

All That Jesus Taught Bible Study - Part 12

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen emphasizes the importance of embodying the attitudes Jesus taught, particularly hunger for righteousness, mercy, and purity of heart, to fulfill the Great Commission.

Duration: 25:59

Scripture: Matthew 5:3-8, Matthew 6:15, Matthew 28:20, Romans 8:28, Romans 12:19, Hebrews 4:15, Hebrews 5:7, James 2:13

Topics: "Discipleship", "Righteousness"

Description

This sermon delves into the neglected half of the Great Commission, focusing on teaching and obeying all that Jesus commanded. It emphasizes the importance of having the right attitudes as disciples, contrasting God's ways with the world's ways. The message highlights the significance of hungering and thirsting for righteousness, being merciful, and maintaining purity of heart to see God in all circumstances.

Transcript

We continue again on our subject, All That Jesus Taught. We are basing this series on Matthew 28 verse 20 which says that Jesus told his disciples to go into every nation and make disciples and teach them everything that he himself had commanded. And this is what I have called the neglected half of the Great Commission.

And so I thought it would be good for us to go through all that Jesus commanded and taught so that we can fulfill the Great Commission and satisfy his heart's desire and bring God's people to the place where he wants them to be. So in our last study we were looking at Matthew 5 and verses 4, 3, 4 and 5 where we saw three of the right attitudes that disciples should have. Remember he spoke to his disciples first of all as we read in verse 1 and 2. We must also remember that these are not characteristics that people in the world appreciate.

People in the world do not appreciate being constantly aware of their own need. In the world they say be full of self-confidence, confidence in your own ability. Well that's okay as far as physical ability is concerned and intellectual ability is concerned and human smartness that's required of salesmen and CEOs and things like that.

But when it comes to the spiritual realm it's exactly the opposite. It's the one who's poor in spirit who's going to possess God's kingdom. It's the one who mourns for his sin who's going to be strengthened

spiritually and it's the one who's meek and does not fight for his rights who's going to inherit the earth.

In other words God's ways are not our ways. His way of thinking is completely opposite to this world's way of thinking and all these right attitudes and the attitudes mentioned here are not things that the world appreciates. In fact quite the opposite of it.

And that's why we read at the end of the Sermon on the Mount Jesus said this way that I've spoken of is a very narrow way. Matthew 7 14 and very few people find it. So I don't anticipate millions of people turning to this way.

Many of millions want to go to heaven and millions want the power of the Holy Spirit but very few want to have these attitudes that Jesus spoke of as the characteristics of God's people who are in God's kingdom. Now we move on to verse 6 where Jesus said blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they shall be satisfied. Now in the world there are people hungering and thirsting for all types of things.

If you look at the things that people in the world hunger and thirst for I think most people hunger and thirst for wealth, money, comfort comfortable life, maybe houses and lands and advancement in society higher position in their jobs and they want to beautify their appearance and everything that will bring them honor and comfort and pleasure in this world. Even Christians. Most Christians even those who claim they are born again many of them are pursuing these things.

But hungering and thirsting to live a godly life hungering and thirsting to overcome sin is such a rare quality that I believe what Jesus said. Very few find this way to life. I'm not surprised when I find very few interested in a message of being totally righteous.

In fact I'm not surprised when people turn around and say that's impossible. When people say the sermon on the mount has got impossible standards nobody can live up to it. That's exactly the answer I expect from a worldly Christian or a so-called born-again Christian who's got worldly attitudes.

I would even question whether such a person is really born again if he neglects all that Jesus has said in the sermon on the mount. And that's why we see that when Jesus said you got to teach all that I've commanded in Matthew 28 20 he first said you got to make them disciples. Every person who calls himself a convert who wants to go to heaven is not interested in obeying all that Jesus commanded.

Far from it. But a person if he becomes a disciple would be interested to know what has Jesus commanded. I want to obey that.

If he wants me to be poor in spirit I want to find out what that means. If he wants me to mourn for my sin or to be gentle I want to find out that. If he wants me to hunger and thirst for righteousness I want to hunger and thirst for righteousness.

That would be the attitude of a true disciple of Jesus. What does a hunger and thirst for righteousness mean? You see for example a person any of us may at a particular time say yes I'm a bit thirsty for a little bit of water or I don't mind having a little snack right now I'm hungry for it. But how much would you be willing to pay for a glass of water? If a glass of water cost a hundred thousand rupees would you be that hungry? Or if a little snack cost a hundred thousand rupees would you be that hungry to take it? You say no well I'm not that hungry to pay a hundred thousand rupees for a glass of water.

But consider if you were a person who had been wandering in the desert for seven days and your whole body is dry and your mouth is dry and you're about to die of thirst boy you'd be willing to pay a hundred thousand rupees for a glass of water. That is thirst. And you'd be willing to pay for food any amount because you're dying of hunger.

So the type of hunger and thirst that Jesus speaks of here is a desperate hunger and thirst that wants to be righteous at any cost. Not righteous if it's convenient. If it doesn't disturb any of my plans.

For most people who sit in church even who listen to messages of holiness they want to be holy if it doesn't disturb their plans. If it doesn't ruin their ambitions for the future. If it doesn't hinder them from marrying the girl they want to marry or the boy they want to marry.

They want righteousness if there's not too much of a price to be paid for it. So when you offer them righteousness if their first question is what's the price? Then you know that they're not really hungry. A person who is thirsty or hungry desperately will not ask what's the price.

He'll say give me that water I'll give you everything I have because I'm dying. That is the meaning of seeking God with all of our hearts. The reason why many people do not find God in the way others have found Him why they do not have a satisfying Christian life which is the condition of most born again Christians is because they are not seeking God with all their heart.

I've found very very few Christians in my life I'll tell you honestly. I've traveled to many countries and been a Christian for 52 years born again Christian. I've found very very few people who can honestly say I'm really satisfied with the Lord and I'm satisfied with my Christian life and progress and I'm thankful for the way it's gone and I'm excited about my life every day.

Very few. I find most people are bored. Maybe they were excited on the day they were converted but now they are so bored they have no time to read the Bible they have no interest in spiritual things they may be indulging in certain amount of activity like going to church and witnessing and caring for the poor and all but they are not excited about following in Jesus' footsteps and the reason is it says in Jeremiah chapter 29 there is a law here concerning man and God that we need to understand.

Jeremiah 29 and verse 13 the Lord says to His people Israel you will seek me and find me when you search for me with all your heart. You will seek me and find me when you search for me with all your heart. What if you do not seek Him with all your heart because you seek Him half-heartedly or with three quarters of your heart there is no promise here that you will find Him.

You may miss Him altogether and that's exactly the reason why so many people who call themselves Christians never find the Lord they've got a religion a Christianity which is a mere religion with rituals and various things that they do in whatever church they belong to but they don't know the Lord they don't know Jesus as a personal friend and then they've missed out everything in the Christian life whatever else we may have you can have a Christian name be a member of some Christian church but if you don't know the Lord personally you've missed out on the main thing and the reason is you may not be seeking God with all your heart there are a lot of things in the world you may seek with all your heart but not the Lord Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness they shall be

filled or they shall be satisfied so when a man says oh brother Zach I've been trying so hard for victory over sin I haven't got it I can tell him on the basis of this verse that you're not really hungering and thirsting

for a holy life you're not really desperate about overcoming sin let me show you the way Jesus prayed in order not to sin you know that we consider the fact that Christ was tempted on earth exactly like us and he never sinned but it was not something easy for him I want to show you a verse in Hebrews in chapter 5 which tells us Jesus how he faced temptation he was tempted in all points as we are we are told in Hebrews 4.15 and he goes on to say from there that this Christ who is our high priest after the order of Melchizedek in chapter 5 verse 6 he tells us in verse 7

that in the days of his flesh this is not the last day of his flesh in Gethsemane but in the entire period when he was in the flesh on earth 33 and a half years he offered up prayers and supplications supplications means specific requests to his father not just general prayers saying bless me but specific requests and he offered up these prayers with loud crying and tears why in the world was he crying out loud and shedding tears when he prayed would Jesus pray like that can you think of a time in your life where you prayed with tears maybe if your child was sick or you lost something which you wanted badly you may have cried and prayed to God but Jesus wasn't praying for any such thing have you ever prayed with loud crying maybe when somebody was dead or something like that but Jesus

wasn't praying on such occasions it says he was praying with loud crying and tears to the one that is the father who was able to save him from death and he was heard because of his godly fear now there are a number of things in that verse that teach us what it means to hunger and thirst for righteousness Jesus did not have righteousness offered to him on a platter in a way different from ours he had to struggle and fight for it hunger and thirst for it just like us because he was a man like us in order to be an example for us he faced every situation every temptation that we face and he faced it the way we have to face it and in order to overcome that temptation that's the meaning of praying to the one who was able to save him from death what death is he talking about Jesus was not afraid

of going to Calvary he loved us so much that he'd be willing to go to a thousand Calvary's to save us from our sins he was not afraid of death there are Christian martyrs who have gone singing to their death how could Jesus ever be afraid of that so it is not physical death and it says here his prayer was heard but he was not saved from physical death so how was his prayer heard so both those statements indicate that it was some other death he was praying to be saved from and the Bible speaks about physical death and spiritual death James 1 says sin when it is finished brings death when you are tempted and you yield you become sin it leads to sin and that ends in death so that is the death that Jesus was asking to be saved from in the moment of temptation that there would not even be the

smell of spiritual death by his responding to temptation in any way in thought attitude motive word deed there should be no smell of sin and because he was so desperately eager to be totally pure to be pleasing to the father he had to pray with loud crying and tears for thirty years in Nazareth and three and a half years in his ministry in the days of his flesh in all those days father I never want to sin in other words I never want to do my own will that is the root of all sin he prayed and struggled in Gethsemane for that same thing sweating as were great drops of blood because he wanted never to do his own will and he was heard because of his godly fear so what is the mark of godly fear according to this verse one mark of godly fear is that you cry out desperately that you may not

displease God in any way and he was saved his prayers were heard he never sinned perhaps this is the reason why we sin because we were not so desperate to be saved from it the bible says flee from immorality herein lies the secret of living a godly life the first step blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness and there is a promise here you will be filled there is no doubt about it so then we go on to

the next beatitude mentioned in Matthew chapter 5 blessed are the merciful for they shall receive mercy mercy is the attitude includes forgiveness to others who have hurt us and doing good to those who are in need the bible speaks of two aspects of mercy you remember in the story of the good samaritan Jesus asked the man who questioned him who was the one who showed mercy who

was the one who loved his neighbor the man who showed mercy to his neighbor and what was that act of mercy it was helping a man in his need that's one aspect of mercy the other aspect of mercy is forgiving people the lord is merciful to us he forgives us our sins and he taught us to pray our father in heaven forgive us our sins in exactly the same way we forgive others for their sins against us so what does that prayer mean that means if I don't forgive somebody for his sin against me I'm praying to God lord forgive me in the same way that I've forgiven this person and I haven't forgiven this person so I'm really asking the lord not to forgive me you recognize that forgive me in exactly the same way I've forgiven this person and I haven't forgiven him so you don't forgive me or I have

forgiven him but I've got a terrible grudge against him because of what he did towards me lord when you forgive me keep a grudge towards me do you realize that when you pray you're asking God to forgive you in exactly the same way as you've forgiven others if you're merciful to others God will be merciful to you if you're not merciful to others God will not be merciful to you blessed are the merciful for they shall receive mercy you know whenever people do harm to us or hurt us in some way there are two contradictory thoughts that arise in our mind one is a thought of mercy and the other is a thought of judgment the holy spirit tells us to forgive and to be merciful but our flesh tells us to be hard on that person and to judge and we want to pray that God will judge him as well but it

says in James chapter 2 and verse 13 that if I'm merciless towards someone God will be merciless to me judgment will be merciless to the one who has shown no mercy to others and in the day of judgment we're going to get a big surprise when God imposes a very heavy judgment on believers who did not forgive others they will not enter God's kingdom mercy must triumph over judgment it says in verse chapter 2 James 2 13 that means when there's a conflict in my heart shall I judge this person I'll be merciful to him let mercy triumph not judgment that's the mark of a man of God mercy triumphs over judgment blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy because it is God's business to take vengeance on people not ours Romans chapter 12 says never take your own revenge Romans 12 19 because

that is God's business God says taking revenge is my business it's not your business vengeance is mine I will repay says the Lord so if your enemy is thirsty feed him hungry if he's thirsty give him something to drink we must not take revenge we must be merciful and seek to do good where we can do good to others blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy and we shall discover in the day of judgment that if we have not forgiven others God will not forgive us Jesus repeats that again in the Lord's prayer in Matthew 6 15 we'll come to that when we come to that section but it's very clear Jesus said in Matthew 6 15 if you do not forgive others your heavenly father will not forgive your transgressions your heavenly father means he's already your father you're a child of God he didn't

say God will not forgive you if he had used the word God then we could say that refers to unbelievers but notice what it says in Matthew 6 15 your father is God the father of unbelievers you're a born again child of God don't you know that God is your father and it says your father will not forgive your transgressions why because you didn't forgive somebody else now if your transgressions are not forgiven how in the world can you enter God's kingdom you think they'll be forgiven after you die is there a second chance after we die if you die without forgiving someone what's going to be your fate in eternity I have no doubt in my mind

that you go to hell because no one can enter heaven with their sins not forgiven on earth there's no chance of sins being forgiven after we die it must be

forgiven now and that's why it's so important to be merciful to others that's not a kindness that you're doing it's a kindness you're doing to yourself because you want God to be merciful to you then we come to the sixth right attitude in Matthew 6 verse 8 where it says blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God there are many things about God that he reveals to those whose hearts are pure it's lack of purity in our heart that blinds our eyes you know Jesus spoke about the eye being the lamp of the body I want to connect this verse that we see here with Luke's gospel in chapter 11 where Jesus spoke about the lamp of our body Luke 11 and verse 34 the lamp of your body is your eye when your eye is clear your whole body is full of light and if you want to know what a blind what it

means to be blind just shut your eyes and you know what blindness is all the light outside does not come in anymore you can't see anything the lamp of the body is the eye but if your eye is bad or blind or full of cataract your whole body is full of darkness watch out the light doesn't become darkness if your whole body is full of light with no dark part in it Luke 11 36 then it will be wholly illumined so this is a reference to the conscience the conscience is the eye of the heart when you keep your conscience clear the heart is filled with light you can see God but when you neglect to keep your conscience clear that means maybe you did something wrong and you don't confess it you don't take the blame for it you try to put the blame on somebody else the eye becomes dim and little by

little you lose your vision of God you can still have a head full of knowledge of the Bible but you don't see God anymore because that's got nothing to do with head knowledge it's got to do with purity of heart and we can also say that this also refers to seeing God in all our circumstances when our heart is pure that's another possible way of looking at this verse when my heart is pure I look around and I see God in all my circumstances everything he does everything he says I say God is in control even the evil that other people do to me I can see God using that for my good you see Jesus could see God in the most evil thing that happened to him when the Roman soldiers came to capture him in Gethsemane all that Peter could see was this crooked betrayer Judas betraying Jesus Christ and the

evil Roman soldiers coming to capture his master but Jesus didn't see them he said the cup which my father has given me shall I not drink it that's what he said in Gethsemane the postman may have been Judas Iscariot the postman may have been the Pharisees and the high priest etc but the cup came from the father what does it matter if the postman looks like an evil man if the letter came from your beloved so because Jesus heart was pure he saw God in everything and that's why he could accept being captured being humiliated being crucified his heart was pure and he saw God in everything and when we love God with all of our hearts and we are called according to his purpose Romans 8.28 says everything works together for good God makes it all work for good and we look at the evil that other

people do to us and circumstances that don't seem to fit in with our desire and we say God is there because my heart is pure so this is why the tremendous blessings in pursuing purity of heart we understand more scripture we see Jesus more clearly in scripture many people when they study scripture they don't see Jesus they see a doctrine and they fight for a doctrine but when our heart is pure and our eyes are clear in the same scripture where somebody else sees a doctrine we see Jesus we see the glory of Jesus which the Holy Spirit brings out and that draws our heart to him and helps us to be able to follow him more closely so let's consider these three good attitudes that we consider today seriously in our lives blessed are the meek sorry blessed are those who hunger and thirst for

righteousness and have a tremendous longing to be totally pure blessed are those who are merciful who are ready to forgive no matter what harm another person has done to us and those who seek with all of their heart to keep their conscience pure before God and like Paul did and who are thereby pure in heart and who see God all the time see God in the word see God in their circumstances let's pray Heavenly Father we pray once again that you will renew our mind to see these truths clearly the way you want us to see them so that we can pursue them with all of our heart we pray in Jesus name amen

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