

# Survey of Biblical History – Part 1: Creation to Christ

## #17 - THE EARLY MINISTRY OF CHRIST IN GALILEE

### Introduction:

After a brief period of ministry in the Judean countryside and Jerusalem, Jesus spends a considerable period of time preaching, teaching, and performing miracles and healings in and around Galilee, the northern region of Palestine. His message was the same (see Mark 1:14-15). At this time Jesus calls 12 men to become His special disciples. In fact, much of Christ's earthly ministry was wrapped up in the training of these 12 men to carry on the gospel message long after Jesus would depart from the scene. The 12 included: Peter and Andrew (brothers); James and John (brothers); Phillip, Bartholomew (also called Nathaniel), Matthew, Thomas, James (son of Alphaeus), Thaddaeus (also called Lebbaeus or Judas, son of James), Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot. Peter, James and John are known as the Inner Circle. They were particularly close to Jesus and became the most prominent of the Apostles.

### The Healing of a Paralytic (Mark 2:1-12; cf. Luke 5:17-26)

- Vss. 1-2** – Jesus and His disciples traveled from town to town and always attracted large crowds. They developed followers of all kinds—some of which opened their homes for Jesus to teach. In this case, they met in the home of someone who may have been wealthy (there is evidence he lived in a more expensively built Greco-Roman style house). The Pharisees and Scribes came to Capernaum from all around Palestine to hear Jesus (Luke 5:17). Jesus “preached the word to them,” meaning He most likely expounded upon the significance and fulfillment of the Old Testament which was taking place before their eyes.
- Vss. 3-4** – Four men carried a paralyzed man on a cot to the house hoping that Jesus might heal him. It was impossible for them to reach Him and most likely they would have no opportunity afterwards to catch Jesus either. They demonstrated remarkable boldness in their strategy, by removing roof tiles (Luke 5:19) and lowering the man in front of Jesus—no doubt creating tremendous commotion and dismay among the crowd.
- Vss. 5** – Jesus was impressed with the man's determination and faith and immediately pronounced his sins forgiven. It was customary for people to believe that physical suffering and disease was the result of one's sin (cf. John 9:1-2). Jesus evidently knew the heart of this man and his desire to be freed from not only from the burden of his infirmity but also his sin. Jesus used the opportunity to forgive the man of his sin before even considering his paralyzed condition.
- Vss. 6-7** – The religious leaders were more alarmed at Jesus' response than the boldness of the men. They realized that Jesus' statement regarding forgiveness and pardon was the prerogative of God alone. They were right. However, they failed to understand who Jesus was.
- Vss. 8-12** – Jesus supernaturally ascertained what these men were thinking. They would not make any verbal comments, since at this time the people were by and large very supportive of Jesus. To express opposition would not be a popular response. By healing the man, Jesus demonstrates His authority as God. Only God can heal miraculously; but more importantly, only God can pardon sin. The people were awestruck, recognizing the historic uniqueness of this event.

### The Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7)

The Sermon on the Mount is a powerful exposition of the Mosaic Law and its significance. It is also a powerful expose of legalism (as espoused by the Pharisees). Christ demonstrates that the Law places an impossibly high demand upon human beings (5:48). The Law penetrates right to the very thoughts and intentions of the heart and not simply outward conformity. The conclusion is despairing, because no one is able to meet its requirements. However, it also points to the hope that Christ Himself provides.

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## 1. The Beatitudes (5:2-15)

Speaks to attitudes of those who have true faith in God. “Blessed” means to be happy (i.e., fulfillment or satisfaction). This blessedness contrasts with the world’s concept of happiness.

- A. **Poor in Spirit.** A humility marked by utter dependence upon God.
- B. **Those who Mourn.** Godly mourning is mourning over the effects of one’s sin.
- C. **Meek.** One who is controlled by God and not himself, loathing any self-interest.
- D. **Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness.** One who seeks the righteousness of God, not his own.
- E. **Merciful.** One who is compassionate to the needy reflecting the mercy God has on oneself.
- F. **Pure in Heart.** A conscience that is cleansed from wrongful motives, acting blamelessly.
- G. **Peacemakers.** The desire to reconciled with others where conflict has occurred.
- H. **Persecuted for Righteousness.** Remaining steadfast when reviled for honoring God. Vss. 13-15 indicates the task set before those demonstrating the faithfulness described previously.

## 2. Jesus Expounds the Law (5:17-48)

- A. **Jesus fulfills the Law** (vss. 17-20). All must obey the Law. Lawbreakers are judged and banished from God’s future earthly kingdom. Those who obey the Law’s demands are considered great in the kingdom. “Righteousness” here exceeds external conformity, speaking of the thoughts and intentions of the heart. Only by looking to Christ can the Law’s requirements be fulfilled.
- B. **Murder** (vss. 21-26). Entertaining ill thoughts toward another person (see 1 John 3:15).
- C. **Adultery** (vss. 27-30). Entertaining lust in one’s imagination. Note Jesus’ common use of hyperbole here. Gouging out one’s eye or self-mutilation will not cure lust. Nonetheless, removing sin takes radical measures. If it was possible to remove sin by living in such impossible conditions, then it would be better than suffering the real reward of lust: eternal punishment.
- D. **Divorce** (vss. 31-32). The Rabbis taught that it was okay to divorce one’s wife for any reason. Christ places a higher value upon marriage than was ever common among the Jews.
- E. **Oaths** (vss. 33-37). Oaths were commonly treated with a flippant attitude. Jesus demanded that promises are to be kept and truthfulness honored in all relationships (human and Divine).
- F. **Retaliation** (vss. 38-42). Many were using OT civil laws to justify personal retaliation in non-criminal circumstances. Jesus is calling for the relinquishing of personal rights in deference to others. This is not groveling, but the willingness not to retaliate even when wrongfully injured.
- G. **True Love** (vss. 43-47). In addition to non-retaliation Jesus calls for self-sacrifice towards one’s enemies. True love is to love those whom one would be more inclined to hate.
- H. **Perfection** (vs. 48). The Law demands perfection in the manner that God Himself is perfect.

## 3. Religious Hypocrisy (6:1-18)

Religious hypocrisy is exposed as false religion and self-righteousness which is an abomination.

## 4. Kingdom Priorities (6:19-7:12)

The priority of one’s life is to be marked by a heavenward focus and dependence upon God. We are to judge others (those in personal relationships with us) only after proper self-examination (7:1-6). The golden rule should apply to all of one’s relationships (7:12).

## 5. Kingdom Entrance Requirements (7:13-27)

The way to eternal destruction is paved by lawlessness (vs. 23), but eternal life is obtained by obedience to Christ and the provision He Himself has made. He is the rock that one must build his life upon. Christ met the requirements of the Law on behalf of those who cannot—but who nonetheless trust in Him alone for salvation from sin.