

Did Jesus Address the Multitude or His Disciples in the Sermon on the Mount?

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[0 : 00] Welcome back. Today's question is, did Jesus preach the Sermon on the Mount to his disciples? Matthew 5, 1. And seeing the multitudes, he went up in a mountain, and when he was seated, his disciples came to him.

Or to the large crowd? Matthew 7, 28. And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

As the old El Paso girl says, why not both? When we actually look at the context, I think it explains why Jesus would talk to his disciples, teach his disciples in the presence of the crowd.

He's teaching his disciples about what they are, what they are supposed to be within the world. A city set on the hill, the manner of behaviour that will mark them out. He talks about the beatitudes, the ways in which they will be blessed.

And these sorts of things are not direct teachings to the crowd. These are teachings about a particular body of people, those who have committed themselves to following Christ.

[1 : 05] But as he teaches them, Jesus is also indirectly teaching the crowd. And so the crowd learns something about what the disciples of this man, what this rabbi's disciples are like.

And that, I think, also explains something that we see throughout the book of Matthew, where there's interaction between the crowds and the disciples and Jesus as three different bodies, or two different bodies of people interacting with Christ.

So the multitude interact with Christ often through the disciples. And Christ can interact with the crowds through his disciples.

So the crowds can bring people to Christ to be blessed and the disciples can kind of hold them back. Or on other occasions, Christ tells his disciples to deal with the crowds, gives them instructions to get them seated, things like that, to feed them.

And so there's this interaction between the crowds and the disciples that we see. But here, I think, it's particularly about the fact that the disciples themselves, they are the ones that are being taught about.

[2 : 11] They are the ones that are to model this new form of teaching. This new form of teaching is not just an abstract thing that's floating up in the air and being addressed to individuals.

It's being spoken about a particular body of people, a form of praxis, a form of commitment that will mark them out, that they will be salt and light, that they will be a city set on a hill, that they will be marked by these beatitudes.

And as they are taught, then the multitude will learn. Jesus also teaches the multitude in parables, while teaching his disciples in private the true meaning of those parables.

And so again, we see a dynamic between the crowds and the disciples and the distinction made between them. And so both are taught, the disciples, both are taught, the parables, both the disciples and the multitudes.

But only the disciples are given insight into what those parables mean. Later on, we also see in Matthew 23 that Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to his disciples.

[3 : 22] And then he goes into the woes to the scribes and the Pharisees. In the next chapter, the beginning, Jesus went out and departed from the temple and his disciples came to him to show him the buildings of the temple.

And later on, Now as he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?

So we see the two main speeches within the two principal sermons or discourses in the book of Matthew. One is delivered to the disciples in the presence of the crowd.

And the second, the Olivet Discourse, the other main discourse, is in private and is to the disciples alone on the Mount of Olives. So you have the Mount of the original sermon and then the Mount of Olives for the discourse concerning the end of the age.

The addressing of the disciples and the multitude in Matthew 23 is interesting because Matthew 23 has several parallels with the Beatitudes. If you actually look through the Beatitudes and then compare them with the list of the woes that we find in Matthew 23, there are clear parallels.

[4 : 41] I could get into that in another video and outline them all if anyone wants to know about that. But what we see here, I think, is very much a dynamic between the crowds and the disciples and Jesus.

The disciples know things that the crowd do not. Jesus teaches his disciples in the presence of the crowd. The disciples themselves are supposed to be examples to the crowd and the disciples also are to teach and address the crowd on behalf of Christ and to manage the crowds.

Putting all of that together, I think what we have is it is both. That Jesus is addressing the disciples in the presence of the crowd. So the crowd are being addressed indirectly, the disciples directly.

And both are learning from this, but in different ways. And later on, we'll see the disciples addressing the crowds more directly themselves. And in that address, they are bringing the specific teaching that they received as disciples to that broader audience.

But at this certain point in this Christ ministry, many things remain secret. The meanings of the parables are not known by the crowds. His messianic identity is not known by the crowds.

[5 : 53] And many of these things that Christ has delivered in secret concerning the end of the age, concerning the true nature of his ministry. These sorts of things will only become known to the wider multitudes later.

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Please continue to send it in. And I'm considering the way to do these in the future. Thank you very much for listening and for your time. God bless.