

## What's the Message – Lesson 98

Our lesson today presents Jesus teaching us about God.

Greetings in the name of Jesus, our Savior. Lord, our prayer today is that You would help us to open our hearts and minds to listen carefully to the words of Your Son as He teaches us about You and Your will for our lives. Amen.

Last time we saw Jesus teaching us about the distorted view that had arisen in Judaism about the purpose of separation. Today we move on to another lesson Jesus would have us learn about God, and His will for us.

But first, let us recognize that man is a curious creature, always wanting to learn more about such things as the world beyond us, or the problems we encounter in the world around us. This is why we launch space probes and the Hubble telescope, and do research on the tiny microbes and diseases that consume us. But our restless spirit does not stop with these simple examples. Many of us also search spiritually.

Many of us have learned that science does not have all of the answers we seek, and so we search elsewhere for understanding, for truth, and for contentment. This is not something new . . . civilizations have, for centuries, sought answers to these questions. All but a very small percentage have concluded there must be a power greater than ourselves, a power – or great spirit – that has created this world and governs it. But there are many religions confusing us with conflicting claims. Teacher, where do we turn for guidance?

While others make claims, Jesus speaks with authority and certainty that is both comforting and reassuring. Jesus taught by His example, by His actions . . . and by word, by illustration, often by paradox and parable. One of the first things He taught the Disciples is found in Matthew 6, beginning at verse 5: *And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by men. . . . Do not be like them . . . Pray like this: Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be Thy name.*

*Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.* The point here is that God is our Father, and rules over both earth and heaven, and we are meant to live under His rule in both realms. Here on earth, we are to be His servants, to reach out and be a blessing to the whole world.

Teacher, I remember you making a point back in our study of Jeremiah, chapter 29, verse 7, where it is written: *Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf . . .* In other words, the Jews exiled by the Babylonian captivity were to do the unthinkable, and work on behalf of the people who forced them into exile. Here God was instructing His people that He was Lord of both Jew and Gentile.

Yes, and the emphasis is on being a servant of God now, right where you are, wherever that may be. Do not look for a more auspicious time or place. Anything less than being the servant of your heavenly Father, starting right now, is only an excuse.

God set forth His purpose for us way back in Genesis, chapter 12, when He pronounced His covenant to Abraham. We now share in that assignment given to our spiritual forefathers, and we are to be a blessing to all the families of the earth. That is our purpose given by God. Likewise, there should be no confusion regarding the will of God. As Jesus taught the Disciples, *For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him should have eternal life.* (John 16:40).

Let me summarize. Our subject is Jesus teaching His Disciples about God. I asked for guidance, and in answer you gave me the comfort of the authority of Jesus reassuring us that God is our Father, who rules both earth and heaven. Then you said, we are to be His servants and to be a blessing to all peoples of our world, because that is the will of God, and the purpose of Jesus. What else should we know about God? What other points did Jesus teach His followers regarding this subject?

How about instruction on the nature of God? Back in our Old Testament studies we saw an emphasis on Yahweh as the God of both judgment and forgiveness. We could make a lengthy list of attributes using theological language that would include such things as: eternal, omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent, holy, loving, faithful and true, merciful, gracious, patient. We could say He is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. His word is infallible, all-sufficient, and so on. But although accurate, such a listing does not really reveal the nature of God to us on a personal basis.

OK, I think I see where you are going. Jesus did not just talk about God as an abstract being, He showed us what God was like through His own actions. And there are so many examples we could cite, but here are a few of them. When He saw people hungry, He fed them (Mark 6:39-44). When He saw people, like sheep without a shepherd, “He had compassion on them” (Mark 6:34). When He saw men burdened by sin, He forgave them (Mark 2:5).

Jesus taught us that God is all powerful and nothing is beyond His ability to do (Matt. 19:26). Jesus taught us that God knows everything, even the things that we try to hide. Recall these words from Matthew 12:36 *I tell you, on the day of judgment men will render account for every careless word they utter.* This may be disturbing to some, but then Jesus also taught us that every soul has incomparable value in the sight of God when He said “you are of more value than many sparrows” and “even the hairs of your head are numbered” (Matt. 10: 29-31).

Then with the parable of the one lost sheep (Matt. 18:12-14) Jesus taught us that God is a Father who loves each individual member of His family, and is not only mindful of the needs of His children, but ministers to those needs. Recall the familiar words of Matthew 6: 31-33: *Therefore do not be anxious, saying “What shall we eat?” or “What shall we drink?” or “What shall we wear?” For the Gentiles seek all these things; and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well.*

What more comfort and assurance can we have than these wonderful words Jesus spoke to Nicodemus about the love God has for us:  
*For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him*  
(John 3:16-17).

Next time we will hear what Jesus had to teach us about the relationship man needs to have with God.