textus Receptus and several other of the ancient manuscripts, but not in some others. The NIV chose to omit the words and translate it “his kingdom.”*

Revelation defines who the dogs are:

Revelation 22:15 “Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.”

We should not be surprised that such people will not thank us for sharing the shining truths of the Word of God. Rather they will attack us. It is worth noting that this describes what happened to Jesus Himself. The Jewish leaders tried to trample down the pearl of great price that was Jesus.⁵ They turned on Him and tore him to pieces. This is not a prohibition from sharing the gospel. Rather, it is a word of advice against wasting time on those who have shown consistent rejection of the Gospel. It is also a warning against their violent reaction if you continue to share the truth with them. As an example; in the latter part of his life, Peter found it was useless to evangelize the Jews of Babylon. He moved into Anatolia (Turkey) where he ministered mainly to Gentiles.

Matthew 7:7-8 “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.

This wasn't talking about material things. It was talking about spiritual wisdom and insight. This is what was also taught in James:

James 1:5 “If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God,⁶ who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.

God has never hidden His wisdom from any soul that sought it, in any age or in any place.

Matthew 7:9 “Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!

The two examples used well known figures or symbols to convey their message. A fish is the symbol of the Church, and a snake was the symbol of Satan. Likewise bread is a symbol of God's truth and the stone is a symbol of a heart hardened against truth.

The “good gifts” here are spiritual enlightenment. They are gifts of the light of truth to deliver us and to walk by.

⁵ *Matthew 13:45-46.*

⁶ *See also Proverbs Chapters 1:20-3:35, particularly 2:1-6*

Matthew 7:12 **So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.**

This was another way of stating the command “Love your neighbor as yourself” (Leviticus 19:18). It should be reassuring to us that Jesus, who was God Incarnate, kept all the commands perfectly. He has treated us as He would want to be treated if He was in the same place.

Matthew 7:13-14 **“Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.**

There is only one narrow way of salvation. It is by faith in God’s free gift through Jesus Christ. This also implies that if “only a few find it,” that “most” of the human race would miss it.

Matthew 7:15 **“Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves.**

In both the Old Testament and the New there was a warning against false prophets. There is no age or place where believers have lived that they haven’t been plagued with false prophets who have tried to disguise themselves as members of God’s flock. We shouldn’t be discouraged by this fact.

Matthew 7:16-17 **By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.**

One of the ways to spot a false prophet is to look at the fruits of his life which would include an examination of his habits of fasting, giving, and praying as described above. James later described the same process of evaluation:

James 2:18 “But someone will say, ‘You have *the* faith; I have deeds.’ Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do.”

Matthew 7:18-20 **A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.**

A false prophet could be recognized by the fruits of his life. Did his life mirror the character of God? Words alone were not evidence of a true relationship with God.

Matthew 7:21 **“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.**

Many might call Jesus “Lord.” The word translated “Lord” here is the Greek word κύριος {kü'-rē-os}. It was the title of honor expressive of respect and reverence, with which servants greeted their master. It is one thing to call Jesus “Lord” and another thing to treat Him as the Lord who deserves our worship, respect, and obedience.

Matthew 7:22-23 **Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’**

It should be kept in mind that during this second Galilean ministry Jesus sent out His Twelve disciples with the power to cast out demons and perform miracles (Mark 6:7). Among these was Judas Iscariot who was an unbeliever.

Casting out demons or performing miracles weren’t what was required for salvation. About this time they had asked Jesus what was the work that God required:

John 6:28-29 “Then they asked him, ‘What must we do to do the works God requires?’ Jesus answered, ‘The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.’”

Matthew 7:24-25 **“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.**

Jesus was the “living Word.” Anyone who built his life on the Word had an unshakeable foundation for his life.

Matthew 7:26-27 **But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”**

Any other foundation for a life than faith in God and His word would wash away and leave nothing standing on it.

Matthew 7:28-29 **When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.**

The Greek word translated by the NIV as “authority” is the Greek word ἐξουσία {eks-ü-sē'-ä} which is perhaps better understood as “power,” particularly as related to the power of words or ideas. This was because Jesus understood the Old Testament which their teachers did not. I believe that the phrase “and not as their teachers of the law” isn’t meant to contrast Jesus’ power in teaching with that of the teachers of the law. I believe it is meant to contrast Jesus’

interpretation of the Law with theirs. He saw the Law as pointing to God's Grace which had the power of God behind it. They saw the Law as standing on the weakness of man's flesh.

Sermon on the Plain in Luke The Beatitudes

At this point we will review the Beatitudes (or Blessings) from the Sermon on the Plain which was also delivered about this time in Galilee. There were nine Beatitudes in Matthew. In the Sermon in Luke there are only four. Some of the sayings were almost identical.

Luke 6:20a Looking at his disciples, he said:

You may remember from the previous lesson that this message was delivered just after Jesus had named His Twelve Disciples (Luke 6:13-16). The people to whom Jesus was addressing His remarks here were His disciples, not the world in general.

Luke 6:20b "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.

This is similar to the First Beatitude in Matthew.⁷ As there, this wasn't praising material poverty or condemning material prosperity. It was commending an attitude of understanding that in the spiritual realm we are all poor and weak before God. Only those who abandon reliance on their strength and wealth can proceed in God's strength and grace to accomplish everlasting things for the kingdom of heaven.

Luke 6:21a Blessed are you who hunger now, for you will be satisfied.

This Beatitude isn't in Matthew. It just says that any adversity Jesus' disciples underwent for His sake would be more than repaid with blessing. Except for John, all of the others⁸ were martyred.

Luke 6:21b Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh.

This was another form of the blessing promised to the sowers of the Word as recorded also in Psalms:

Psalms 126:5-6 "Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy. He who goes out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with him."

This Beatitude is also unique to Luke.

⁷ *Matthew 5:3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."*

⁸ *Of course this excluded Judas Iscariot.*

Luke 6:22-23 **Blessed are you when men hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven. For that is how their fathers treated the prophets.**

This is almost identical to the Ninth Beatitude in Matthew. This was to prepare the disciples for the violent opposition of the world that they would face when they began to spread the Good News.

These next four statements in Luke are four pronouncements of “woe.” Similar pronouncements of woe were scattered throughout Jesus’ other teachings though they aren’t found in the Matthew account of the Sermon on the Mount. These were warnings to those who were listening who didn’t believe in Jesus. Some were even then plotting His death.

Luke 6:24 **“But woe to you who are rich, for you have already received your comfort.**

The comfort of the rich is very transitory. It often ends at the acquisition of riches. The succeeding period of their lives is often spent in worrying about losing their riches. At the end of their life the riches are no comfort at all. The worldly King Solomon expostulated in detail about the emptiness of his own riches in Ecclesiastes.

Luke 6:25a **Woe to you who are well fed now, for you will go hungry.**

I think this is meant to contrast physical food with spiritual food. The “well fed” are not rich, but they devote their lives to comfortable living. They do so at the expense of spiritual things so they never taste of the “bread of Heaven.”

Luke 6:25b **Woe to you who laugh now, for you will mourn and weep.**

I think this is meant to warn those who pursue entertainment and other forms of gratification at the expense of pursuing truth. There will come a time, to their sorrow, when it is too late.

Luke 6:26 **Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for that is how their fathers treated the false prophets.**

This is a warning to those who rely on the good opinion of men as a barometer of their standing with God. Undoubtedly it was aimed at the Jewish religious leaders in Jesus’ audience. A true prophet will have many enemies, just as a false prophet will have many friends. Adherence to the Word of God is always the true measure of a prophet or teacher.

Luke 6:27-33 **“But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also. ⁹ If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic. Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do to you. “If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even ‘sinners’ love those who love them. And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even ‘sinners’ do that.**

These verses are similar to what Jesus said on the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:39-45) where Jesus set the bar for righteousness. He met it during His trial and during His death on the Cross as we saw in the previous lesson.

Matthew 5:39-48 “But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you. “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Luke 6:34 **And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even ‘sinners’ lend to ‘sinners,’ expecting to be repaid in full.**

God doesn’t give to us expecting repayment. There is nothing with which can repay His gift except acceptance.

Luke 6:35-36 **But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.**

Here they were enjoined to imitate the mercy of God. This also tells us that God doesn’t expect to get something back from His mercy. It is a one-way gift. As is recorded in Job, there is nothing we can add to God:

⁹ *Lamentation 3:30*

Job 35:5-8 “Look up at the heavens and see; gaze at the clouds so high above you. If you sin, how does that affect him? If your sins are many, what does that do to him?¹⁰ If you are righteous, what do you give to him, or what does he receive from your hand? Your wickedness affects only a man like yourself, and your righteousness only the sons of men.”

Luke 6:37 **“Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.”**

This is very close to the passage from the Sermon on the Mount which we studied earlier in this lesson:

Matthew 7:1-2 “Do not judge, so that you may not be judged. For with the judgment you make you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get.”

Luke 6:38 **Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”**

If we reflect God’s grace to our life back to others, God’s grace will be poured out even more abundantly to us in all kinds of blessings. This doesn’t just refer to material gifts, but also to gifts like compassion and mercy.

Luke 6:39 **He also told them this parable: “Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit?”**

This was a parable that Jesus told more than once. He told it again late in His Galilean ministry as recorded in Matthew 15:14. It was a warning against following the false teaching of the “blind” Pharisees.

Luke 6:40 **A student is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher.**

Perhaps this was a warning against all of the additions the Jewish religious leaders had made to the Word of God. God was supposed to be their teacher, but they presumed to know better than God.

Luke 6:41-42 **“Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, ‘Brother, let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when you yourself fail to see the plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.”**

¹⁰ Job 7:20

This is almost identical to the passage from the Sermon on the Mount which we studied earlier in this lesson on page 5:

Matthew 7:3-5 “Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.”

Luke 6:43-45 **“No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. Each tree is recognized by its own fruit. People do not pick figs from thorn bushes, or grapes from briars.¹¹ The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks.**

This is also close in concept to the passage from the Sermon on the Mount which we studied earlier in this lesson on page 7:

Matthew 7:16-20 “By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.

Luke 6:46-49 **“Why do you call me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say? I will show you what he is like who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice. He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built. But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete.”**

This is close in concept to the passage from the Sermon on the Mount which we studied earlier in this lesson on page 7:

Matthew 7:21-27 “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me,

¹¹ The Greek word here is βάτος {bä'-tos}. It is the same word used to refer to the acacia thorn tree of Exodus 3:2-4 in Luke 20:37, Acts 7:30 and Acts 7:35.

you evildoers!’ “Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”

Much of the teaching on the Sermon on the Mount was a warning against self-righteousness. Yet having been credited with the righteousness of Christ the believer is commanded to take on the mind of Christ. If we begin to think like Christ, we are to begin to imitate the righteousness of Christ with which we have been credited. Every author of the New Testament enjoined this for the Church:

1 John 2:6 “Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.”

1 Peter 1:15-16 “But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: ‘Be holy, because I am holy.’”

1 Peter 2:21 “To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.”

Romans 13:14 “Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.”

Philippians 2:5-7 “Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.”

James 1:18-25 “He chose to give us birth through the word of truth (Jesus Christ), that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created. ---- humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you. Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it--he will be blessed in what he does.”

Hebrews 12:2 “Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”