



Christ to the World Ministries

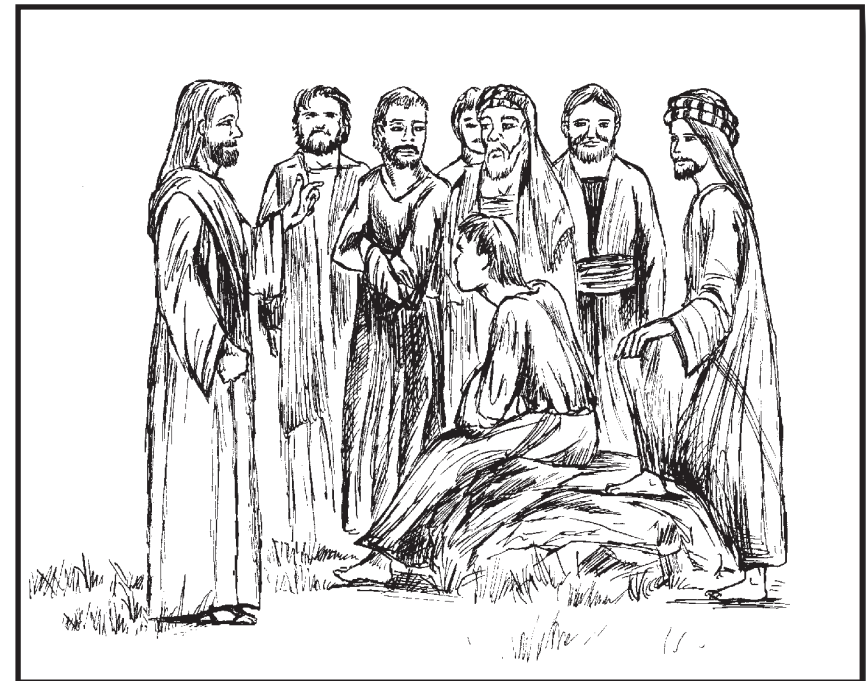
Christ to the World Ministries is a nonprofit ministry dedicated to sharing the gospel of Christ with the world through radio Bible dramas and oral and printed Bible studies. For additional information, see our website at www.christtotheworld.com.

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JESUS MINISTERS TO HIS DISCIPLES



CHRIST TO THE WORLD MINISTRIES

Jesus Ministers to His Disciples

Read Luke 6:12-49 in your Bible.

In Jesus' day, men did not go away to a university to study. They attached themselves to a teacher who would lead them in learning whatever the teacher knew. Such a teacher might stay in one place, such as Jerusalem. He might move from place to place. The students went with him. The teachers of Jesus' day used the five books of Moses as the basis of study. These five books, called the Torah, are the books we call Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. The teacher would recite from one of the books. Then he would explain the meaning. The students would learn the passages and the meaning by heart. These students were called disciples because they put themselves under the discipline of the teacher.

Jesus the Teacher

Jesus gathered numbers of disciples around him. Some he called. Some volunteered. He did one major thing differently from other teachers. Some of his disciples were women. (See Luke 8:1-3.) He taught them just as he did the men, and they traveled with him.

Jesus also gave principles of life. But he did not use a source book such as the Torah. Instead he used the truths of the kingdom of God.

Some things he taught plainly, but they were not easy to follow. *"Love your enemies"*, he said. *"Do good to those who hate you."* There were plenty of enemies to be hated, with the country under enemy occupation. Do not judge, he went on. But judging was so easy. Who could keep from it? Jesus gave his disciples many things to think about.

And he held his disciples accountable. He gave his time to them, twenty-four hours a day. When they were walking along the dirt roads of Galilee, when they were having a meal in a friend's house, when they were sitting by the lakeside, he was always available to them. He trusted his inmost thoughts to them. He gave them new ideas. And he was always ready to explain himself to them.

Teaching By Parables

He also taught by parables. These were stories that illustrated the major truths the teacher was trying to impart. Parables were not new to the Jewish people. The prophets had used them many years before. The Jewish teachers used them also; they tied the main point of the parable to a specific teaching of the Torah. Jesus' parables were not tied to old teachings. His parables taught new truths. So he took time to explain the underlying truths to his disciples.

His parables were always true to the life his disciples knew. He used the illustration of fruit trees to show his disciples how their inner lives showed in their outer lives. He reminded them that they would not look for figs in a nest of thistles. And he had a good sense of humor! The picture of the man with a log sticking out of his eye trying to pick a bit of sawdust out of his neighbor's eye surely made his disciples laugh! (See Luke 6:41-42.) But Jesus' point was clear: If you are going to judge someone else's behavior, be sure that your own life is free from sin. We may be sure that Jesus' teachings stayed with the disciples long after the teaching session was ended!

Proof of Jesus' Teaching

What did he ask in return? He asked his disciples to shape their lives according to his teachings. It was not enough for them to repeat his teachings back to him, as the students of the rabbis did. He wanted to see the results of his teachings in their actions. The group of disciples were like a new family, a new community. They had a chance to act differently toward one another than the ways they had been taught in their old families. Jesus was looking for those differences. Of course he did not get such a result at once. The old ways of relating to other people were ingrained in the disciples' personalities. They argued with one another as they walked along the road. They reacted to other people as they always had.

Jesus knew that life-changing differences took time. So he told the disciples a parable. He contrasted two people's reactions to his teachings. (See Luke 6:46-49.)

One person listened to Jesus' words and began to put them into action. He was like a man who wanted a house that would last. He chose a beautiful location near a river, where the trees grew thickly and the soil was rich for planting. He dug deeply until he hit rock. Then he laid the foundation of his house. Even when the river flooded, nothing could shake his house.

The second reaction was that of a man who listened to Jesus and shrugged off his teachings. He built a house in the same location, near the river. But he did so without a foundation of any kind. It was a beautiful house, but it could not withstand the flooding of the river. It fell and, Jesus said, *"The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete"* (Luke 6:49).

Conclusion

Anyone can be Jesus' disciple. All of us, men and women, young and old, learned and less educated, can learn from Jesus. His teachings are not hard to understand, although they may be hard to live by. But Jesus promises to teach us every day. He said: *"Take my yoke [like the yoke worn by oxen in teams] upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light"* (Matthew 11:29-30).

Just as oxen learn to pull together when they are in one yoke, Jesus promises to help us to live like him if we trust him with our lives. This is not something we can do overnight. But it is something we can live more day by day as we walk with Jesus.

Pray this prayer: *"Dear God, I know that I'm a sinner. I believe that Jesus died for my sins and rose from the dead and is alive today. I now turn from my sins. I am placing my faith and trust in Jesus alone to be my Savior and to forgive me. I receive Jesus into my life as my Savior and Lord. From this day forward, I will follow Jesus. Thank you, Lord Jesus, for loving me and for coming into my life. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen."*

Welcome to God's family! Share with others that you have received Christ as your Savior and Lord. Ask for baptism in a local church as a public expression of your faith. If there is no church near you, start a church by gathering a group of persons in your home and worship together on a regular basis. Read your Bible and pray each day. Tell others what Christ has done for you and what he can do for them.