

Christ Preached His First Sermon on The Plain

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Christ Preached His First Sermon on the Mount
(*Matthew 5:1*)

Christ Preached His First Sermon on the Plain
(*Luke 6:17, 20*)

The first four books of the New Testament represent different perspectives from four witnesses that lived during the time of Christ's ministry. These witnesses were Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

As two people rarely remember an event in exactly the same manner, Matthew's account of Christ's first sermon omits certain details that Luke's account provides, and vice versa. Nonetheless, it will be shown in this study that they did not contradict one another. Instead, their accounts complement one another and, when combined, these two different perspectives provide a more complete picture of Christ's first public message.

And seeing the multitudes, **he** (Christ) **went up on a mountain, and when he was seated his disciples came to him** (Mt. 5:1; NKJV used throughout unless otherwise noted; emphasis added).

In this account, Matthew pointed out that Christ taught his disciples without any multitudes being present. This was not unusual because Christ often elaborated on subjects with his disciples, while not providing the same details to the multitudes. It is interesting to note Luke's comment on this aspect of Christ's ministry.

Then his (Christ's) disciples asked him, saying, 'What does this parable mean?' ¹⁰And he said,

'to you it has been given to know the mysteries (secret or hidden truths) **of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is given in parables, that 'Seeing they may not see and hearing they may not understand'** (Lk. 8:9-10; cf. Mk. 4:11; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Today, many people who consider themselves "Christian" believe they must try to convert as many people as possible. This is contrary to what Christ taught. Instead, Christ stated that only his heavenly Father could lead people to understand they have sinned and that they need to repent and begin living a new life of obedience to every word of God (Jn. 6:44, 65; Rom. 2:4b; Ac. 2:38; Rom. 6:4; Mt. 4:4). Christ also said that many people would have an opportunity to repent and begin living in accordance with God's word, but that very few would continue doing this until the end of their lives (Mt. 22:14; 10:22; 24:13; Mk. 13:13).

After commenting on the fact that Christ was not trying to convert the multitudes that followed him, Luke then explained that Christ elaborated on the meaning behind the parable of the sower to his disciples (Lk. 8:11-15). With this in mind, Luke's account of Christ first sermon can be examined.

And he (Christ) came down with them (his twelve disciples; cf. Lk. 6:12-16) and stood on a level place with a crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem, and from the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon, who came to hear him and be healed of their diseases (Lk. 6:17; Ed. notes in parentheses).

By combining Matthew's account of Christ's first sermon with Luke's version, it can be seen that Christ first taught his twelve disciples, providing more background information to them than to

the multitudes, and after completing this instruction Christ went further down the mountain to a larger, more level area, where he began teaching some basic truths to the multitudes who had gathered for a number of reasons, including curiosity and a desire to be healed of various illnesses.

Then he (Christ) lifted up his eyes toward his disciples (knowingly, because he was about to repeat some of the things he had just taught them), and said (to the multitude): 'blessed are you poor, for yours is the kingdom of God (Lk. 6:20ff; Ed. notes in parentheses).

In conclusion, there is no contradiction between Matthew's account of Christ's first sermon and Luke's account. Instead, they complement each other and provide a better understanding of what took place. Technically speaking, Christ's first sermon was given to his disciples while he was on a mountain, followed by his second sermon to the multitudes on a level place further down the same mountain.

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