

Life Lessons

Matthew 12:15-21

Intro

It seems likely that we have all used the phrase ***life lesson***...

- Now, a ***life lesson*** is something from which *useful principles can be drawn*...

For example, there are many life lessons that can be learned from playing sports...

- ***We can learn the life lesson of the importance of practice, the lesson of not giving up after defeat, the lesson of being gracious in victory — and the list goes on and on...***

*But we have to be careful with **life lessons** because it is easy to learn the wrong ones...*

- You see, if we are learning from the ***wrong people*** then we will learn the ***wrong lessons***...

In order to avoid this error, we must ask ourselves the vital question: “***What kind of person do I want to be?***”...

- And how we answer that question will determine the kind of person that we become...

As we consider this question I want to share a quote from Dallas Willard...

“What God gets out of your life is the person you become. And what you get out of your life is the person you become.”

I believe that this quote points us to the very reason that God created us...

You see, God’s primary goal for our lives is ***not that we would do certain things*** but that ***we would become a certain sort of person...***

But what sort of person does He want us to become? — What is His ultimate goal for our lives?...

Romans 8:29 (NKJV)

For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

This is God’s goal for you — that you would be conformed into the image of Jesus Christ...

- And this process of conforming us into the image of Christ is called ***sanctification***...

Sanctification is all about us becoming more and more like the Lord Jesus as we are discipled by the Lord Jesus...

And this is where we come back to the importance of life lessons...

If we are to be disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ then ***He must be the primary source of our life lessons...***

But as we look to Him for **life lessons**, we must not view our goal as merely learning to do what He did — though that is part of it...

- Our primary focus must be to ***become just like Him*** — *to become the sort of person that He is...*

[ex. actor imitating a carpenter for a part in a movie **vs** a person who is apprenticed to a carpenter and becomes a carpenter in his own right...]

The weakness in the church — the continual failure of so many believers — is that they have never intended to actually become carpenters — they are only imitating carpenters...

But a person imitating a carpenter is not someone you want working on your house — you want the real thing...

Likewise, if we do not intend to be disciples — if it is not our intention to become the type of person Jesus is — then it is no wonder that we are unable progress...

- You see, if you want to truly become a carpenter then you must become a different sort of person...

The sort of person who not only ***does what a carpenter does*** but who ***sees what a carpenter sees*** — ***one who thinks like a carpenter thinks...***

- *And if we truly want to be mature disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ — if we truly want to become the sort of person that God created us to be...*

Then it is not enough to simply imitate the life lessons of the Lord Jesus...

- We must intend to be the sort of person that the Lord Jesus is — *to see as He sees — to think as He thinks — and then we will do what He does...*

And this will happen not because we are pretending to be like Him but because we have become that sort of person — the sort of person that God intended us to be...

With this in mind, let's read the passage that we will be studying this morning...

Matthew 12:15-21 (NKJV)

15 But when Jesus knew it, He withdrew from there. And great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them all.

16 Yet He warned them not to make Him known,

17 that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying:

**18 "Behold! My Servant whom I have chosen,
My Beloved in whom My soul is well pleased!**

I will put My Spirit upon Him,

And He will declare justice to the Gentiles.

**19 He will not quarrel nor cry out,
Nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets.**

**20 A bruised reed He will not break,
And smoking flax He will not quench,**

Till He sends forth justice to victory;

21 And in His name Gentiles will trust."

Let's go ahead and move into our first verse...

15 But when Jesus knew it, He withdrew from there.

In order to understand what is going on here, we must remind ourselves of the context by looking back to the previous passage...

Matthew 12:1-14 (NKJV)

1 At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. And His disciples were hungry, and began to pluck heads of grain and to eat.

2 And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to Him, "Look, Your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath!"

3 But He said to them, "Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him:

4 how he entered the house of God and ate the showbread which was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests?

5 Or have you not read in the law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless?

6 Yet I say to you that in this place there is One greater than the temple.

7 But if you had known what this means, I desire mercy and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless.

8 For the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."

9 Now when He had departed from there, He went into their synagogue.

10 And behold, there was a man who had a withered hand. And they asked Him, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?" —that they might accuse Him.

11 Then He said to them, "What man is there among you who has one sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift it out?

12 Of how much more value then is a man than a sheep? Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath."

13 Then He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched it out, and it was restored as whole as the other.

14 Then the Pharisees went out and plotted against Him, how they might destroy Him.

So, the Pharisees *sought to kill the Lord Jesus* because He exposed their false teaching and because He refused to submit to their man-made laws...

This brings us to the first of 12 life lessons from our passage...

Life Lesson #1 — Obeying God will bring persecution...

This is the story of human history — the godly have always been persecuted...

It started with Cain persecuting Abel — the persecution continued through the Old Testament times — through the New Testament era and has continued on until this very day...

And Paul warned believers of the reality of persecution in...

2 Timothy 3:12 (NKJV)

...all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

So, the reality of persecution is something that we must come to grips with if we intend to become the sort of person that God wants us to be...

Continuing on in Matthew 12:15 we read...

And great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them all.

To put it quite simply, those who ***followed*** the Lord Jesus and sought healing ***from Him*** were healed ***by Him***...

Life Lesson #2 — Following Jesus leads to blessing...

Now, please do not misunderstand me — following Jesus does not guarantee the blessing of healing...

- *Because healing may not be the best thing for us...*

But following Jesus *always leads to the blessings of His choosing* — because He always knows what is best for us...

“God always gives His best to those who leave the choice to Him”...

Continuing on to vs 16 we read...

16 Yet He warned them not to make Him known,

We understand that the Lord Jesus was keeping a low profile because the Pharisees were after Him...

Life Lesson #3 — Louder is not always better — God may be calling us to a quiet ministry...

- [ex. Muslims who become Christians in Saudi Arabia — they generally have a quiet ministry that does not draw the attention of the government...]

You do not need to be well-known to become the sort of person that God wants you to be...

Moving on to vs...

17 that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying:

This brings us to...

Life Lesson #4 — God always has a plan...

- [ex. common cause of arguments between husbands and wives is a lack of a plan...]

But this is never the case with God — He always has a plan...

Here are a few verses that confirm this truth...

Isaiah 46:9-10 (NKJV)

**9 Remember the former things of old,
For I am God, and there is no other;
I am God, and there is none like Me,
10 Declaring the end from the beginning,
And from ancient times things that are not yet done,
Saying, My counsel shall stand,
And I will do all My pleasure,'**

Acts 15:18 (NKJV)

"Known to God from eternity are all His works."

Romans 8:28 (NKJV)

**And we know that all things work together for good to those
who love God, to those who are the called according to His
purpose.**

Ephesians 1:11 (NKJV)

**In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being
predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all
things according to the counsel of His will...**

*So, God has a plan — but the truth is that we will never fully
understand His plan on this side of eternity...*

Isaiah 55:8-9 (NKJV)

**8 “For My thoughts are not your thoughts,
Nor are your ways My ways,” says the LORD.
9 “For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
So are My ways higher than your ways,
And My thoughts than your thoughts.”**

*Now, I love the way this theme is dealt with in the worship song,
Know You Will...*

Here are some of the lyrics...

***When the world's on fire
It's not like You don't have a plan
And when the earth gives way on this rock
Your Church will stand***

***And nothing has ever once surprised You
Nothing has ever made You flinch
And when it all shakes out
The gates of hell don't stand a chance***

***I don't know how You make a way, but I know You will
I don't know how You make a way, but I know You will
You've been good on every promise, from Eden to Zion
Through every dead end and out of that grave
I don't know how You make a way, but I know You will***

***So remember, God has always had a plan and He will always
make a way...***

Let's move on in Matthew 12 to vs...

18 "Behold! My Servant

Here we are given...

Life Lesson #5 — Like the Lord Jesus, we are called to be servants of God...

Now, many people view being a servant of God as a bad thing...

But being a servant of God is the best possible life — because as a servant of God you only have **one Master**...

- If you try to please people then you are setting yourself up to have countless masters with all sorts of differing desires...

And pleasing all of them is an impossible task so you might as well not try...

- Instead, simply submit to God alone as your Master and enjoy the easy yoke and the light burden...

Moving on in Matthew 12:18 we read...

Behold! My Servant whom I have chosen,

This is...

Life Lesson #6 — Like the Lord Jesus, you have been chosen by God to be His servant...

And this should bring great encouragement to each of you!...

You were created by God and chosen by God for service to Him — which is the greatest honor that anyone can be given...

God initiated relationship with you and has a place and a purpose for you...

Ephesians 2:10 (NKJV)

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Continuing on in Matthew 12:18 we read...

My Beloved in whom My soul is well pleased!

*Now, if you do a NT word search for **beloved** you will get 66 results in the NKJV...*

- *Several are references to the Lord Jesus — like here in vs 18 — but the vast majority are references to believers — which leads us to...*

Life Lesson #7 — As a believer in Christ Jesus — you too are the beloved of God — and you are called to love others as God loves you...

These truths are made clear in...

1 John 4:11 (NKJV)

Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

Continuing in in Matthew 12:18 we read...

I will put My Spirit upon Him,

It is very interesting to note that the Lord Jesus conducted His public ministry in the power and anointing of the Holy Spirit...

- *The Holy Spirit descended upon the Lord Jesus when He was baptized by John...*

The Holy Spirit then led the Lord Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted by the Devil — and all of the ministry of the Lord Jesus was done in the power of the Holy Spirit...

This brings us to...

Life Lesson #8 — Like the Lord Jesus, we are to live out the ministry that we have been called to in the power and anointing of the Holy Spirit...

To see this connection between the Lord Jesus fulfilling His ministry in the power of the Holy Spirit and us fulfilling our ministry in the power of the Holy Spirit, please turn to...

Acts 1:1-8 (NKJV)

1 The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach,

2 until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen,

3 to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during

forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

4 And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me;

5 for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

6 Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"

7 And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority.

8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Let's turn back to Matthew 12 as we look at the last part of vs 18...

And He will declare justice to the Gentiles.

The ministry of the Lord Jesus extended to Gentiles as well as to Jews...

- *And these were the only two categories of people in the Jewish mind — Jews and Gentiles — so the Lord Jesus is for everybody!...*

This gives us...

Life Lesson #9 — Like the Lord Jesus, we are to see individuals of every tribe, tongue, people and nation as objects of God's love...

As the Lord Jesus Himself said in...

John 3:16-17 (NKJV)

16 “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.”

Now, moving on in Matthew 12 we come to vs...

**19 He will not quarrel nor cry out,
Nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets.**

- The idea here is that the Lord Jesus was not quarrelsome or argumentative — He was not demanding or tyrannical...

Instead, the Lord Jesus always offered an **invitation to participation...**

Matthew 11:28 (NKJV)

“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

This gives us...

Life Lesson #10 — Like the Lord Jesus, we are to be inviting but not demanding — we are to share truth but we are not to be quarrelsome...

Continuing on in Matthew 12, we come to vs...

**20 A bruised reed He will not break,
And smoking flax He will not quench,**

- [explain imagery...]

In other words, the Lord Jesus does not shoot the wounded...

- Instead, He takes those who are bruised and broken and seeks to restore them...

He takes those who are burning low and tends to them so that they may burn brightly again...

- Jesus heals the brokenhearted and empowers them for ministry...

Life Lesson #11 — Like the Lord Jesus, we are to minister to the weak and hurting...

Now we come to the final part of our passage...

**Till He sends forth justice to victory;
21 And in His name Gentiles will trust."**

Even though it seemed like the ministry of the Lord Jesus ended in failure as He was rejected and crucified — the Lord Jesus was victorious over the grave...

This gives us our final life lesson...

Life Lesson #12 — Just as the Lord Jesus was victorious over the grave, so we will be victorious over the grave as well...

Romans 8:11 (NKJV)

But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

Conclusion

Now, as you go over this passage, it may be that you come up with different life lessons — and that's ok...

- As long as those life lessons are helping you become the person that God wants you to be...

And the person He wants you to be like is the Lord Jesus Himself...

- You and I can learn helpful life lessons from many people — but being conformed into the image of the Lord Jesus is our ultimate goal...

Let's pray...