

The Village Church – Rancho Santa Fe
Week #18 – Adult Bible Study – 2025 & 2026

Discovering the Bible

February 10 & 11, 2026

Review – The Ministry

1. For about 3 years, Jesus taught, preached, healed, and in many other ways, embodied the presence of God among the people, carrying out a ministry the present reality of the Kingdom of God
2. Jesus' life was a continuation of the work of God, attested in the Old Testament, of redeeming a people
3. And Jesus' life was much more: it was a radical new inbreaking of God into the world
4. Along with Jesus were many disciples (students or apprentices) who serve as examples to all would-be disciples

The Teachings

1. General Thoughts
 - a. Jesus was a master teacher
 - b. He taught in private conversations, in group settings, especially with his chosen and closest followers
 - c. He taught those who were eager to learn and open to his message, and those who were threatened by his lessons and trying only to subvert his work
 - d. Jesus taught using parables, healings, actions, and sermons
2. Matthew 5:1-20
 - a. The opening to the Sermon on the Mount
 - b. The Beatitudes (or Blessings) – verses 3-11
 - i. Often mistaken as ethical injunctions or commands for how to live, they are actually pronouncements (first and foremost) of God's blessing that is available to all people. They are not pronouncements of the conditions that we must achieve first in order to be blessed by God, but rather descriptions of the sorry state we are in but that do not prevent God from blessing us.
 - ii. Teaching that contradicts the prevailing attitude that only the "super-holy" ones are loved/blessed
 - iii. "poor in spirit" – the not-very-religious acting folks who nevertheless can be blessed by God
 - iv. "those who mourn" – even in this sad human condition, God can and will bless
 - v. "the meek" – the poor and powerless ones, who can still find blessing in and from God
 - vi. "hunger & thirst for righteousness" – in a world that can be decidedly *unrighteous*, still there can be blessing from God
 - vii. "merciful" – in an unmerciful world, still the merciful will receive mercy from God
 - viii. "pure in heart" – those for whom nothing is good enough – even themselves – who will finally find in the present availability of God all that they have longed for
 - ix. "peacemakers" – those who are reviled and rejected for not taking sides will be blessed
 - x. "persecuted" – even those in this horrible condition can and will be blessed
 - c. Salt, Light, true fulfillment of the Law – true righteousness that is available to everyone
3. Matthew 6:5-15
 - a. Teaching on prayer
 - b. Not for show, and not more effective because of many or fancy words
 - c. A simple and profound statement/prayer – the model for all prayer
4. Matthew 25:14-30
 - a. A classic parable, using an easily understood situation from life to illustrate truth about the Kingdom of Heaven
 - b. As with all parables, there are multiple lessons here
 - c. Some lessons:
 - i. the amount of ability you have is not an issue: what you do with what you have is
 - ii. we are encouraged to live boldly, confident of the approbation of our master
5. Mark 10:17-31
 - a. More teaching that turns conventional spiritual wisdom on its head, wisdom that said that the rich are more blessed and loved by God
 - b. Jesus' teaching here:

- i. Exposes the man's trust (and even worship of) in his wealth
 - ii. Jesus never says the rich cannot enter the Kingdom – only that material wealth is a powerful and seductive force that can take us away from the Kingdom if we let it
 - iii. And in his response to Peter, teaching that encourages absolute fealty to God and God's Kingdom that will in fact pan out...both in this life and the next
- 6. Mark 12:28-34
 - a. The Great Commandment
 - b. Jesus' teaching that true righteousness comes from absolute love (not just in attitude, but in action) of God, Neighbor, and Self
- 7. Luke 10:25-37
 - a. The Good Samaritan
 - b. A parable that illustrates how actual love of God plays out in real life
 - c. Note: the story is prompted by a question/questioner who wants to test Jesus
 - d. Jesus' parable does not define who a neighbor is (which was the question asked) but rather defines what "neighborly love" does
- 8. Luke 15:1-32
 - a. The Lost Sheep, Coin, Son
 - b. To the charge that Jesus consorts with sinners, which was understood to mean that he himself was a (hopeless) sinner, Jesus tells 3 stories
 - c. In all 3, the owner/parent goes to any length necessary to find/redeem/restore that which is lost
 - d. Jesus also "condemns" the common "religious" attitude that prevents or withholds grace, love, and forgiveness to those who do not conform to our particular standards of righteousness
- 9. John 4:5-30
 - a. Jesus and the Samaritan Woman
 - b. Jesus' presence in Samaria was itself a questionable thing, for no self-respecting and law-abiding Jew would go there, and much less would even converse with a woman
 - c. And even more so, the woman was not morally pure, having had many husbands, and currently not married to the man she was with – for the self-righteous folks, she was ineligible for God's grace and blessing
 - d. But...Jesus offers her the gift of grace and blessing
 - e. And, also part of the conversation, Jesus breaks down barriers of thought about true worship (in a place, or style) and points toward worship that is born of Spirit and Truth
- 10. John 10:1-18
 - a. Jesus, the Good Shepherd
 - b. Another parable using a common situation of the day to illustrate deep spiritual truth
 - c. Jesus compare himself to:
 - i. The Shepherd – the one who cares for the sheep
 - 1. Feeds, waters, even loses his life to save his sheep
 - 2. Who leads the sheep to find and have what they need for life
 - ii. The Gate to the sheepfold – the shepherd who literally lays across the opening to the corral in order to prevent thieves and predators from harming the sheep

Questions for Your Life Today

- A. What parable of Jesus speaks most powerfully and directly to you?
- B. What teaching from Jesus is the most difficult for you to understand or apply in your life?
- C. What lessons do we learn from others that distort or contradict the teachings of Jesus?
- D. In what ways do you teach others about Jesus?
- E. What parable from modern life might you tell that would illustrate truth about God and us that is consistent with Jesus' teachings?

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Primary Source: Discovering the Bible: A New Generation, published by The Kerygma Program, Pittsburgh, PA. Boyd Lien, author.