

Jesus Began to Teach His Disciples About His Coming Death

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain what Jesus said in His first mention of the church to His disciples. We also saw that we will only be effective as we share about Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit and not in our own strength. In our topic today, we are going to see that Jesus began to teach His disciples about His coming death.

We saw, in our last topic, that Jesus had taken the disciples with Him to the region of Caesarea Philippi. This was a mostly Gentile area so Jesus was able to spend time with just the disciples, teaching them. After Jesus explained to the disciples that He would build the church, Jesus then began to teach His disciples about His coming death and resurrection. Matthew 16:21 says, “From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.” The statement “from that time” tells us that Jesus was beginning a new period in His ministry. From this point on, we will see that Jesus spent more and more of His time teaching just the disciples and preparing them for His coming death and resurrection.

The word translated “must” means *it is necessary or it is right and proper*. Here, we see that Jesus was making it clear to His disciples that it was necessary for Him to go to Jerusalem to carry out the work that the Father had sent Him to do. Jesus and the disciples had already made several trips together to Jerusalem. However, we see that Jesus is now beginning to talk about the trip when He would go to the cross. The Old Testament had given many prophecies about the death and resurrection of the Christ. Isaiah 53:8 says, “He was taken from prison and from judgment, and who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgressions of My people He was stricken.” In this verse, we see that Isaiah had predicted the death of Christ for the sins of the people.

We see that Jesus said that He would suffer many things from the elders, chief priests and scribes. Jesus explained, here, that it would be the religious leaders who would put Him to death. The elders were the seventy men that were known as the Sanhedrin. The chief priests were the men who were responsible to lead the people of Israel in the worship of God. The scribes were the men who made copies of the various books of the Old Testament. Together, these men were recognized by the Jews as the religious leaders. Matthew 26:57 says, “And those who had laid hold of Jesus led *Him* away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled.” In this verse, we see that it was these religious leaders that had gathered to condemn Jesus to death. That night, the high priest put Jesus under oath and said, “‘Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!’” Matthew 26:64-66 says, “Jesus said to him, ‘*It is as you said*. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.’ Then the high priest tore his clothes, saying, ‘He has spoken blasphemy! What further need do we have of witnesses? Look, now you have heard His blasphemy! What do

you think?’ They answered and said, ‘He is deserving of death.’” Here, we see that the religious leaders formally condemned Jesus to death.

Jesus also told the disciples that death would not be the end. Instead, Jesus said that He would be killed and be raised the third day. Peter was not happy to hear Jesus say that He would be put to death. Matthew 16:22-23 says, “Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, ‘Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!’ But He turned and said to Peter, ‘Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.’” These verses show the reaction of Peter. Peter said that such a thing would never happen to Jesus. Here, we see how easy it is to see things from our viewpoint, instead of the plan of God. The Old Testament had given the plan of God when it said that Jesus would be put to death to pay the penalty for our sins to bring us back to God. Isaiah 53:6 says, “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth.” God had made His plan clear.

In contrast, the viewpoint of Peter was that this would never happen to Jesus. As a result of the failure of Peter to understand the plan of God, Peter instead gave his own opinion. His opinion was directly contrary to the Word of God. This caused Jesus to give the strongest recorded rebuke that Jesus gave to any of the disciples. Jesus said, “Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.” In the Garden of Eden, Satan spoke to Eve through the snake. Here, we see that Jesus said that Satan was speaking through Peter. Satan is always against the plan of God because his goal is to exalt himself. Isaiah 14:12-14 says, “‘How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! *How* you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: “I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.”’” Jesus wanted Peter to understand the plan of God.

Jesus also said that Satan, speaking through Peter, was an offense to Him. The word that is translated “offense” means *a stumbling stone, a trap or a snare*. This word is used in Romans 11:9, where we read, “And David says: ‘Let their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a recompense to them.’” In this verse, the word is translated “stumbling block”. Peter himself later used this word in 1 Peter 2:7-8, where we read, “Therefore, to you who believe, *He is* precious; but to those who are disobedient, ‘The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone,’ and ‘a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense.’ They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed.” In these verses, the word is translated a rock “of offense”. When we give our own opinions, instead of sharing the Word of God, we can open a door for Satan to speak through us also. Satan desires to get all Christians thinking about the things of men, instead of being mindful of the things of God.

Matthew 16:24-28 goes on to say, “Then Jesus said to His disciples, ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save

his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works. Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.” In these verses, we see that Jesus went on to explain to the disciples what it means to follow Him, instead of following the world.

Jesus said that we are to do three things if we desire to follow Him. First, we are to deny self. To “deny himself” means *to forget self and our own interests*. Second, we are to take up his cross. Jesus said in Luke 14:25-27, “Now great multitudes went with Him. And He turned and said to them, ‘If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.’” To “take up his cross” means that *we are to have a greater love for Christ than for our relatives or even our own physical life*. Third, we are to follow Christ. 2 Peter 1:1 says, “Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ.” In this verse, we see that Peter viewed himself as a bondservant of Jesus Christ and his purpose in life had become to serve Jesus as His bondservant.

Peter understood that salvation and forgiveness of sins was a free gift. However, as he grew in Christ, he grew to understand that as a follower of Christ, his goals in life would either focus on the things of this world or they would focus on the things that have eternal value. The same thing was true for all of the twelve except for Judas Iscariot. In 2 Peter 3:10, Peter explained what he had come to understand as he followed Jesus. That verse says, “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.” We are to be obedient to the command to make disciples. Matthew 28:20 says, “‘Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’ Amen.” As we help new Christians grow in their understanding of the love of Christ for them, they will respond to that love by loving Christ more than the things of this world. That is especially important since the things of this world will all be burned up and everything that is gathered in this world will be destroyed.

As a result, the process of helping a new Christian grow and become a disciple of Christ will change and transform his or her value system. Instead of the temporary things of this world, a growing Christian begins to have a greater and greater desire for the eternal rewards that Christ has promised to all who seek the things that have eternal value, instead of value just for this world. The disciples had their hearts and minds transformed as they followed Jesus and they became willing to die for Him because the temporary things of this world became of no value to them. In the same way, we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain to others why they have chosen to seek the things which are eternal, instead of the things that will only last for this world. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children why this is becoming true in your life.

