

All That Jesus Taught Bible Study - Part 11

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen's sermon emphasizes the importance of embodying the attitudes taught by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount for true discipleship.

Duration: 25:23

Scripture: Isaiah 49:10, Matthew 5:3-5, Matthew 11:29, Luke 23:28, 2 Corinthians 12:21, Philippians 2:8

Topics: "Discipleship", "Humility"

Description

This sermon delves into the teachings of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount from Matthew chapters 5 to 7, emphasizing the importance of following these instructions seriously as disciples. It highlights the significance of being poor in spirit, mourning for sin, and embracing meekness as key attitudes for believers. The sermon encourages a daily awareness of spiritual need, repentance, and humility, mirroring Jesus' example of living out these teachings in his own life.

Transcript

We continue today with our study on all that Jesus taught. We're basing our study in this series on Matthew 28 verse 20, where Jesus commanded his disciples to go into every nation, make disciples, baptize them, and then teach them to do every single thing that he taught, which I believe is the neglected half of the Great Commission. And we were looking at Matthew chapter 4 and see some of the things that Jesus taught there in our previous sessions.

We want to move on now to Matthew chapter 5, where we begin what is very well known as the Sermon on the Mount. And this comprises the next three chapters. There's a lot of instructions here.

It says here, when he saw the multitudes, he went up to the mountain and his disciples came to him and he began to teach them saying. So the first thing we notice here is that Jesus was speaking to his disciples. The Sermon on the Mount was not given to the multitudes primarily.

It was to his disciples. It was those who wanted to follow him, only could understand and live by the standards mentioned here. And whenever we find Christians neglecting these three chapters or taking the instruction in these chapters lightly, or like some believers do, say this is not for us, this is for the Jews or something like that.

There are many crazy, foolish, stupid arguments like that among Christians who do not want to obey all that Jesus taught and find many excuses to do away with what Jesus taught. But if we see that these are very important words that Jesus spoke to his disciples, then those of us who want to be disciples, who are disciples, will take them very seriously. But the multitudes were permitted to listen.

It says he sat down, his disciples came to him and he taught them. But at the end of the Sermon on the Mount, it says the multitudes, chapter 7 verse 28, were amazed at his teaching. So the picture we have here is Jesus getting his few disciples close up to him and speaking to them and the multitudes behind them listening to what he was saying.

And they were amazed at his teaching. And one paraphrase says that it was obvious that he had lived what he was preaching, Matthew 7.29. He had authority, unlike the scribes, Matthew 7.29, who preached without authority. And the reason behind Jesus' authority was he lived every word of what he spoke.

People take a lot of time preparing sermons. How long did Jesus take to prepare the Sermon on the Mount? 30 years. He was speaking out of his life.

These are not notes that he sat down one day earlier and wrote down to speak on, like a lot of preachers do today. He was speaking out from his life, a life that had faced all types of temptations and various circumstances in Nazareth. And from there he was now speaking out of his life.

And that is the example for us to speak as well, as we have often considered before. So here we see, first of all, nine blessings, or nine, what I would call right attitudes, or B attitudes, that are described in the first verses 3 to 12. And then from chapter 5 verse 13 onwards, he gives a little introduction up to verse 20.

And then chapter 5 verse 21 onwards, up to chapter 7 verse 6, we have nine wrong attitudes that a believer should not have. Wrong attitudes. First nine right attitudes, or good attitudes that a believer should have.

And then at the end of chapter 7, there's a conclusion from chapter 7 verse 7 onwards. So let's look at these right attitudes that Jesus speaks about. First of all, in Matthew 5 verse 3. Blessed are the poor in spirit.

And this word blessed can mean happy, or like the Amplified Bible says, someone to be envied. If you want to envy somebody on earth, don't envy the rich person, don't envy the famous person, don't envy the good-looking person, but envy the one who is poor in spirit. Because the kingdom of heaven belongs to him.

Now people with many other qualities like auditory and money and all can have things on this earth and possess a kingdom on earth. But the kingdom of heaven belongs to the poor in spirit. And in the long run, this is the one who is really to be envied because his wealth is going to last for all eternity.

When we think of our lifetime on earth, even if it's 70-80 years, if you really believe that man is an eternal being, eternity is never-ending. Millions of years are like just one second in eternity. What would 70 years be? Nothing.

Even in 2nd Peter it says a thousand years is like one day before the Lord. And one day is like a thousand years. So in the light of eternity, our entire life on earth is very short.

So the wise person would be one person who really seeks to have a future in God's kingdom. And here we are told the one who is going to have the maximum possessions in God's kingdom is the one who is poor in spirit. Now this is a phrase which is not understood much because most people don't seek to understand these statements of scripture.

They just read and move on. But it's good for us to think in terms of an illustration. I find when I think in terms of pictures, I get a clear understanding of the scripture.

In fact, Jesus himself explained many doctrines in terms of pictures like salt and light and through many parables. So when we compare poor in spirit with poor in body, because man is spirit, soul, and body, and we understand what it is to be poor in body, a tramp or a beggar is poor in body. He does not have what it takes for his bodily needs.

A really poor beggar who is living on the streets, he would go from house to house begging for his needs. And very often they get just a little to survive for the day and they got to come back to the same house to receive some more for the next day. So applying that to poor in spirit, it means here is a person who is aware of his spiritual need every day.

Just like that beggar is aware of his physical need every day and goes to some generous man's house. And if the man asks him, what about what I gave you yesterday? He would say, well that was finished yesterday. The money you gave me yesterday was just enough for yesterday's need.

I'm again in need. I'm penniless. I'm in need.

So poor in spirit would mean a man who comes to God in that way and says, Lord, I'm a needy person and who comes to God every single day aware of his spiritual need and asking for help to meet his spiritual need. Just like the beggar would ask for help to meet his physical need. In the book of Proverbs, there is a verse that speaks about this condition.

In Proverbs chapter 8 and verse 34, where the Lord says, this chapter is a chapter on wisdom and Christ is pictured here as wisdom. I wisdom, as you read in verse 12. And it was through wisdom that the world was created and he was there, it says in verse 24, before the fields were there and the earth and everything else, when he established the heavens, verse 27, I was there.

So wisdom is what we need. And here it says, blessed is the man, verse 34, Proverbs 8, 34, who listens to me, who watches daily at my gates, think of that beggar now, waiting at my doorposts, just like a beggar waiting for his daily gift of money. We are to come before God as spiritual paupers every day.

Now, we won't come like that unless we are needy. I mean, rich people don't go begging in people's houses. They'd be ashamed to do it.

But a beggar is not ashamed because he's needy. He doesn't have money for food or his daily necessities. And he's aware of that.

And it's only the person who's aware of his spiritual need every day, who will come before God every single day, say, Lord, I'm a needy person. Please give me wisdom for today. And it says here in verse 35, he who finds me finds life.

So this is what it means to be poor in spirit, to be aware of our spiritual need constantly. And the one who is aware of it constantly and seeking for wisdom from God will possess the entire kingdom of heaven or the kingdom of God. So if you look at the kingdom of heaven, like, you know, the riches of God's kingdom.

And the Bible says in Ephesians 1 verse 3, that God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. Ephesians chapter 1 in verse 3. Every single blessing of the Holy Spirit is ours in Christ, in the heavenly places. That means we have to have our mind set there if you are to possess this.

This is the kingdom of heaven or the kingdom of God. And if we think of that as a huge mansion with a thousand rooms as an illustration, the master key that opens every door of that palace is poverty of spirit. Blessed is the one who is poor in spirit.

He can possess the kingdom of heaven. Every single room, the treasures in every room are his if he has this master key. So now you've got the master key.

If you want to possess God's kingdom, it's to be aware of your own need. Very often the devil makes us aware of the needs of other people. Towards the end of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus speaks about that.

The wrong attitude, judging others. He says, leave them alone. Judge yourself.

Don't worry about the speck in somebody else's eye. See the log in your own eye. See your own need.

That's where he begins the Sermon on the Mount. That's where he ends the Sermon on the Mount. Be aware of your own need.

Don't be a busybody in other people's matters. Aware of your own spiritual need. You come before God.

Wait before him. And day by day, the thing is not just being aware of it in the beginning. When we first come to Christ, we're all aware that we're sinners.

We're hopelessly lost. And at that time, we are very aware of the fact that we need Christ's help to have our sins forgiven. But many people stop there.

We don't realize that we need God's help for deliverance from this wretched nature, this corrupt nature that we have inherited from Adam, which has everything in it contrary to the nature of Christ. And if you're longing for that, we come aware of our own need and we won't be begging for looking at other people's needs. A tramp or a beggar comes to a house asking for himself.

And that's how we got to come to God and say, Lord, I am a needy person. I'm needy. It's very easy, as I said, to recognize that the day we are born again.

But 50 years after we are born again, we still need to live recognizing our need. I'm personally very thankful that God has opened my eyes to see this as the great secret of the Christian life. To be aware of my need even today, 52 years after I'm born again, to come before God empty handed and say, Lord, I need you.

The picture that Jesus used of the branch in the tree, I'm the vine and you're the branches, he said. A branch is always aware of its need. If a branch has been in a tree and produced mangoes for 50 years, it

still needs to remain in the tree to produce a mango this year.

It can't say, I've got 50 years experience, now I can cut off from the tree and produce mangoes on my own. It's impossible. A branch is constantly poor in spirit and therefore it constantly produces fruit.

It's when a man begins to think that he can rely on his experience and not upon Christ that he stops producing fruit. And let me also add one other thing. The branches that have laden down with the most fruit are the ones that bend low the most.

The most upright branches are the ones who've got no fruit. The more fruit we have, the humbler we become. The less fruit we have, the prouder we are.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. We will go on to the next characteristic here in verse 4. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. And the word comfort means strengthened.

It's got the little word F-O-R-T right in the middle of it. Fort, which is a picture of a huge military protected area, a fort, strengthened. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Now people in the world mourn for all types of things. Most people mourn because of some personal loss. Either they lost money or they lost a loved one or they lost their reputation or they lost something of this earth or their dignity or their position or their job or something.

But here it is not speaking about such mourning. It's not mourning because somebody hurt me. It's not weeping for my own sorrows.

Jesus never wept for his own sorrows, but he did weep for others. We read that he wept over Jerusalem. He wept at the tomb of Lazarus.

But never once did he weep for the way people treated him, whether they called him the devil or spat on him. He never wept for himself. Not only that, as he was taking up the cross and stumbling on the road to the cross, we read here that in Luke 23, a great multitude of people, verse 27, Luke 23, 27, were following him as he was carrying the cross.

And some women were mourning and loudly crying when they saw him whipped and beaten, the blood flowing down his back, carrying this heavy cross, stumbling and the cross upon his, the crown of thorns upon his head. You know what Jesus turned around and said to them, Luke 23, 28, daughters of Jerusalem, stop weeping for me. I'm okay.

Yeah, my back is torn. My crown of thorns on my head. I'm carrying a heavy cross.

I'm going to be killed in a few moments, but I'm perfectly okay because I'm in the center of the will of God. Can you have that attitude when you're suffering the most? Don't weep for me. I'm okay.

But if you want to weep, weep for yourselves and your children. Look at their spiritual condition. Yeah, these Pharisees are all clothed in robes and look very grand, but look at their spiritual condition.

What's going to happen in the day when Christ comes back and they say to the mountains to fall on us and cover us, Luke 23, 30. So there's the attitude of Jesus. He didn't have any tears for his own griefs, like the song says, but sweat drops of blood for my griefs.

This is the true disciple of Jesus who mourns. He mourns because he's not Christ-like. He mourns when he has sinned.

He mourns when he has slipped up. He doesn't mourn for the way people treat him. He believes that that's his appointed lot on this earth to be dishonored for the sake of Christ, but he mourns whenever he has dishonored the Lord by sin or by failure.

He mourns also when he goes to a higher level for the sins of others, for the failure of others, like Jesus wept over Jerusalem. So this is the mourning spoken of here. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be strengthened.

Perhaps the reason why some of us are not being strengthened is because we're not mourning for our sin and it's a higher level to go beyond that to mourn for the sins of others. The apostle Paul had reached that higher level. He says to the Corinthians who had failed so miserably, he tells them in 2nd Corinthians chapter 12.

He says, when I'm afraid, 2nd Corinthians 12 and verse 21. He says, when I come to you, my God will humble me before you. Why should God humble Paul? He's lived such an upright life, conscious of no sin against himself, but he says, I will mourn over many of you who have sinned in the past and who have not repented of your impurity and immorality and sensuality.

He lists some of the things they have there in their midst in that church, strife, verse 20, jealousy, angry tempers, disputes, slanders, gossip, arrogance, disturbances, and he thinks of all these sins among those people who call themselves God's people and he's their spiritual father and he weeps. You know, just like an earthly father would weep if his son is very sick or if the father is spiritually minded, would be very grieved that his son is going astray into drugs or evil habits. Paul was a spiritual father to the Corinthians and every true Christian shepherd or pastor should be a spiritual father to his flock and one mark of the fact that he's a father is that he won't just criticize the flock, he will weep over them like Paul wept over the Corinthians.

Only such a man is fit to be a spiritual leader. There's a verse in Isaiah in chapter 49. Isaiah 49 is a great chapter on spiritual leadership that it says in verse 10, in the middle of that verse, he who has compassion on the people will lead them.

Who is fit to be a spiritual leader? The one who has compassion on people and so this mourning refers to mourning for oneself, for one's own sin, one's unlikeness to Christ and mourning for others. We will be strengthened if we do that and we will find strength to be able to strengthen other people as well if we go along this way. Thirdly, it says in verse 5, a third right attitude, blessed are the gentle or those who are humble and meek for they shall inherit the earth and I think this refers to those who will not fight for their rights, who will not retaliate when ill-treated.

Those who are meek means like Jesus when his rights were taken away, he would not fight back. He would not curse those who cursed him. He would not pray for God's judgment on those who crucified him.

He said to us in Matthew 11 verse 29, learn from me for I'm meek and gentle of heart. I'm humble and gentle of heart. It's not an easy word to fully translate in English and that's why there are many different translations that people use.

Gentle in my margin of my Bible, it says humble, meek and I think the general picture is one who is not fighting for his rights on earth because it says here they shall inherit the earth one day. God gives the earth to those who do not fight for it. This is God's way.

It's not those who fight for their rights to whom God gives his greatest blessings but those who yield their rights because Jesus went down to the cross, says in Philippians in chapter 2, because he yielded up all his rights, his humility and his meekness was seen in this in Philippians 2 that he humbled himself verse 8 Philippians 2 to the point of death, even death on a shameful cross. He was humiliated and put to shame and because he was willing to go down like that to that level therefore it says in verse 9 God exalted him and give him a name which is above every name. The reason why Christ is exalted to the right hand of the father today is not because he was always there from all eternity.

He was always there as God but when he came to earth as a man he earned his right to come to the right hand of the father. It's very important to understand that he earned a right to come back to the right hand of the father because he demonstrated the nature of God so perfectly in his earthly life as a man facing all types of temptations and he humbled himself to the point of death, even death on a cross. He didn't fight for his rights and therefore one day the whole earth will be given to him.

Right now he's been given a name which is above every name that in the name of Jesus every knee will bow who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth. That's not yet happened. A lot of people despise the name of Jesus today and they don't bow at that name today.

The demons don't, a lot of people on earth don't but a day will definitely be coming when every knee will bow at the name of Jesus and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord and the whole earth will be given to him. It'll belong to him because he was meek and so the ones who follow him in that road of meekness, Jesus said learn from me. Matthew 11 verse 29, the only thing he told us to learn from him was this gentleness and weakness.

Matthew 11 29, learn from me for I'm gentle and humble, meek and lowly of heart. So here is something we have to learn from Jesus. He doesn't tell us to learn from a book.

He says look at me and see how I did not fight to my rights. I gave up my rights and I was meek and lowly and you will find rest it says to your souls. I believe the reason why so many Christians are at unrest and in tension and some have nervous breakdowns, there is only one reason for it.

They are not meek. They are inwardly fighting for something. They are seeking for their rights and therefore they are at unrest.

So let's learn these three values they thought of today. To be poor in spirit, to mourn for our unchristlikeness and to be meek, never fighting for our rights but walking in humility and leaving it to God to give us what he sees we need. Let us pray.

Heavenly Father, we thank you for your word which guides us along the path of life. We want to see it clearly and walk along that path all our days. We pray in Jesus name.

Amen.

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