

7. Jesus Clarified the Truth for Those Who Were Searching

In His ministry, while He was here on earth, Jesus chose to hide truth from some people, while making it clear for others. In order to help developing leaders become more like their Savior, we need to help them understand who they should make truth clear to. We also need to help them understand how to make truth clear.

In Matthew 13:10-16, we read, “And the disciples came and said to Him, ‘Why do You speak to them in parables’ He answered and said to them, ‘Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: “Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, And seeing you will see and not perceive; For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with *their* eyes and hear with *their* ears, Lest they should understand with *their* hearts and turn, So that I should heal them.” But blessed *are* your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear...””

In these verses, we see that Christ made the mysteries of the kingdom clear to His disciples, but He did not make those mysteries clear to the multitudes. Christ made it very clear that the reason the multitudes could not see, could not hear, and could not understand was due to the fact that their hearts had grown dull. Paul quoted these same verses and said the same thing in Acts 28:25-28. Verse 28 adds, “Therefore let it be known to you that the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear it!” The fact that this statement was made about the Jews both by Christ and Paul shows that they had heard but continued to reject. That generation of Jews was not searching. However, the Gentiles were searching, and Paul said they would hear.

We need to realize that many people today are searching for answers in life. It is our privilege to share with them, because they will hear. We want to help developing leaders begin to learn to recognize when they are talking to people who are searching for answers in life. Many times, the people who are searching do not even realize they are searching. That is why we need to ask the Holy Spirit to lead us and guide us to people. One of the things we see about Christ is that He was continually taking the opportunity to talk to people. In the process of talking with people, some became open, because they were searching for truth.

A good illustration is the Samaritan woman in John 4. When Jesus first began talking with her, she was not very open. In fact, she responded, in John 4:9, “How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?” For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.” From this answer, it almost sounds like she was suspicious. For the next few verses, Jesus talked about living water and she interpreted what He was saying from her natural thinking. 1 Corinthians 2:14 says, “But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.”

However, she quickly revealed that she was searching for spiritual life when she said, in John 4:19-20, “...Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.” She showed by her statement that she thought worship happened by going to a certain place. Jesus explained the meaning of true worship in John 4:23-24, where we read: “But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

As a result of that meeting at a well, a whole town was changed. John 4:41-42 says, “And many more believed because of His own word. Then they said to the woman, ‘Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.’” Here, we see that Jesus found a whole town of people who were searching, and He shared the Word of God with them. The result was that many believed. The previous verse said that Jesus had spent two whole days teaching these people who were searching.

In Mark 12, we see that Christ recognized when another man was searching. Mark 12:32-34 says, “So the scribe said to Him, ‘Well said, Teacher. You have spoken the truth, for there is one God, and there is no other but He. And to love Him with all the heart, with all the understanding, with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is more than all the whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.’ Now when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, He said to him, ‘You are not far from the kingdom of God.’”

In this case, Jesus recognized by the answer the man gave that he was searching for spiritual life. One of the things the scribe recognized was the need to love God, not just offer sacrifices. Many times, people will show that they are searching for spiritual life by the questions they ask, or the statements they make. We need to help developing spiritual leaders realize that whenever we talk with people, we need to ask the Holy Spirit to make us sensitive to what they are saying, so that the Holy Spirit shows us those who are open.

We also need to help developing leaders learn how to make the truth clear to those who are open. One of the things we notice about the ministry of Christ was that He used illustrations of things the people understood to help them understand things they did not understand. The Samaritan woman had come for water, so Jesus began talking about living water and helped her make the transition in her thinking from physical water to spiritual life.

In John 9, Jesus met and healed a man who was blind from birth. The man who had been blind was inwardly searching, as is shown by his growing understanding through the chapter. Jesus asked a question to help the man understand and believe. John 9:35-38 says, “Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when He had found him, He said to him, ‘Do you believe in the Son of God?’ He answered and said, ‘Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?’ And Jesus said to him, ‘You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you.’ Then he said, ‘Lord, I believe!’ And he worshiped Him.” This man was searching, so Jesus told him who he needed to believe.

Some Pharisees had been listening to what Jesus said to the man. However, those Pharisees had no desire to believe. As a result, John 9:40-41 says, “Then some of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these words, and said to Him, ‘Are we blind also?’ Jesus said to them, ‘If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, “We see.” Therefore your sin remains.’” Those Pharisees had not been able to understand when Christ used physical blindness and physical sight to introduce the need for spiritual sight. They did not believe, because they wanted to remain in their sin rather than seek spiritual sight. The man who had been blind could understand the comparison between physical sight and spiritual sight. The Pharisees could not, because they were not open.

Nicodemus was one Pharisee who was searching for spiritual truth. In his case, he showed that interest by talking to Jesus one night. Jesus helped him to understand spiritual life by comparing physical birth and spiritual birth. At first, he did not understand. John 3:9 says, “Nicodemus answered and said to Him, ‘How can these things be?’” Jesus used an illustration from the Old Testament to help Nicodemus understand what it meant to believe. Jesus then explained to Nicodemus that every person must make the choice to believe and come to the light, or reject and remain in darkness. The fact that Nicodemus was one of the men who buried Jesus shows that he chose to come to the light. Jesus had clarified the truth for him, and the result was that he believed.

We want to help developing leaders learn to become sensitive to the Holy Spirit, so that they recognize when people are searching. We also want to help them realize the need to use illustrations the person understands to help make the truth clear to them. That way they will become effective leaders who will be able to help people come to recognize that they must make the choice to choose life, or reject the life Jesus has already paid for by His death and resurrection. May the Lord richly bless you as you help developing leaders learn to clarify truth for those who are searching.