

Purpose

- To finish up the Calling of the 12 Disciples
- To learn about the women who followed Jesus
- To learn about the Sermon on the Mount
- To learn the Beatitudes

Materials

- Bible
- Handouts

Background Information**CALLING THE 12 DISCIPLES**

The Gospels do not recount all the stories in which Jesus invited people to follow him. There must have been many who left what they were doing to go with him, at least for a time. But out of that large number, Jesus finally selected twelve who would stand in special relationship to him, including Simon and James and John and Matthew, whose stories of meeting Jesus were told.

Luke indicates that there were many disciples, and that out of that large group Jesus chose twelve of them, who he also named apostles. The apostles went with him on his journeys. They learned from him as he taught. They were sent out by him to preach, to teach, to heal.

WOMEN WHO FOLLOWED JESUS

One other group of those close to Jesus is given special recognition by Luke—the women: Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna, and “many others.” A significant number of women are named in the Gospels, and there are many indications that women played an important role in the work and the ministry of Jesus.

In Mark, Herodias and her daughter are mentioned but not looked upon very kindly. Mark also writes a lot about three special women—the two Marys and Salome—remained loyal to their teacher longer than any. Other women mentioned included: Simon’s mother-in-law, who upon recovery from a fever ministered to Jesus; the woman who bled for years; the Syrophoenician woman, who insisted upon healing for her little girl; a widow who gave to the Temple her whole livelihood; the woman of Bethany who anointed Jesus for his burial. Like the men who followed Jesus these women cover all types of humans; the best, the worst, and all in between. In Mark the followers of Jesus were not restricted to men. But whether man or woman it was not easy to follow Jesus and stay loyal.

In John women were mentioned many times. John talks a lot about Mary, the mother of Jesus. We are also told of Mary and Martha the sisters of Lazarus.

As you search more in the Bible on your own you will discover that women were important to Jesus. This was not true of most men on that time. Women were simply to take care of the men and serve them. Jesus was often criticized because he revered women and used them to spread his word.

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT BEATITUDES

As Jesus collected his twelve disciples he also continued to do miracles and work on his ministry. Matthew gives a quick summary of the work of Jesus as he began his ministry. He traveled in Galilee. He taught in the synagogues. He preached the good news of the Kingdom. He cured the sick people who were brought to him. In his work, Jesus achieved great success. And people from many places followed him day and night. The people were so hungry for the good news of the Kingdom that they never left him alone. Jesus knew that he needed to have his time alone to pray and talk to his father. From time to time Jesus would try to isolate himself. He often went up into the mountains to have his time away from the crowds. Matthew tells us in Matthew 5:3-10 about the time that Jesus saw the crowds and went up the mountain. After he sat down his disciples came to him. Many times Jesus preached to the multitudes or did a miracle or told a parable and then called his disciples out to explain it to them. He knew they were going to have to teach others when he was gone. On this occasion Jesus declared the good news of the Kingdom to those who had committed themselves to be his disciples.

In this his longest recorded sermon Jesus does not tell us to be meek, or poor in spirit but rather he tells us the traits he is looking for in his followers. He called those who lived out those traits blessed because God had something special in store for them. Each beatitude is an almost direct contradiction of society's typical way of life. In the last beatitude Jesus even points out that a serious effort to develop these traits is bound to create opposition. The best example of each trait is found in Jesus himself. If our goal is to become like him, the Beatitudes will challenge the way we live each day. In the Beatitudes Jesus speaks of promises rather than of commandments.

Also in the Beatitudes Jesus tells the disciples that they are now changed. He uses familiar things to explain this to the disciples so that they can understand him. He tells them they are the salt of the earth, the light of the world. The salt makes all the difference in the flavor of food and the disciples are to make a difference in the lives of people. The light is provided so that people can see where they are going. The disciples are to be that light.

Jesus also explains that he has not come to do away with the Jewish laws. These laws were very detailed and hard to live by. Jesus came to fulfill what the laws had always said would happen. It was the responsibility of the scribes and Pharisees to make sure that the people kept the laws. The Pharisees were afraid that Jesus would tell the people not to follow the laws. This was one reason that the Pharisees were so afraid of Jesus and tried to get rid of him. See Handout 57-5 explains more about the Pharisees, Sadducees and other religious leaders of the day.

Procedure

- Read the review on the selecting of the 12 disciples
- Check out the handout 59-1 and 59-2.
- Go over background information on Sermon on the Mount and the Beatitudes.
- Check out handout 59-3 and go over it. Handout 59-4 also gives some key points from the Beatitudes.
- Read about the Pharisees look over handout 59-5 and go over it. This may help them to understand a little better.