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4 Following the Messiah Episode 7 (9:45-28:04) Teaching Along the Way

Opening:

1. You have viewed the video “Following the Messiah Episode 7 at www.appianmedia.org and have worked through the study guide Lesson Four available by request at wtg2@hughes.net.
2. This lesson focuses attention on the parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk. 10:25-37); Jesus’ teaching the woman at the well in Samaria (Jn. 4:1ff); His using a coin to teach about the distinction between the kingdom of Caesar and the kingdom of God (Matt. 22:15-22); and His teaching in the synagogues in Galilee among the Jews, in the Decapolis and in the region of Tyre and Sidon, among the Gentiles.

Into the Text:

1. Reading of Lk. 10:25-37. The account quotes from Deut. 6:5 and Lev. 19:18 and founds inheriting eternal life on love for the Lord and love for one’s neighbor. The later is founded on the former.

The lawyer’s question, “And who is my neighbor?” sprang from his desire to justify himself. When a question is asked an opportunity is presented for teaching. Jesus took good advantage of the opportunity here by telling a story of a man going down from Jerusalem to Jericho. Even today this way is deserted and therefore it is a good place for robbers to take advantage of those passing by.

The interesting feature of this story is that a priest and a Levite passed by the man stripped, beaten and half dead without helping him. But a Samaritan felt compassion for him and helped him. The priest and the Levite were supposedly the ones that would have helped. They were the “good Jews” of the story. The Samaritan on the other hand, was, well a Samaritan. His religion was not according to the revealed will of God, but he certainly acted in a way that demonstrated love for his neighbor. This “twist” to the story not only demonstrates love for one’s neighbor, but it calls attention to the fact our assumptions about people may need to be called into question. There is something to be learned about love from Samaritans. And perhaps instead of not loving them we should show them compassion (v. 33) and mercy (v. 37).

Jesus was big on teaching such concepts (Matt. 9:13; Prov. 21:3; Hos. 6:6). Our neighbor includes those that are different than us. Neighborliness involves compassion and mercy. Love cares and acts. It sacrifices. It gives. So this idea of “going and doing the same” challenges us. If we hear a woman scream from a dark alley do we investigate? What if it is a “bad” neighborhood? How are we affected if it is a white woman in a black neighborhood? A black woman in a white

neighborhood? What if it is a white woman and a black man has come to her aid? Does the neighborhood, the sex, the race of the persons involved change what love demands?

2. Reading from Jn. 4:1ff. This account is interesting in a variety of ways. Jesus is passing through Samaria. Is He avoiding the Pharisees as He leaves Judea and goes into Galilee and so passes through Samaria?

2 Kings 17:24ff describes the origin of the Samaritans. They were a mixed group. Their religion was a mixture of influences from Judaism and idolatry from the nations. Jesus' speaking to a Samaritan was interesting in and of its self. John observes, "For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans" (9). But the woman finds it unusual that Jesus is speaking to her and asks, "How is it that You being a Jew, ask me for a drink, since I am a Samaritan woman?" Note not just a Samaritan, but also a "Samaritan woman."

Such a "trans-cultural" encounter created a teaching opportunity. Jesus moves from talking to her about a drink of water to talking about "living water." Perhaps in our culture we could go from talking about a "bottle of water" to talking about living water? Maybe the opportunities are all around us to teach about Jesus and this living water.

Jesus' acceptance of the woman led to her thinking that He might be a prophet. This led to her asking a question about the place of worship. Samaritans worshiped at Mt. Gerizim, Jews in Jerusalem. Jesus spoke of a time when the place would not be critical and then introduced Himself as the Messiah.

The woman was so excited she left her water pot and went into the city suggesting to others that Jesus was the Christ. Jesus has moved from asking for a drink to communicating that He is the Messiah, the source of the water of life, and now the opportunity is open to teach others also.

John 4:39 describes what happened over the next two days. "From that city many of the Samaritans believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, 'He told me all the things that I have done.' So when the Samaritans came to Jesus, they were asking Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. Many more believed because of His word; and they were saying to the woman, 'It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this One is indeed the Savior of the world.'" Are you willing to spend a couple of nights in a "Samaritan's house" in order to teach them about Jesus?

3. Reading of Matt. 22:15-22.



AD 14-37 Tiberius Silver Denarius (enlarged)

“Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not?” the Pharisees asked. Paying taxes to a foreign government must have been particularly painful to Jews. They are occupied by a foreign power and had to pay taxes to the occupying force. Under the theocracy of Israel, the king may have exacted taxes, but it was a Jewish government, not the government of an invader.

Upon whose side will Jesus fall? On the side of the Jews or on the side of the Romans?

Jesus’ statement is revolutionary. “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and to God the things that are God’s.” Whatever you think about the separation of religion and government this statement has the effect of separating the two. It is a challenge to the Jewish theocratic concept where religion and civil government are essentially one and the same. It calls on Jews to financially support the government that is exercising care for them.

This principle is carried over into the Kingdom after Jesus is seated as King at the right hand of God. See Rom. 13 and 1 Pet. 3.

Not only are Christians to support their government they are to support the Kingdom of God with their first day of the week contributions (1 Cor. 16:1-2).

Who is this Teacher Jesus who speaks well of Samaritans as examples of loving ones neighbor? Who is this who sees Samaritans as worthy of attention and spends 2 days with them? Who is this who says, “Pay taxes to the invading force?”

4. Reading of Mk. 4:24-37. Who is this that goes to the Gentiles, even to Tyre and Sidon healing their sick and teaching them? Jesus does not limit His teaching to “traditional” Jews, but embraces Samaritans and Gentiles. It would seem that these actions are forerunners to the gospel going into all the world (Matt. 28:19; Acts 1:8). Sometimes traditional barriers have to be broken, the status quo has to be challenged and the conventional has to give way to the unconventional. It can be unsettling and usually generates fear, but loving your neighbor demands “going and doing” even though it may be uncomfortable.

Applications:

1. What about this study challenges you the most?
2. Who do you find it difficult to talk to? Wealthy people? Poor people? People of a different race? People of a different religion? People of a different culture? One stripped, beaten and half dead? Is it loving to withhold the gospel from people because we are afraid?
3. While Jesus was the master teacher and teaches with powerful skill it would seem that it is His love for mankind that motivates His work. Which would you prefer, greater skill in teaching or more love for the people? Explain. Which would you prefer in one that would teach you? Why?
4. Samaritans/tax collectors/sinners/Gentiles show up a lot in the teaching of Jesus. Why do you suppose that is? Who are your "Samaritans/tax collectors/sinners/Gentiles? How can you increase your love for them?
5. To become a better teacher . . .
 - a. I need more skill
 - b. I need more practice
 - c. I need more Bible knowledge
 - d. I need more love for my neighbor
 - e. I need to overcome my fears