

**Pastor Jim Lloyd**

**Date: May 22, 2016**

**Title: The Master Teacher**

**Text: Luke 6:47-48 (All Scripture quoted from the NIV)**

Romans 12:6-7 – <sup>6</sup>“We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man’s gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith...<sup>7</sup>if it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach;”

Luke 6:47-48 – <sup>47</sup>“I will show you what he is like who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice. <sup>48</sup>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.”

One of the most important aspects of Jesus’ ministry on earth was His teaching ministry. He came to this world so that we might receive new life in Him – “that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” – and He accomplished this through His death on the cross. But He came to do more than just die for our sins. He also came to teach us how to live. We don’t always know the right thing to do, AND even when we do know the right thing to do, we’re not always real good at doing it. When we do know the right thing to do, it’s because we learned through a variety of sources OR someone TAUGHT us the right thing to do. Jesus came to teach us how to live, and His teachings cover the many facets of life. He teaches us how to sort our priorities, how to treat our friends, how to respond to our enemies or to those who don’t treat us well, how to pray, how to relate to God, what it means to love God, what our proper attitude should be toward money, generosity, and the accumulation of wealth, how to face our problems, how to deal with adversity, what to do when we’re afraid, worried, or full of doubt, what it means to live a life of faith, and on and on.

If all the Bible we had were the four gospels – Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, the books that tell the stories of Jesus’ life and record His teachings – it would be enough for us to live a life in God. Obviously, ALL Scripture is inspired and ALL Scripture is essential for our edification. I’m not implying otherwise. I AM saying that there is enough in these four gospels to teach us how to live the kind of life Jesus promised: The Abundant Life. This is why a Christian’s Bible reading schedule should include an emphasis on reading the gospels. All Scripture is inspired, BUT the teachings of Jesus are especially helpful in teaching us what we need to know about how to live this life.

In these last number of weeks as we’ve looked at some of the gifts listed in Romans 12, we have found that JESUS IS THE BEST EXAMPLE. We’ve been challenged these past weeks to KNOW JESUS and to BECOME LIKE JESUS. We learned that He is fully God, fully man, and that He came to this earth so that we might see a living, breathing example of what it means to be fully surrendered to God, and that it’s worth it to follow Him. Next we saw that Jesus’ entire approach to life and ministry was the opposite of the entitlement mentality, even though He of all people had every right to act entitled. He gave us an example of greatness, and an example of humble SERVICE to others – and, as it turns out, they’re the same thing. “If you want to be great in the kingdom, learn to be the servant of all.” And, every one of us can devote their lives to SERVING others.

Today we want to look at Jesus the Teacher. How many teachers do we have here this morning? (School, church?) You are gifts to our community, to our church. Obviously, this morning we can’t look at all of the teachings of Jesus, but we will talk about the attitude we should have toward His teachings and what role His words should have in our daily lives. Have you ever struggled with these questions – “What does it really mean to live the Christian life? What does it mean to be holy? What does God expect of me and how does He want me to live?” In the teachings of Jesus, you will find answers to these questions. In the teachings of Jesus, you will find clarity, purpose, and direction. And though sometimes you’ll be challenged to confront attitudes and situations that you may not be ready to confront, when you have a solid foundation in the teachings of Christ, you’ll face these situations with a clearer idea of what needs to be done.

1. **JESUS’ METHOD OF TEACHING.** If you’ve been in the church any time at all, you’ve likely heard it said that Jesus was a great teacher, so let’s talk for just a moment about His style of teaching. **His most common style of teaching was to TELL STORIES.** The Bible word for them is “parable,” but they’re really just stories – stories that teach a lesson or explain a spiritual truth. He talked about a farmer planting seeds, some on good soil and some on bad soil. He talked about a man who had planted a wheat field and discovered that his enemy had come in and planted weeds among the wheat. He talked about how a woman baking bread needs to put a little yeast in the dough so that it will rise when it’s placed in the oven. He talked about how the smallest of all seeds – the mustard seed – would grow into the largest of all garden plants, the mustard tree. He talked about a man who

owned a hundred sheep and lost one, so he went out looking for it. He told about a man who gave his workers large amounts of money and advised them to manage it well. He told about the owner of a vineyard who hired day-laborers throughout the day and paid them all the same wage at the end of the day; and on and on. Some people are more spiritually perceptive than others. Some people hear a parable and get it right away, and say, "That makes perfect sense. He's talking about forgiveness...Or...He's talking about faith." Others hear a story about a man working in a vineyard and think, "What does that have to do with anything?" The stories of Jesus have something like a time-release effect on some people. They're like spiritual seeds planted in the hearts of listeners. The story is easy to remember, even if the listener doesn't understand its meaning at first. But those who seek to know the truth will eventually have that "aha" moment, where they say, "Okay. Now I get it."

**Another method Jesus used in teaching is the MEMORABLE SAYING.** In other words, a single statement consisting of just a few words which sums up a spiritual principle. "*Do to others as you would have them do to you*" (Luke 6:31). "*Judge not, that ye be not judged*" (Matthew 7:1). "*For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted*" (Matthew 23:12). His sayings are short and to the point. They're easy to remember, and they tell what you NEED TO KNOW about what you NEED TO DO. "*Do unto others as you would have them do unto you*" – it's almost impossible to misinterpret this command. Think about it. Would I like it if someone got in my face and screamed at me for making a mistake? No, I wouldn't. Hmmmm. That means I shouldn't yell and scream at others. **Jesus also taught lessons through the EVENTS OF DAILY LIFE.** He saw some children, and He called them to Him, and He taught about what faith really means. He saw a widow drop two small coins in an offering plate, and He taught about generosity. The Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery, and He used the moment to teach about forgiveness and grace. A man came asking to be healed on the Sabbath, and after Jesus healed him, He talked about the dangers of legalism. The great Bible teacher Donald Grey Barnhouse used to say, "All of life illustrates Biblical truth." We see this in the teaching of Jesus. He talks about everyday events in a way that can make spiritual truth come alive. Here's what I've noticed: The more time you spend in the gospels, learning how Jesus taught, the more spiritually perceptive you become – you see the lessons of Biblical truth in every day events. That's why Jesus said so often, "*For him who has ears to hear, let him hear.*" He's talking about becoming spiritually perceptive. May we all have ears to hear His voice. These are three examples of the teaching methods of Jesus. He also used rhetoric, logic, and asking questions. But these three are the most common.

- 2. WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT WHEN YOU READ THE GOSPELS.** Let's talk for a minute about five challenges you can expect to encounter when you read the teachings of Jesus. **You will be challenged to take a CLOSER LOOK.** There are many aspects of the teachings of Jesus that require more than a surface level scan. They require thought, reflection, and meditation. Sometimes you'll find yourself intrigued by His teachings. And sometimes you might find yourself taken aback. And sometimes, quite frankly, you may find yourself confused – at least at first. A man said to Jesus, "*I will follow you, but first let me bury my father.*" Jesus responded by saying, "*Let the dead bury the dead.*" Why would He say that? One time He said to a Gentile woman, "*It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to the dogs.*" Why would He say that? Another time, when a man called Jesus "*Good teacher,*" Jesus replied, "*Why do you call me good? There is none good but God.*" Why would Jesus say that? What does that mean? That He is not good? That He is not God? There are times you will encounter a teaching in the gospels that causes you to say, "Wait a minute. What does that mean? What's He really saying here?" Many of Jesus' teachings are so straightforward and direct that they require no interpretation, but sometimes you'll encounter stories and sayings that leave you scratching your head for a minute. When you read the gospels, expect to be challenged to take a closer look. **You will also be challenged to take a SECOND LOOK.** And a third look, and a fourth, and on and on. Here's what I'm saying: The gospel stories are so richly layered that you can come back again and again and discover something new. These are not like dime-store novels where when you've read one, you've read them all. These stories bear repeating. Every time you come back to the gospels, they take you a little deeper than last time. When I say you'll be challenged to take a closer look and a second look, I'm saying that the more you read the gospels, the deeper you'll want to go, and it's doubtful that you ever quite reach the bottom of the well. **You will be challenged to take an INWARD LOOK.** You'll discover in the gospel stories and the teachings of Christ that Jesus talks to you about YOU. His stories aren't designed to tell us how bad all those other people are, and how much better we are than them, and how the world would be a better place if they were more like us. No, when you read the gospels, you get the impression that Jesus is talking to you about YOU. In the gospels you see that He is challenging you to evaluate yourself, to evaluate your heart, to evaluate your priorities, to take a personal inventory of who you are and where you are

and where you stand in your relationship to God. For example, Jesus told a story about two men who went to the temple to pray. One was very religious and very proud of it. He prayed a rather self-congratulatory prayer, *“Lord, I thank you that that I’m such a good person and I’m so much better than everyone else.”* The other man was a sinner, a tax collector, too ashamed to even look up as he prayed. He simply said, *“God, have mercy on me, a sinner.”* Jesus said, *“I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God”* (Luke 18:14). Which describes you? We see this again and again in Scripture, especially in the gospels. The sin you need to worry about first, and worry about most, is the sin that’s polluting YOUR life – YOUR SIN! Before you start pointing fingers at the rest of the world, Jesus challenges you to look inward – at your heart, your thoughts, your attitudes, your words, your desires, and your motives. The gospels never let you get away with looking down on others. Jesus challenges you to deal with what’s in YOUR heart. **You will be challenged to MOVE OUT OF YOUR COMFORT ZONE.** The gospel stories aren’t just feel-good stories. This isn’t *Chicken Soup for the Sadducee Soul*. Though you will hear many words of comfort in the teachings of the gospels, you will also hear Jesus calling you outside your comfort zone – to LOVE those you’re not inclined to love, to GIVE when you’re not inclined to give, to OBEY when you’re not inclined to obey, to PRAY when you’re not inclined to pray. He’ll challenge you to PERSEVERE when you’re tempted to quit, to STAND IN FAITH when you’re ready to crumble in doubt, to HOLD FAST TO HOPE when those around you are giving in to despair. In the gospels, Jesus challenges you to stretch yourself, to MOVE YOUR FAITH TO THE NEXT LEVEL. You can’t read the gospels every day and stay satisfied with where you are spiritually. Reading the Gospels doesn’t allow us to be complacent about our role in God’s kingdom. In reading the gospels, you will find yourself challenged again and again to DO MORE and to BE MORE for the glory of God. This brings us to the fifth challenge that you can expect to encounter. **You will be challenged to TAKE ACTION.** I’m saying that you’ll be challenged to put His teachings into practice. Jesus wasn’t given to teaching theory. He taught the practical application of spiritual truth. Jesus said it very plainly, *“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven”* (Matthew 7:21). And He went on to say, *“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”* (Matthew 7:24). Jesus didn’t preach “FYI” sermons, as if to say, “Here’s some interesting information about the Bible,” or “Here’s some interesting information about God.” The teachings of Jesus always move us in the direction of taking action. James says that we are to be doers of the Word, and not merely hearers who deceive ourselves (James 1:22). In the gospels you will find yourself challenged again to be a DOER of the Word – to put His teaching into practice in your daily life.

- 3. HOW WE SHOULD BEGIN.** Let’s talk about HOW we can put the teachings of Jesus into practice. It begins with spending time in the gospels – reading and re-reading the teachings of Christ. I love the Psalms. I love the Proverbs. I love the letters of Paul. When we study the Word, we need to study all of the Word, because ALL of it is useful. However, as we study the Word, let’s make sure that we do not neglect the gospels. We would all do well to spend a few minutes each day – reading from one of the gospels. Specifically, reading the words of Jesus (in some Bibles, these words are in red). You don’t have to read an entire chapter. Just read one section at a time, or a few verses at a time. If you don’t know where to start, you could start in Matthew 5, or Luke 15, or John 10 – anywhere in the gospels. Read and listen to what Jesus has to say. Think and meditate on the words of Jesus. Then ask yourself, “What do Jesus’ words mean for me today? How should I respond to His teaching today?” If, for the next 30 days, you were to spend just a few minutes each day reading from the gospels, you would be amazed at what you will learn. I can tell you what will happen. You will find yourself, sometimes, taken aback. Maybe even a little confused. And you’ll find yourself discovering nuggets in the stories that you had never noticed before. And you’ll find yourself, at times, confronted with areas of your life that you need to correct. Sometimes you’ll find yourself challenged to demand more from yourself: to be MORE HOLY than you’ve ever been, MORE MERCIFUL than you’ve ever been, MORE CONSISTENT than you’ve ever been. And you’ll find yourself challenged TO PUT IT ALL INTO PRACTICE, to apply His words to your daily life and become a doer of the Word.
- 4. Conclusion.** I hold that Jesus is the greatest teacher who ever lived. Not because His stories are merely interesting or because His sayings are clever, but because they’re POWERFUL, LIFE-CHANGING! Hebrews 4:12 – *“For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.”* When you build your life on the teachings of Jesus, your life works. It’s as simple as that. Let’s look at our text again (this time from the NLT): <sup>47</sup>*“I will show you what it’s like when someone comes to me, LISTENS TO MY TEACHING, and then FOLLOWS*

IT. <sup>48</sup>*It is like a person building a house who digs deep and lays the foundation on solid rock. When the floodwaters rise and break against that house, it stands firm because it is well built.*” Jesus came not only to die on the cross for our sins, but also to teach us how to live. You can build your life on the teachings of Jesus, because He taught lessons that anyone can LEARN, anyone can UNDERSTAND, and anyone can DO – that includes you and me. When you build your life on the teachings of Jesus, you’re building your life on SOLID ROCK. So take the first step. A grand way to start any day is in the gospels. Read the words of Jesus and listen to His teachings. Make the effort to put His words into practice. See what changes He can make in your life.