

Sermon Outlines

Little Lessons From Jesus' Life

Reading:

Mark 8:1-21

The life of the Lord Jesus is filled with little lessons. It is the multitude of details of the Saviour's holy life that lays down a strong foundation for our faith.

Lesson 1 - His ministry was larger than life (v. 1)

- a) The life of Christ was real, earthly and interactive with His society. Nothing was done in a corner to leave a cloud of suspicion about the Lord's real character.
- b) Jesus was truly a public person. He was open to every eye and the subject of every conversation of his day.
- c) The ministry of Christ drew intense and protracted interest. This massive group followed the Lord for three days (v. 2). He was obviously satisfying the people's interest and feeding their souls.

Lesson 2 - He ministered out of a large heart (v. 2)

- a) In this instance it is the Lord who recognises the physical plight of these people who had extended their time and exhausted their supplies. To dismiss them without food would leave them wanting on their long journey homeward "*for divers of them came from far*" (v. 3).
- b) The many incidences of the Lord's compassion reveals His true nature.
- c) We are in the school of learning mercy to the needy.
- d) If we claim to be like Christ, our ministry too must be filled with compassion toward those in need.

Lesson 3 - His miracles were repeated to add substance to His testimony (v. 5-9)

- a) This feeding the 4000 was a Deja Vu experience of the feeding the 5000 with 5 loaves and 2 fishes.
- b) This separate incident with so many different details, cannot be construed to be the same event. It boosted the character of the Lord in the eyes of the disciples and the people.
- c) The Lord's power, while not indiscriminate, was never limited. The Lord was up to any situation.
- d) We honour the Lord in our witness for Him by remembering His power to help us in our times of need. In ill-health, lack of finances, temptations and in trials the Lord is the helper we need.

Lesson 4 - The Lord was grieved by unbelievers seeking signs (v. 10-12)

- a) Seeking for a sign from heaven was evidence of the Pharisees setting themselves against the Lord. In truth, no evidence of any kind would satisfy these unbelievers.
- b) The miracles of Jesus did not convince them of His character, nor did His ministry of the gospel speaking with power and truth convince them.
- c) The lesson we note is in how the Lord responded to this wide gulf of unbelief. "*And he sighed deeply in his spirit . . .*" (v12). The Lord did not take the unbelief of men lightly. He was deeply disturbed in his soul.
- d) The Lord himself was the word of the Father who came from heaven. We are bidden by the Father to hear Him.
- e) When evil men go beyond God's Son they risk ruining their own souls.
- f) The spirit of unbelief denies that God sent His Son to save sinners.
- g) As Christians, we also grieve at the attitude of unbelievers to our Lord. We take this to pray pleading the Lord's mercy and power to change their hearts.

Lesson 5 - The Lesson of one loaf (v. 14)

- a) On this seeming impromptu boat-trip across the sea of Galilee, the disciples brought only one loaf of bread. If all the disciples were together it wasn't much.
- b) **The loaf on board the boat prompted the Lord to warn against the corrupting influence of the Pharisees and of Herod (v. 15).**
 - i) Having all knowledge of their wily ways and wicked works the Lord needed to warn the disciples of the corrupting influence of evil men.

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- ii) Religious men and political figures too may corrupt the truth of the gospel and distract God's people from their core work.
- c) **The Pharisees were given to legalism.**
 - i) They were in bondage to laws and traditions which were contrary to grace.
 - ii) The spirit of forgiveness and mercy was pushed out and a hard attitude of law was built into their way of thinking.
 - iii) It was filled with pride forcing long prayers in public places.
 - iv) It was heartless religion missing the compassion of the Lord.
 - v) Herod was known for his immorality and was apt to justify his sin. To be a Herodian was contrary to being a Christian.
- d) **The one loaf on board the ship also prompted the Lord to call the disciples to faith in His power to multiply the bread.**
 - i) He reminded them of the event when he fed the 5000, and again more recently, his feeding the 4000.
 - ii) He reminded them of the collection of fragments (12 baskets and then 7) as evidence of His ability to satisfy the hunger of the people. See the hard question, "*How is it that ye do not understand?*" (v. 21)
 - iii) They were not to become hardened through unbelief after being witnesses to these miracles.
 - iv) What are the things that distract you from remembering the Lord's power in your life? How quickly Christians lose sight of the Lord's power and grace in bestowing past blessings.
 - v) We need to count our many blessings and see what God has done.

"It is a blessed thought that Jesus, our Master in heaven, despises none of His people. Marvellous and blameworthy as their slowness to learn undoubtedly is, His patience never gives way. He goes on teaching them, "Line upon line, precept upon precept." Let us do likewise. Let it be a rule with us never to despise the weakness and dullness of young Christians. Where ever we see a spark of true grace, however dim and mixed with infirmity, let us be helpful and kind. Let us do as we would be done by." J. C. Ryle

. . . . Ian Goligher