

6. More Lessons from the Master Teacher (4Q 2020—Education)

Biblical Material: Gen. 3:1–11; Rom. 5:11–19; Gen. 28:10–17; John 1:1–14; Matt. 15:21–28; Mark 10:46–52.

Quotes

- Better than a thousand days of diligent study is one day with a great teacher. *Japanese Proverb*
- Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn. *Benjamin Franklin*
- A good teacher is like a candle—it consumes itself to light the way for others. *Mustafa Kemal Atatürk*
- Commitment is a word that cannot stand alone. We must always ask, “Committed to what?” . . . let us be committed to . . . using Jesus Christ as our master teacher. *Marvin J. Ashton*
- I cannot teach anybody anything, I can only make them think. *Socrates*
- A master can tell you what he expects of you. A teacher, though, awakens your own expectations. *Patricia Neal*

Questions

What lessons do we learn about education when we examine the life and work of Jesus? How can we apply those lessons in our world today? Why was it necessary for God to take on human form in order to teach us and win us back to trust? What about the claims of the Serpent that his method of “education” would give Eve “divine knowledge”?

Bible summary

Gen. 3:1–11 is the story of the Fall, including the Serpent in the role of educator! Rom. 5:11–19 shows that Jesus is more than a teacher; he is salvation. In Gen. 28:10–17 Joseph sees a ladder reaching from earth to heaven. John 1:1–14 speaks of the Word taking on humanity. The faith of the Canaanite woman is recorded in Matt. 15:21–28. Mark 10:46–52 is the story of the healing of blind Bartimaeus.

Comment

We’re taken back to the Fall for the context of this week’s study, mainly because we need to see that there are two competing “philosophies of education” at work—God’s and the Devil’s. The way in which the Serpent seduced Eve is intriguing, because it capitalizes on our innate desire for knowledge and understanding, and the Serpent claims God is withholding this from Eve. So in a sense the sin of the Fall is a misdirected desire for education!

Jesus comes to set the record straight, to reveal God as he truly is, as we saw in our last study. In this study we look at Jesus’ life. While we only have a couple of examples of Jesus’ ministry of teaching and healing this time, we can draw many conclusions as we survey his life as a whole. Primarily that Jesus was always concerned to help others, and that any “educational” process was designed to achieve that, quite unlike the education of the religious leaders.

We see the also see the way the disciples related to Jesus, the Rabbi, their Teacher. They spoke with Jesus. They *kind of* knew him. They *kind of* believed he was special—after all they’d seen enough amazing miracles. They *kind of* realized his divinity. Peter had called him the Christ

of God. They had heard him speak of the Father, and of his mission to reveal God to the world. But it wasn't enough. They wanted the real God, not just this very human-looking Jesus who walked and talked and ate and slept just as they did.

So they asked him questions. Think of all the questions Jesus was asked. He really did invite questions: suggested lines of questioning, ways of asking. He was no pompous egotist who was offended at being questioned. God as Jesus wanted to answer all mankind's questions. Think of Thomas asking where Jesus was going, Philip wanting Jesus to show them the Father, of John the Baptist wondering whether Jesus was really the Messiah.

Jesus invited questioning by asking, "Who do men say that I am?"

The Pharisees and Sadducees posed their own hostile questions. They asked, "By what authority do you do these things?" Again questioning Jesus as the Answer, suggesting that he was not who he claimed to be. Just like the Devil in the wilderness: "*If you are the Son of God...*" For if Jesus was *not* who he said he was, then he was mad, a fool, or an impostor—and *not to be relied on to represent God and his character to humankind.*

The Devil well knew that once God *was* revealed as he truly is, then the Devil's lies would be exposed for what they were. The battle over God's nature and actions would be lost by the Devil if Jesus managed to show beyond dispute the true picture of God. That's the issue at the heart of the questioning of Jesus. The greatest irony is that the only "charge" they could get to stick was that of blasphemy: claiming to be God. He was, and they killed him for saying so!

Why? *Because Jesus did not fit the picture of the kind of person they believed God to be.* If this was God in human form, they didn't want to know. Besides, they *knew* what God was really like—and he *certainly* wouldn't act as Jesus did. By such circular reasoning then, they proved Jesus was a liar. He was not God—and therefore he deserved to die. This is where the questions inexorably lead—to God's final answer, the Cross.

Ellen White comments

Jesus' manner of teaching was beautiful and attractive, and it was ever characterized by simplicity. He unfolded the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven through the use of figures and symbols with which his hearers were familiar, and the common people heard him gladly; for they could comprehend his words. There were no high-sounding words used, to understand which it was necessary to consult a dictionary. He illustrated the glories of the kingdom of God by the use of the experiences and occurrences of earth. In compassionate love and tenderness he cheered and comforted and instructed all who heard him; for grace was poured upon his lips that he might convey to men in the most attractive way the treasures of truth. {CE126}

Christ came to preach the gospel to the poor. He reached the people where they were. He brought plain, simple truth to their comprehension. How simple his language! Even the poorest, the unlearned and ignorant, could understand him. Not one needed go to a dictionary to obtain the meaning of the high-sounding titles or words that fell from the lips of the greatest Teacher the world ever knew. While the priests, the rulers, and the expounders of the law were considering themselves as the only teachers of the people, he told these learned rabbis that they were both ignorant of the Scriptures and of the power of God. {RH, July 19, 1887 par. 13}

In the training of His disciples the Saviour followed the system of education established at the beginning. The Twelve first chosen, with a few others who through ministry to their needs were from time to time connected with them, formed the family of Jesus. They were with Him in the house, at the table, in the closet, in the field. They accompanied Him on His journeys, shared His trials and hardships, and, as much as in them was, entered into His work. {CG 294}