

Lesson 3

A New Perspective

Group Icebreaker:

What is one family value that your parents stressed and why was it so important?

Introduction:

Children learn from watching and listening. The disciples have been watching and listening to Jesus. They have been with Him for more than a year.

Soon after their encounter with the woman at the well in Sychar, John the Baptist is thrown into prison. Jesus moves from his hometown of Nazareth to Capernaum where He goes public with His ministry. He preaches, heals the sick, and casts out demons. The message Jesus has been preaching is, *“the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand, repent and believe in the gospel.”* And the multitudes have been following Him wherever He goes.

Jesus takes His disciples to the Feast of Weeks in Jerusalem. Opposition begins to arise against Him when He heals a lame man at the pool of Bethesda on the Sabbath. Jesus further infuriates the religious leaders when He claims that He is the Son of God. Then His disciples are accused of working on the Sabbath when they pick, husk and eat grain from the fields.

Returning to the Galilee, Jesus ascends Mount Eremos (eremos topos – “solitary place”) where He spends the night in prayer. A cave on the southern exposure of the hill provides shelter for Him. In the morning, the disciples come to Jesus and He names twelve of them to be His apostles (sent ones). Together, they descend to a level place where Jesus begins to speak what today is known as the Sermon on the Mount.

The Sermon on the Mount is the **Law of Christ**.¹ It is Jesus’ teaching on God’s family values. It compares favorably with the Ten Commandments that Moses received and delivered to his

¹ **Law of Christ** – **Law**: 1772 – (ennomos) legal, subject to *law*^{*}; bound to the law; bound by the law (<https://biblehub.com/greek/1772.htm>); & **Christ**: 5547 – (Christos) the Anointed One, Messiah, Christ (<https://biblehub.com/greek/5547.htm>)

^{*} *law* – 3551 – /νόμος (“law”) then can refer to “the Law,” or “law” as a general principle (or both simultaneously). The particular sense(s) of νόμος (3551) is **determined by the context** . . . a law or rule producing a state approved of God, i.e. by the observance of which we are approved of God; the mention of the divine law causes those things even which in opposition to this law impel to action (Ezekiel 36:26-27, “²⁶And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.”) – (<https://biblehub.com/greek/3551.htm>)

What exactly is the **law of Christ**, and how is it fulfilled? The Bible nowhere specifically defines what precisely is the **law of Christ**, although referenced twice in The Epistles, once in 1 Corinthians 9:21, “. . . *though not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ* . . .,” and once in Galatians 6:2, “*Bear one another’s burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.*” However, most Bible teachers understand the **law of Christ** to be what Christ stated were the greatest commandments in Mark 12:28–31.

But to truly understand the phrase “**law of Christ**” we must draw from Jesus’ own words, which begins in His Sermon on the Mount, and specifically a portion of the teaching found in Matthew 5:17-20, “*I did not come to abolish the Law and the Prophets, but to walk it out as it should be . . . and that until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law.*” Jesus continues later in His teaching to the Rich Young Ruler in Matthew 19:16-22, ““Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?” So Jesus said to him, “*Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. But if you want to enter into*

people, the Israelites. The events surrounding the Sermon on the Mount and the giving of the Ten Commandments are very similar.

Both events immediately follow the Feast of Weeks. Both Moses and Jesus worked miracles before the events occurred. Both were being followed by a multitude of people. Both ascend a mountain where they spend time with God. Both descend the mountain to give the law of God to the multitudes below. Moses delivers the Ten Commandments that are written on two stone tablets by the finger of God. Jesus speaks His commandments and they are written on the hearts of people by the power of the Holy Spirit. Both the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount contain instructions for right living. Both contain blessings and curses. Moses finishes

life, keep the commandments.’ He said to Him, ‘Which ones?’ Jesus said, “*You shall not murder,*” “*You shall not . . .*” Here we see Jesus affirming the Law, God’s teaching and instruction, as the way of eternal life, emphasizing the fact that the only “good” one could do was live according to God’s way of living, where He highlights the core of God’s teaching, the 10 Commandments, but then challenging the young leader to not just know these teaching, but to make them a life style, by walking in the same manner that He was teaching and modeling, and by no other teaching or standard.

The next phase of our understanding of **the Law of Christ** in Jesus’ own words, is found in His teaching in John 14:6-11, “**I am the way, the Truth, and the Life, and that no one can come to the Father except through me,**” which profoundly we find Jesus identifying Himself as “**I am,**” a unique name that we see first identified when God reveals Himself to Moses on the back side of Mount Sinai at the burning bush (Exodus 3), a name that had not been revealed to Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob (Exodus 6), but here ties Jesus to it, as the name in Hebrew is “*Havayah,*” the Ineffable Name of God, “*Yah-u-way,*” meaning “*the God above all gods and the God above all laws of nature,*” and in written form “*YHVH*” (Hebrew: yad, hey, vaw, hey), which in its tetragram form is read, “**Behold the Hands of the Man with Raised Hands, Behold the Nail Pierced Hands of the Man with Raised Hands,**” which for the past 2,500 years, our Jewish brothers and sisters hid, following their captivity to Babylon around 600 BC, at which time the leaders purposely hid the name of God (“*YHVH*”/“*Yah-u-way*”/“*Havayah*”/“*I am*”) so it would not be profaned among the nations, and therefore, consequently also hiding the “*True Meaning*” of God’s name, “*Behold the Man with Nail Pierced Hands,*” used over 7,000 times in the Old Testament.

It is therefore, with this understanding that I would describe **the Law of Christ** as God’s clarification of “*the Spirit of the Law*” as depicted in Ezekiel 36:26-27, “. . . *And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules . . .*” and not the “*law*” based on the tradition of men (Isaiah 29:13, Mark 7:6-9, Matthew 15:7-9, Mark 7:6-9, “*You leave the commandments of God and hold to the tradition of men,*”), which Jesus does throughout His Sermon on the Mount, in the Gospel accounts of Matthew 5:1-7:29 and Luke 6:20-49 (i.e. “*You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder . . .’ But I tell you the truth, that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgement . . .*”

Finally, we see Jesus’ teaching in the Great Commission, which reads, “*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations . . . teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you,*” (Matthew 28:19-20) where we find Jesus giving us the full breath of **the Law of Christ**, in His phrase, “**teaching them to observe all that I have commanded,**” which includes not only the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms (i.e. Matthew 5:17-20 “*I did not come to abolish the Law and the Prophets . . .*” and Luke 24:27 (*On the Road to Emmaus*) “*And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he (Jesus) interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.*”), but much more, everything the Father told Him to say and do (John 5:19; 12:49, “*For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment – what to say and what to speak.*”), which although encompasses Paul’s teachings in 1 Corinthians 9:21 and Galatians 6:2, and keeping in the context of Hebrews 13:8, “*Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever,*” can ultimately be summed up and truly defined by one of Jesus’ closest disciples, John, as we see written in John 1:1-3 & 1 John 2:4-6:

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.” (John 1:1-3)

“Whoever says ‘I know him’ but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.” (1 John 2:1-4)

giving The Law (Torah) to the Israelites by having the people declare the blessings and curses of the covenant (Deuteronomy 28). Jesus begins the giving of His Law with nine blessings (beatitudes) and four curses (woes).

As Jesus descends the slope of Eremos to the waiting multitudes below He has time to reflect. Spread before Him to the south lay the Sea of Galilee. The azure blue of the harp-shaped lake dominates the scene. To His left the sun's golden orb has risen above the eastern hills. Not two miles away is His home, Capernaum. To the west lay the plain of Gennesaret with its rich crop producing soil. On most days at this time of year the sun's shimmering heat causes the whole scene to look hazy. The slope of Eremos itself is covered with grasses and wildflowers and the chirping of sparrows' fills the air. The disciples, like children, are in need of the next stage of training, lessons on family values.

Reading the Scripture:

A New Perspective (The Beatitudes)

The Sermon on the Mount²

Matthew 5:1-12, Luke 6:20-26

Scripture excerpts from "Follow Me: A Message from God"

And turning His gaze on His disciples, He began to say, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who have been persecuted³ for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when men cast insults at you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of Me. Be glad in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for in the same

² **The Sermon on the Mount** – Although these passages are referred to as being on the mount, they actually occurred after Jesus had descended with His disciples to a level place. Here Jesus expounds His "Law" or "Teaching" (Torah) to His followers just as Moses had done when he came down from Mount Sinai to the Israelites.

³ Persecution: 1377 *diōkō* – (to be maltreated, suffer persecution on account of something) – properly, *aggressively* chase, like a *hunter* pursuing a catch (prize). 1377 (*diōkō*) is used *positively* ("earnestly pursue") and *negatively* ("zealously persecute, hunt down"). In each case, 1377 (*diōkō*) means *pursue with all haste* ("chasing" after), *earnestly* desiring to overtake (apprehend). (<https://biblehub.com/greek/1377.htm>) – *i.e. Testimony of one Tortured for Christ:*

One of our workers in the Underground Church was a young girl. The Communist police discovered that she secretly spread the Gospel and taught children about Christ. They decided to arrest her. But to make the arrest as agonizing and painful as they would they decided to delay her arrest a few weeks, until the day she was to be married. On her wedding day, the girl was dressed as a bride – the most wonderful, joyous day in a girl's life! Suddenly, the door burst open and the secret police rushed in.

When the bride saw the secret police, she held out her arms toward them to be handcuffed. They roughly put the manacles on her wrists. She looked toward her beloved, then kissed the chains and said, "I thank my heavenly Bridegroom for this jewel He has presented to me on my marriage day. I thank Him that I am worthy to suffer for Him." She was dragged off, with weeping Christians and weeping bridegroom left behind. They knew what happens to young Christian girls in the hands of Communist guards. Her bridegroom faithfully waited for her. After five years she was released – a destroyed, broken woman, looking thirty years older. She said it was the least she could do for her Christ. – *Tortured for Christ, Richard Wurmbrand, VOM*

way their fathers used to treat the prophets. But woe to you who are rich, for you are receiving your comfort in full. Woe to you who are well-fed now, for you shall be hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep. Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for in the same way their fathers used to treat the false prophets.

The Command:

- ❖ Rejoice, and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great.

Group Discussion:

1. How do the values Jesus lists in the eight beatitudes compare to what people value in our culture?
2. How are people taught our cultural values?

The Lesson:

The beatitudes challenge the way people think. Jesus wants His disciples to learn three things. First, the values within the family of God are not the same as the world's values. Secondly, the reward for holding these values is in the future. And finally, that the underlying attitude of the family of God is joy, even in the face of persecution.

Joy means to be exceedingly glad. To rejoice means to get exceedingly glad all over again. People find many reasons to rejoice and they are all based in finding themselves in fortunate circumstances. Some causes for rejoicing might be at the birth of a child, getting a raise at work, winning a jackpot, or watching their football team win the Super Bowl. When people are glad they usually make joyful noises and are quite animated. This is the attitude that Jesus wants His disciples to have.

It is easy for people to rejoice when they find themselves in fortunate circumstances. But it takes special qualities to rejoice when a person finds himself in painful or difficult circumstances. He must look beyond the circumstances. It takes faith in God, trusting that He is allowing these circumstances for the person's own good. It also requires hope in God's future promises and love to endure the suffering. It requires a different perspective.

The prophet Habakkuk foresaw that God was going to make a new creation, a different kind people who walked by faith not by sight. The last three verses of the book of Habakkuk read this way. *“Though the fig tree should not blossom, and there be no fruit on the vines, though the yield of the olive should fail, and the fields produce no food, though the flock should be cut off from the fold, and there be no cattle in the stalls, yet I will exult in the LORD, I will rejoice in the God of my salvation. The Lord GOD is my strength, and He has made my feet like hinds' feet, and makes me walk on my high places.”*⁴

The prophet contrasts the way men of this world see with the way the new creation sees things. Men are concerned with lack of things and the works of their hands. When these things fail they are discouraged. The new creation is made like a hind or deer. They have a better view because they live at a higher elevation. Deer are not concerned with empty stalls or failing crops. They don't worry about the circumstances of men because it's not how God created them. God clothes the deer and provides shelter in harsh elements. He supplies them with food and water and they rest in cool places throughout the heat of the day.

⁴ Habakkuk 3:17-19

Some ask, “Why does God allow persecution of the righteous on account of Jesus Christ?” There are three reasons. The first reason is that it is a **sign** from God.⁵ It is a sign of salvation to Christians and destruction for all those who oppose them. Christians are receiving assurance from God concerning their salvation when they are persecuted for their testimony of Jesus Christ.

The second reason ties in with the first, a **testing** of a person’s faith. Is it genuine or not? The reference for this reason is found in 1 Peter 1:3-9. The third reason is also found in the first epistle of Peter. Chapter 4 verses 12-14 say that the **Spirit** of glory and God rest upon those who are persecuted for Christ’s sake. In truth, those who oppose these individuals and persecute them hate God, His Christ and the way of salvation.

Jesus said, *“Blessed are you when men hate you, and ostracize you, and cast insults at you, and spurn your name as evil, for the sake of the Son of Man. Be glad in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for in the same way their fathers used to treat the prophets.”* Jesus wants His disciples to look forward to being persecuted for their faith. So much so that He wants them to rejoice in the persecution. Jesus considered persecution to be the norm. He even used the phrase **when** you are persecuted instead of **if** you are persecuted.

Since Jesus views persecution as a blessing, it behooves His followers to find the way persecution comes. It’s quite simple; just start proclaiming your faith in Jesus Christ. The pattern is seen throughout the book of the Acts: proclaim faith in Jesus Christ, persecution comes, then start rejoicing.

Group Discussion:

3. How can you express joy?

The Point of the Lesson:

Live joyously, for it is God’s will for you and you will be rewarded.

Application:

Read the following five accounts of the pattern of preaching, persecution, and rejoicing from the book of **Acts**. Write down how you felt about the five accounts and share your feelings with the group.

1. Peter and John
 - a. Preached (3:1-26)
 - b. Persecuted (4:1-22)
 - c. Rejoiced (4:23-31)
2. The Apostles
 - a. Preached (5:12-16)
 - b. Persecuted (5:17-39)
 - c. Rejoiced (5:40-42)
3. Stephen
 - a. Preached (6:8-10)

⁵ Philippians 1:27-30, “²⁷ Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, ²⁸ and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God. ²⁹ For it has been granted to you that **for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake.** ³⁰ engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.”

- b. Persecuted (6:11-7:58)
- c. Rejoice (7:59-60)
- 4. Paul and Barnabas
 - a. Preached (13:14-43)
 - b. Persecuted (13:44-50)
 - c. Rejoiced (13:51-52)
- 5. Paul and Silas
 - a. Preached (16:11-18)
 - b. Persecuted (16:19-24)
 - c. Rejoice (16:25-34)

Discipleship Lessons by Verse

Book 1

“Fishers of Men”

John 1:35-51, Luke 5:1-11, 27-28, Matthew 4:18-22, 9:9, Mark 1:16-20, 2:14

Lesson 1

John 4:1-42

Lesson 2

Matthew 5:1-12, Luke 6:20-26

Lesson 3

Matthew 5:13-16

Lesson 4

Mathew 5:17-20

Lesson 5

Matthew 5:21-26

Lesson 6

Matthew 5:27-32

Lesson 7

Matthew 5:33-37

Lesson 8

Matthew 5:38-42, Luke 6:29-30

Lesson 9

Matthew 5:43-48, Luke 6:27-28, 31-35

Lesson 10

Matthew 6:1-18

Lesson 11

Matthew 6:9-15

Lesson 12

Matthew 6:19-23

Lesson 13

Matthew 7:1-5, Luke 6:36-42

Lesson 14

Matthew 7:6

Lesson 15

Matthew 7:7-14

Lesson 16

Matthew 7:15-29, Luke 6:43-49

Lesson 17

Learn what Jesus teaches us to do, what it means and how it is applied to our lives today as we walk by the Spirit!

Fishers of Men . . . introduces Christians to the subject of becoming disciples of Jesus Christ and covers the first 17 lessons He taught His disciples. Beginning with His command to “Follow Me,” Jesus lays a solid foundation of instructions for developing the character of Christ within individuals.

- *Jesus’ teachings have completely transformed my life. (M.M.)*
- *Jesus invites you to walk with Him and learn from Him. (J.G.)*
- *I have been going to church for over 30 years and have never heard anything like this before. Why don’t churches teach this? (J.R.)*

Upon coming to faith in Jesus Christ at age 33, Michael Gibson earnestly wanted someone to disciple him in the faith. Finding no one . . . he became a student, and then teacher of God’s word.

One statement in particular captured his attention, “Go . . . make disciples . . . baptizing them . . . teaching them to observe all that I commanded you.” (Matthew 28:19-20) From that he wrote his first book, “Follow Me” (1996), a compilation of the four gospels into one account while highlighting each of the 263 instructions Jesus commanded His disciples to do and teach. Subsequently, he has written the three-part teaching series, “A Journey with Jesus” and many other books which help equip believers to do the work of the ministry.

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