

Sermon on the Mount - Part 19

by David Servant

David Servant emphasizes the importance of holiness and obedience in the Christian life, urging believers to seek God's will in their prayers and interactions with others.

Duration: 28:30

Scripture: Matthew 5:6, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 7:7, Matthew 7:11, Luke 11:13

Topics: "Christian Obedience", "Holy Living"

Description

This sermon delves into the importance of holiness and obedience as highlighted in the Sermon on the Mount. It emphasizes the need for Christians to seek first God's kingdom and righteousness, focusing on spiritual blessings rather than material possessions. The sermon also discusses the significance of discernment in sharing spiritual truths with receptive individuals and the role of prayer in aligning with God's will, particularly in seeking the Holy Spirit for empowerment and holiness.

Transcript

Welcome, once again, to Galilee, Israel. Hey, I'm so glad you joined me here as we continue our journey through the Sermon on the Mount. As I've always told you, we're here because we wanted to be in the vicinity of where Jesus gave the original Sermon on the Mount, not far from the Sea of Galilee.

Nobody really knows exactly where it's at, but we know we're close. The main thing is we want to be 100% close in obeying what Christ said in this very important sermon. And so if you have your Bible, let's take a look at it and then look at our lives at the same time.

We're in Matthew chapter seven, the last third of this sermon. This is definitely a sermon about holiness, is it not? All it has been has been instruction about how we are to live our lives. So much of what we hear these days, as far as sermons are concerned in church, is not how we are to live our lives in such a way to be holy and please God.

In fact, holiness is almost kind of like a negative word in many churches. How many preachers would consider it a compliment if someone spoke of them as a holiness preacher? Yet I want to submit to you that there are living creatures around the throne of God that do not cease to cry day and night, holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty. God is holy and he gives us his holy spirit, puts his holy spirit in us.

Well, it doesn't take a real smart person to realize why God would put the holy spirit in us, because he wants us to be holy. Because without holiness, no one will see the Lord and that's the true faith of the true disciple, his faith results in obedience and holiness. So all this is about holiness and obedience and Jesus ties it in again and again to salvation.

Holiness is clearly a requirement for salvation because we're saved by faith and faith without works is dead. So instead of hearing sermons and listening to sermons all the time that tell us how we can be more blessed by applying certain spiritual principles, Jesus said, if you want to be blessed, well, he told us who are the blessed people right at the beginning in Matthew chapter 5, didn't he? All the beatitudes. And he didn't say, blessed are those who have great faith and own lots of possessions, proving their faith.

No, Jesus said, blessed are those who are gentle, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. Those who are merciful, pure in heart. That's the blessed people.

Why don't we hear a sermon series like that on how you can be blessed by holiness. Jesus said, God will take care of your needs if you seek first his kingdom and his righteousness. In the prayer that Jesus taught us to pray, it's all about holiness.

May God's kingdom come. May his name be hallowed. God don't lead me into temptation because I want to be holy.

Lord, forgive me if I sin and do it according to how I forgive others. And I'll be content. Just give me my daily bread.

All these things. This is a holiness sermon. Why has it not become the centerpiece of Christian teaching and Christian experience? Well, I don't know.

It's a shame. Well, in our last program, we looked at Matthew chapter seven, verses one through five. Jesus talked specifically about a certain kind of judging, which is wrong.

And all judging is not wrong, as we'll soon see, but a certain specific kind of judging Christ condemns here. Only one kind of judging. And that is finding a little fault with your brother when you yourself have a greater fault.

So that's being a hypocrite. Jesus said, take care of your own self first. Turn that spotlight, that searching spotlight on yourself, and clean up your own life.

Then, he said, then, then, then, you'll see clearly enough to get the speck out of your brother's eye. So it's not your job to clean up anybody until you've cleaned up yourself first. And of course, when you do clean yourself up enough that you feel, with the help of the Holy Spirit, that you can lovingly point out how others need to clean up, well, of course, you're going to do it in love, and humility, and gentleness, and out of real concern for them.

Most times, people find fault with others to justify themselves, because they're trying to feel better about themselves. Someone said one time, when you squash a bug, it elevates you a little bit. And so people are finding fault with others so they can feel better about themselves.

The kind of fault finding that Jesus said is okay, again, once you have the log out of your own eye, is the kind of fault finding that you're really concerned about your brother. You want him to be pleasing to God.

You want your sister to be obedient to the Lord.

You have a zeal for God's righteousness, and you're motivated by love, and then you've got the log out of your own eye, then you can point out the speck in your brother's eye. Praise God for relationships like that in the body of Christ. Very few people, I think, experience that blessing.

But when you have true fellowship in the Spirit, with true disciples of Christ, who really, really love each other, they will lovingly, gently, humbly tell you where you need to change. And only after they themselves feel that they've got the log out of their own eye, to the degree that they have even a right to say that to you. Thank God for brothers and sisters in Christ who are like that.

Amen. Hopefully, those of you that are married, you have a husband or a wife who loves you that much, who will point out your flaws that you need to correct or improve in. All right.

Now, verse number six, here's the new stuff today. Jesus said, do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before the swine, lest they trample them under their feet and turn and tear you to pieces for your own sake. He says, for your own sake, don't antagonize these pigs and these dogs, because it can result in harm for yourself.

Some persecution that we experience is our own fault, because we've antagonized pigs and dogs. Jesus is not talking about literal pigs and dogs here. He's obviously talking about people who don't value the pearls, the spiritual truths that we share with them.

I would assume, mostly, he means God's word. When you share the gospel with somebody else, and they just outright reject it from the beginning, you don't have to hammer them over the head with it. Just leave them alone.

Let them be. Do you realize that the people that we evangelize, God has been evangelizing them already, before we ever got there, all their lives, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. You say, how has God been doing that? Number one, God's been revealing himself through creation.

Take a look around here, and listen to God shouting to everybody who has eyes. He's saying, I'm here, I'm powerful, I'm much bigger than you, I'm amazing, I'm putting on a, as it were, a magic show before you every single day of your life. There's a billion things that you cannot understand.

So many mysteries. Science has not even got into the one inch into understanding the unfathomable depths of the mysteries of creation, of the size of our galaxy, the minuscule parts of molecules and atoms. It's all incredibly mysterious, and it all testifies, it shouts, it screams at us every day.

God is here, God is wise, God is powerful, and so seek to know him above all else. But again, most people, closing their ears, closing their eyes, ignoring it, alright? Number two, God is evangelizing people every day of their lives through their conscience. Every time they do wrong, morally or ethically, God convicts them.

Now, as people grow older, they learn to suppress that conscience, they harden their hearts, they become callous, and that voice becomes more dim. And of course, they believe, when they find a lie to believe that will help them to counteract their conscience, you know, well everybody's doing it, it can't be wrong, look, they're all my favorite actors and actresses on TV are doing it, it must be okay. And so, suppress the conscience that way.

But God never stops till the day they die. That conscience keeps, so God is calling them every day, every moment, repent, repent, repent, repent, repent. Okay? Thirdly, God is speaking to them through calamity, three C's, creation, conscience, calamity.

You know, you can't take God out of the equation of natural disasters. God is sovereign over the affairs of men. God exalts leaders, God puts down leaders.

And so, although God is not responsible for the evil, all the evil in the world, He is certainly responsible, and certainly could put an end to a lot of the suffering, but He doesn't. Why? Because He's trying to get people's attention, calling them to repentance through their calamity, saying, look, you think this is bad, I'm trying to tell you I'm a God of wrath, there's a consequence to your sin. Many sins are directly tied to the suffering that people experience.

They get venereal disease from their sexual immorality. They wind up in prison because of the governmental authorities that God has set up because they broke moral laws of God, you see. And so God is warning them, repent, repent, repent through their calamity.

Right as I'm sitting here right now, we're hearing a war go on up north of here, explosions and so forth. God's not behind that war, but He's trying to get people's attention. Your life is temporal, okay.

And so then, all of that, you see, God is evangelizing, evangelizing, evangelizing, trying to get people's attention, and they're ignoring Him. So for the most part, people are spiritual pigs and dogs, but eventually God is able to get through to some people. They begin to soften their hearts, open up their hearts through a calamity or through creation or through conscience, and then God sends one of us along with the gospel to tell them, here's one more affirmation.

God has already told you 90% of what He wants you to know. Now I'm able to come in here and fill in the last 10%. You want to listen? Well, if they want to listen, well then, praise God, you've got a person who is changing from a pig and a dog to something else, you know, a worthy person who's going to listen now to the gospel, okay.

So we need to be led by the Holy Spirit. In the book of Acts, we have records of people who are led by the Holy Spirit to receptive people, like Philip the Evangelist. He was led to that guy who was reading Isaiah chapter 53, the Ethiopian eunuch, and he said, what does this mean? Who's he speaking about? Well, see, God knew his hungry heart, and God sent Philip the Evangelist right to him at that moment.

God will send missionaries where people are receptive and so forth, because God knows everybody's hearts, okay. So that's why, you don't have to feel like you are holding the whole burden of evangelizing the whole world. No, no, God is the great evangelist.

We are coworkers with Christ. We need to follow his leading and not waste our time. If they don't receive us, you know, we can, just as Christ commanded, shake the dust off of our feet and go to the next village, okay.

All right, we've got some more things to talk about along these lines in our next segment. I'll be right back after this short break. See you in one minute.

You might remember a guy by the name of Agrippa, actually King Agrippa, before whom Paul stood and testified of his faith in Jesus Christ and how Jesus had worked so wonderfully in his life and his

conversion. And the only thing that Agrippa could say that day that's been recorded for us is in Acts chapter 26 and verse 28, he said, Paul, in a short time you will persuade me to become a Christian. So obviously he wasn't about to be persuaded.

And besides that testimony of his unbelief, all that Agrippa has left behind are these ruins of his castle that at one time was this immense and beautiful structure where he lived in lavish luxury. If you think about it, your house is not going to look any better than this in 2000 years either, which is why Jesus told us, lay up your treasures in heaven, not on this earth. That's where your heart ought to be, in heaven.

Amen. Okie dokie, welcome back. And let's continue in our study through the Sermon on the Mount.

We're now in Matthew chapter seven. Take a look there with me. Jesus told us that we ought to be judging people, whether or not they're spiritual pigs or dogs.

Of course, we can only know that if we cast them one pearl. That's how you decide. Throw them one pearl, see how they react to that one pearl.

And then if they are receptive, throw them another pearl. Amen. It's a wonderful study to take a look at Jesus' encounter with the woman at the well of Samaria.

He threw her a pearl. He said, if you knew who was speaking to you, you would ask of him and he would give you living water. Well, she could have said, well, that's interesting.

See you later. Right? She could have walked away at that point. But, you know, he had piqued her interest and her heart was open enough that she asked another question.

And he led her slowly to the point where she ultimately believed in him. Praise God. Okay? So follow the example of Christ.

Throw out your pearl. I often do that, you know, when I find myself in public places, like on an airplane and, you know, have just a general conversation and people ask you what you do for a living. It's so easy for me.

I tell them what I do for a living and I know if they're interested, they're going to ask me more questions. And I can easily lead to the gospel because I'm already introducing to them that I'm involved in Christian work. You know? So, boy, it's simple for me to cast a pearl to see if people are interested in spiritual things.

Okay. Now, Jesus is later on going to tell us to judge another category of people. That is to judge spiritual leaders.

And we probably won't get to that in this program, but in our next program, we're going to keep reading now in verse number seven of Matthew, rather, chapter seven. Why don't you read along with me? Here are some beautiful prayer promises that we want to talk about and apply in our lives. Jesus says, ask and it shall be given to you.

Seek and you shall find. Knock and it shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives, and he who seeks, finds, and him who knocks, it shall be opened.

Now, notice just very fundamentally here, human effort is involved in receiving from God. And so, we don't want to be like those who have overemphasized the sovereignty of God to the point of fatalism where whatever will be, will be because God has decreed it. And there's nothing that we could possibly do, you know, to change anything, no.

Human free will is obviously in the equation. It is those who ask, seek, and knock who receive and who find and who have the doors open to them. Amen.

That implies you've got to be aggressive. That also implies a desire of your heart. That's what motivates you to ask, seek, and to knock.

Okay. Further encouragement, verse number nine. What man is there among you when his son shall ask him for a loaf, will he give him a stone? Or if he shall ask for a fish, you will not give him a snake, will he? So there's a promise.

You get what you ask for. Now, the question that comes up all the time, at least in our minds, we may never verbalize it and oftentimes it's completely ignored in sermons, but the question is, wait a second, this is quite a promise. Jesus said, everyone who asks receives.

Everyone who seeks finds. Everyone who knocks, it'll be open. You know, well, I've asked and I've not received.

I've sought and I've not found. I've knocked. I've not opened.

And I know lots of people like that. They prayed for things that they didn't get. What was wrong? Well, I think the answer is found at least partially in the next verse.

Christ says, if you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask him? And so God is in the habit of giving what is good to those who ask him. And I would submit to you that the one who is the best judge of what is good is not us. It's God.

All right? Now, let me give an example of something that we might think is good, but God might not think is good. And this would cover zillions of prayers that I think are prayed all the time by professing Christians. Oh God, please give me enough money so I can buy that new motor home or that new boat or get that bigger house or, you know, often related to material things and often related to prosperity of which of course is like one of the most popular topics today in so-called Christianity.

It's not true Christianity. It's totally false Christianity, but it's very popular. People are always praying to get more stuff and that's a major emphasis of a lot of preachers, how you can get more stuff for yourself, which again amounts to greed according to everything we've read so far in the Sermon on the Mount, but that being set aside for a moment.

Now, is God likely to answer that prayer to give you more stuff so that you can disobey His commandments and lay up treasure on this earth in complete disobedience to His revealed will? Is that a good thing? Not according to God, it's not good. You might think it's good, but He might not think it's good, so He is not likely to answer that prayer. That's why it doesn't get answered.

It's not according to His will. That's why John wrote, if we ask anything according to His will, we know that He hears us and if we know that He hears us in whatever we've requested, we know that we have it, alright? So the key is, it's got to be God's will, it's got to be something that God thinks is good. Okay, what do you think is most likely to be answered? Here's two possible prayers.

God, give me \$1,000 so that I can upgrade my stereo. Or second prayer, God, give me \$1,000 so that I can feed the hungry and clothe the naked for Your glory. Now, what do you suppose is most likely to get answered? Right, the second prayer.

Okay? And it gives lots of examples, you know, that would fall into that category. If you're praying for things that extend God's glory and extend His kingdom, you're much more likely to have those kinds of prayers answered by God. You know, look at the request that we made in the so-called Lord's Prayer, what I like to call the True Disciples Prayer.

God, may Your name be hallowed, may Your kingdom come, may Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give me this day my daily bread. Well, there you can pray for your basic necessities.

Forgive me for my sins as I forgive others. God will answer those prayers. Alright? Don't lead me into temptation.

God's going to answer those prayers, praise God, He's going to keep you away from temptation. Deliver me from evil, that is, you know, I want to be totally pure and holy. See, that's the kind of stuff that Jesus expected us to be praying for.

You know, our prayers for material things really should consist of nothing more than just, you know, my daily needs. Give me this day my daily bread. I'm content with, you know, with that, and anything above that, well, then of course I'll share that.

I'm not going to disobey You and lay up treasure upon this earth. Okay? So that eliminates all the material prayers in a moment. So what is left to pray for when you eliminate all that material stuff? Well, to pray for your physical healing, if you need healing.

Scripture tells us that the first thing we ought to do if we're sick is examine ourselves to make sure that we don't need to repent of something. Take a look at 1 Corinthians, you know, read chapters 11 and chapters 12. The Bible says, and I'm not trying to make a rule here to condemn anyone who's sick.

I've been sick myself, but when I get sick, when I have something wrong in my body, I seek God and say, now Lord, are you disciplining me to get my attention so that I'll be holy? So that I can, you know, escape having things get worse here. Okay? So, you know, we should seek God. Is anyone suffering? The Bible says, let him pray.

Seek God. God, have I brought this suffering upon myself? Is there something I need to repent of? Well, if it's suffering that, you know, there's lots of suffering that you didn't bring on yourself by anything bad, you can bring on suffering to yourself by doing this right. And you get persecuted for the sake of righteousness.

Okay? So I'm not saying that all suffering means that God is displeased with you. No, no, no, no, no, a thousand times, no. But sometimes God does try to get our attention through calamity and suffering to get us to repent.

So what's left? We eliminated all the physical things, you know, my needs, my health, and so forth. Well, then all that's left are spiritual things. Those things which are most important.

My holiness, God's kingdom, my fruitfulness, the furtherance of his kingdom. Those are the kind of things we should be praying for. Amen.

Okay? Because we should be supremely interested in what God is supremely interested in. What is he supremely interested in? What's the first thing we're supposed to pray for? May your kingdom come, may your will be done, may your name be hallowed. That should be what's motivating us in our lives.

So when we pray for people, we're praying, you know, Lord, convict them of their sin. Those that don't know you, those that are unrighteous, those who have not believed in Christ yet. Lord, supply the needs of the missionaries.

Lord, send laborers into the harvest. That's what should be all consuming to us, not getting rich. See, that is pseudo-Christianity, all that stuff.

Because it's all temporal, it's all greed, it's all material, and it's all in opposition to much of the time, the will of God. But if you're asking for God to bless you so that you can be a blessing, now, finally, you're understanding what Christianity 101 is all about. The most important thing to God is we love him with all our heart.

But the second most important thing to God is that we love our neighbor as ourself. A new commandment Christ gave is that we love each other. So our prayers should reflect those highest desires that we should share, okay? So that's the kind of prayers that get answered, and you can be sure of it.

If you know how to be, if you being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give what is good to those asking? A very similar verse to that found in Luke's Gospel, I believe it's Luke 11, 13, somewhere around there. Jesus says this, if you being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, now listen, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him? See, that's something that's good. Why? Because the Holy Spirit empowers us to further God's kingdom.

The Holy Spirit empowers us to be holy. And may I say, as we wind this down, you know, that shows us that it's appropriate, it's right for Christians to be praying for God to give them the Holy Spirit. I don't claim to fully understand it, but I know this much.

I know that in the Book of Acts there are examples of people who are already once filled with the Holy Spirit, being again filled with the Holy Spirit, and then doing great things for God, being empowered by Him. And so that should be a prayer request that is one that we feel appropriate in praying. Lord, I want your best gift.

Give me more of the Holy Spirit because I want to be holy. I want to be empowered with gifts of the Spirit. I want to have the fruit of the Spirit manifest in my life.

That is my all-consuming desire. That's a good gift. Everyone who prays for that, God answers those prayers a hundred times out of a hundred.

You know, when I began to pray a few years ago, Lord, if there's anything I'm doing that's not pleasing your eyes, please reveal it to me. Oh my goodness, that's a prayer God prays a hundred times out of a hundred times it's prayed. He doesn't wait to answer that prayer.

So pray for holiness, and God will answer that prayer. Hey, thank you so much for joining me. And until next time, keep following Jesus with all your heart.

God bless you. Hey, there's a whole lot more happening through the ministry of Heaven's Family than just this teaching broadcast. Heaven's Family consists of three divisions, the first of which is Shepherd Serve.

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