

Where Ever Two Or More Are Gathered

I'm with a group of guys working our way through the gospel of Luke on Wednesdays. A couple of weeks ago we were discussing chapter 6 with focus on the Beatitudes. We were in the process of comparing Luke's recording to Matthew's when one of the guys raised the question; "who is Jesus addressing?"

Luke 6:20: Then he looked up at his Disciples and said:

Now Luke clearly records that Jesus is coming down from the mountains, having selected his apostles from among his disciples and they have encountered a large crowd that have come to hear him and seek healing. Many people are gathered, yet he seems to be addressing his disciples with the rest as onlookers. Ken's question caused me to step back and look at the whole scene again. And it took me back to a similar event in my past.

In 1983, Deb, two preschool sons and I had just moved to a new town in a new state. We were invited to come to Kentwood Christian Church and that body of believers led us into a journey with Christ that has marked our lives ever since. Early in our time there, a young man named Brett DeYoung was ordained into ministry by our senior pastor - Kent Hickerson. Kent preached to Brett that day in front of all us. He told Brett that he was taking on the incredible responsibility of equipping US, the flock. And that message shaped my belief ever since that the primary role of church ministers is to equip and teach us to be ministers. Kent preached To Brett, but the message benefited all of us.

Ken's question two weeks ago caused us to stop and paint a slightly different picture of this scene. There are 3 groups present, the recently designated apostles, a larger body of disciples that the apostles were drawn from, and the crowd gathered because they have heard stories about this man named Jesus. Jesus appears to be directing his message at those who have already decided to follow him (his disciples), but there is a larger crowd that is not committed yet and they hear the same message as observers.

For me this was significant. It frames the moment in a slightly different way. The content of the message is the same. The target is not. And it opened a whole new perception of one of the most quoted, read and studied passages in the Bible. And I am very very grateful that Ken asked the question.

1. Have you experienced a similar moment with this group, when a question asked has shifted the discussion and your understanding of a passage in the Bible?
2. What shapes your immediate thought more - the question or who asked it?
3. Are you reluctant to ask questions? If so, why?