

All That Jesus Taught Bible Study - Part 16

by Zac Poonen

Jesus taught that we should be angry when God's name is dishonored and people are exploited in the name of religion, but not when we are personally hurt or offended.

Duration: 25:32

Scripture: Job 31:1, Proverbs 9:10, Matthew 5:22-28, Mark 3:5, John 2:15, Ephesians 4:26

Topics: "Discipleship", "Righteous Living"

Description

This sermon delves into the importance of obeying the Great Commission given by Jesus, emphasizing the lifelong process of discipleship and teaching believers to follow all of Christ's commands. It highlights the need for evangelism and other ministries to work together to make new converts effective members of the body of Christ. The sermon also explores the concept of righteous anger, drawing examples from Jesus' life to distinguish between sinful and righteous anger. Additionally, it addresses the seriousness of overcoming sinful anger and sexually lustful thoughts, pointing out how these sins can lead to spiritual destruction and the need for reverence for God in living a holy life.

Transcript

We turn again to continue our study in all that Jesus taught to Matthew chapter 28 and verse 20. A command which is, I believe, being obeyed by very, very few preachers and pastors. Jesus told us here in this passage to go into all nations, make disciples and then baptize them and teach them to do every single thing that he commanded.

The Great Commission is not complete until that is done and that can be more laborious than just bringing them to Christ, which can be in a moment. This is a lifelong thing to lead people to the type of life that Jesus described in his teaching. And this is not something independent of the ministry of evangelism and missionary work.

It's completing the job. One needs the other. Like in one of our earlier studies, I said it's like the hand that takes the food, puts it into the mouth is evangelism, picture of evangelism.

And then the rest of the processes that digest that food and make it part of the human body is a picture of the other ministries that complete the work and make that new convert an effective member of the body of Christ. So we were looking at Matthew chapter 5 to see some of the things that Jesus taught and commanded that we are to bring every single believer into this life. For example, he spoke about putting

away anger.

In the old covenant, the standard was to put away murder, never murder anybody in Matthew 5, 21. But in verse 22, Jesus said, my standard is don't get angry. I want to say a word of clarification there because there is an anger that is not sinful.

There is an anger that's sinful. And the difference we need to understand in Ephesians and chapter four, we have a command. It is a command which says, be angry, Ephesians 4, 26, but don't sin.

So if I were to paraphrase that verse, what it means in Ephesians 4, 26 is the type of anger that you should have in your life is an anger that's not sinful. So when Jesus raised the bar and raised the standard from the old testament standard of don't murder to don't get angry, we need to understand what is the right type of anger and what is the wrong type of anger. And like I said in an earlier study, whenever we don't understand a verse properly, look at our spiritual dictionary, the word made flesh, the life of Jesus Christ.

And in the life of Christ, he called himself the light of the world. And in him was life. And that life was the light of men.

We read in John 1, 4. So it is in the life of Jesus Christ, our Lord, that we see the light that explains every verse in scripture. So when we read, be angry, but don't sin. And we are trying to distinguish between anger that's sinful, anger that's not sinful.

We got to look at the light that there is in the life of Jesus. When was he angry? And when was he not angry? For example, we read in Mark's gospel in chapter 3 in verse 5, that when he was in a synagogue, he looked around with anger at people who were trying to hinder a man with a withered hand, paralyzed hand to be healed. He was angry when the Pharisees were more concerned about keeping the ritual of the Sabbath than healing a paralyzed man.

So that's the right type of anger when you see religious leaders and religious people who are more interested in ritual than in people and more interested in keeping certain rituals than delivering paralyzed people. Today, the paralysis that is found among Christians is defeated by sin. And when we have religious people who are more interested to make sure that the people pay their tithes more than they are free from sin, they're in the same category as these Pharisees who would not allow a man with a withered hand to be healed, but they were more interested in these people paying their tithes and keeping the Sabbath.

And there are a lot of preachers and pastors like that today. They're not interested in delivering their flock from the power of sin in their life. They're more interested to ensure that those people pay up their tithes.

And so Jesus would look at such people with anger today because He didn't come to earth to make people pay their tithes. He came to save people from their sins. He didn't die on the cross to get people to pay their tithes.

He died on the cross to deliver us from our sins. His name is Jesus, Matthew 12:1, and He came to save us from our sins. So where people hinder others from being saved from their sins, they will say, don't go and listen to this person because he's preaching victory over sin and keep listening to me.

I tell you how to pay your tithes. Jesus would be angry with such people. And if you're in fellowship with Jesus Christ as a servant of God, you must also be angry with such people who hinder others from being

delivered.

Another example is in John chapter 2, where Jesus went into the temple and drove the money changers out of the temple. And it says here in John chapter 2 that He made a whip and turned over the tables of the money changers, Matthew John chapter 2 verse 15, and said, take these things away. And He was really angry.

And the disciples remembered the word which said, zeal for your house has consumed me. Zeal for the purity of God's house should make us angry when we see people making money in the name of religion. When we see people making money in the name of Christ and exploiting poor people, just like these sellers of doves and sheep were exploiting the poor people saying, we will sell you these sheep and doves for your sacrifice, but of course it's going to cost you a little more than out in the market because we've got to get our commission.

He was angry with people. He said, if you want to make money, go out into the marketplace. The temple, the house of God is not the place to make money.

And today we have a lot of preachers who are using Christianity to make money for themselves. They're using television, they're using all types of means to become wealthy, to build huge houses, to buy airplanes for themselves and all types of things. And what would Jesus do if He were here today? He would do exactly the same thing.

He would be angry with them because they are dishonoring God's name, exploiting the poor people. So this is the right type of anger which we see in Christ. When He sees poor people being exploited, when He sees people making money in the name of religion, exploiting the ignorance of others, He was angry.

And when you see that happening today, if you're not angry, you're not Christ-like. If you're Christ-like, you'll be angry when you see people, whether on television or on a platform or in a church, trying to make money in the name of Christianity or exploiting poor people. In the name of religion.

Now let's look at where Jesus was not angry. When we look at Him, we read of times when He was called Beelzebul, Prince of Devils. You read about that in Matthew's Gospel in chapter 12, when Jesus cast out a demon that was deaf and dumb.

The multitude saw that and they were excited. And they began to say, this is the Son of David, look what a wonderful miracle He's done, set this man free. But the Pharisees were jealous and they immediately said in Matthew 12, 24, this man's casting out demons by the ruler of demons.

He was calling Jesus Satan. Imagine if somebody called you Satan when you're serving the Lord. And Jesus, you know what He said in verse 32, I'm just a son of man.

I'm just an ordinary man. If you have spoken against me, you're forgiven, but be careful you don't speak against the Holy Spirit. He wasn't angry when people called him the devil.

He said, that's okay. You've spoken against me. I'm just a son of man.

You're forgiven. He was almighty God, but they called him the devil and he wasn't upset. He forgave them.

A true Christian will never be upset with people calling him bad names, calling devil, pig, dog, or whatever. It doesn't make a difference. If he's Christ-like, he'll forgive and not get angry.

He won't even retain any bitterness or anger against those people who called him those names. The other example is that when Jesus was standing before the chief priests at this trial, they spat on his face and he didn't get angry. They slapped him.

He didn't get angry. So we see there that when people physically assault us or spit on our face, if we get angry, we're not Christ-like. So there we see the difference between anger that is sinful and anger that's not sinful.

Anger that is sinful is where I'm upset when people say something against me or do something to me and I get upset. Your convenience is disturbed and your will is crossed, whether by your wife or husband or neighbor or your enemy or anybody. If we get angry, we're not Christ-like.

We need to overcome that type of anger. The Holy Spirit comes to help us, to overcome, to make us like Christ who was never upset when people called him the devil or spat on his face. Very few Christians want to be like Jesus Christ.

They all want to go to heaven when they die. Every Christian wants to go to heaven when he dies, but I asked them, how many of you want to live like Jesus Christ on this earth before you go to heaven? Very few. That's the problem and I say many of these folks are not really Christians.

They're Christian by name because they were born in a Christian family, but they have not surrendered to the Lordship of Jesus Christ in their life and therefore, as far as God is concerned, they're not Christians. They're going to get a big surprise when Christ comes again and they discover they were not Christians at all because you cannot be a Christian by being born into a Christian family. You have to make a personal choice.

In the Old Testament, you were a Jew if you were born into a Jewish family because becoming a Jew was by natural birth, but becoming a Christian is not by natural birth. It's by spiritual birth and that comes when you repent of your sins and receive Christ as your Lord and that's the reason why many people don't take the matter of living like Jesus on this earth seriously. A true Christian will seek to live like Christ on this earth before he goes to heaven and so when he reads a command like be angry but don't sin, he's very eager to find out what is the type of anger that is sinful.

So in a nutshell, let me say when you see a television preacher trying to make money out of poor people in the name of religion, Christianity, and you're not angry at that, you are not Christ-like. You're sinning. You should be angry because Christ was angry when we saw people making money in the name of religion.

If you are angry when people spit on you and call you the devil or hurt you in some way, then again you're sinning because that's the wrong type of anger and when you look at a lot of Christians today and a lot of people in the world, they're angry for the wrong things. They're angry when people hurt them. They're not angry when God's name is dishonored.

They're angry when their own name is dishonored. Jesus taught us to pray, our father who art in heaven, not hallowed be my name but hallowed be thy name. It doesn't matter what people say about my name or myself or my family.

That's unimportant. Let the name of the Lord be honored. So if that is our fundamental prayer and the first prayer we pray like Jesus taught us to pray, then we will be angry at the right times and we will give up sinful anger.

This is so important for us to understand and this is the meaning of Ephesians 4 where it says in verse 26, as we saw, be angry but don't sin and then just four verses down, five verses down in verse 31, it says put away all anger. So it looks contradictory, right? Ephesians 4 26 and Ephesians 4 31. In one place it says be angry but don't sin.

Another place it says put away all anger. What anger should we put away? The anger that is selfish, self-centered and sinful. What is the anger that we should have? That which is God-centered that concerns the glory of God's name.

We should be burdened that God's name is not being honored on the earth today and then Jesus went on from there in Matthew chapter 5 to a second wrong attitude. The first wrong attitude he spoke was anger. Anger is a wrong attitude that we must get rid of from our life.

A second wrong attitude which is another major problem with all Christians is and all human beings is sexually lustful thinking, looking at a woman to lust for her. We read in Matthew chapter 5, the Old Testament standard what you don't commit physical adultery so long as you don't touch a woman who is not your wife, you don't commit adultery with her, you're okay. That was the Old Testament standard but Jesus raised that standard like I said in another session that Moses went up to the mountain and came down with 10 commandments.

Jesus went up to the mountain and preached the sermon on the mountain raised the level of those 10 commandments to the spirit of those commandments which is murder was like anger and adultery was the same as lusting with your eyes. In other words in your mind you're committing adultery with that woman and Jesus said that was in God's eyes that was adultery because your inner life was impure. The mark of the Pharisees was that they kept their external life pure, the outside of the cup and a Christian who keeps his outer life clean but his inner thought life impure is a Pharisee and he's on his way to hell whether he knows it or not.

Now many of us don't understand the seriousness of it. During the last 35 years I have preached maximum against two sins or let's say three or four sins if I were to include others but these two sins particularly anger and sexually sinful lustful thoughts and people have asked me why do you speak so much against them? I say well because Jesus referred to these two sins first of all when he said that your righteousness must exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees that's the number one reason in the Sermon on the Mount immediately after Jesus saying that your righteousness must be higher than the righteousness of all the Pharisees around you who are very religious people the first two sins where he said your righteousness must surpass theirs is in the area of anger and sexually lustful thinking that's number one reason why I preach against it. A second reason why I preach against it is in the Sermon on the Mount these are the only two sins that Jesus spoke about where he said the danger was if you indulged in them you could go to hell.

Now most people don't believe that the only two times where Jesus spoke about hell in the Sermon on the Mount was in relation to these two sins so these two sins must be pretty serious. There were other sins he mentioned in Matthew 5, 6 and 7 but he didn't use the word hell there but when it came to these two sins anger and sexually lustful thinking he says there's a danger of hell. Verse 22 the last part you can be guilty enough to go to the fiery hell and when he speaks about lusting after a woman he says the same thing in verse 29 your whole body can be thrown into hell.

Verse 30 your whole body can be thrown into hell. Notice that it's very significant the only two times Jesus spoke about hell in the Sermon on the Mount was in relation to anger and sexually lustful thinking after women. So these must be very serious sins in God's eyes and there's not sufficient preaching against them.

Can you think of the last time you heard a message on overcoming anger? I don't think I heard a message on that in my whole life. In the 52 years I've been moving around Christendom and I've heard a lot of preachers on television and tapes and CDs and in many many churches. I've hardly ever heard a message on overcoming sexually lustful patterns of thinking.

Why is it that the devil has prevented preachers from preaching on these two areas? Number one reason is the preachers themselves haven't got victory. Then how can they speak about it? And secondly the preachers are very often more interested in just making people look nice on the outside in their church and collecting their money. So there's a great need for these two things which Jesus spoke about so much to be emphasized.

These are the two sins that Jesus said would lead a person finally to hell and that's a pretty serious thing. See Jesus took the sermon on the mount, took the 10 commandments and showed them what was behind those commands. You don't have to come to Matthew chapter 5 to understand that lusting after a woman who is not your wife is a sin.

If I say to you Jesus said everyone and it doesn't matter who that is, person's a believer or unbeliever who looks on a woman to desire her has committed adultery with. Lust means a strong desire to lust for her has committed adultery with her already in his heart and he said this is so serious that if your right eye makes you to stumble you must tear it out. In other words you must be radical when you're tempted to lust with your eyes.

You must act as if you're a blind man. That's the only way to overcome it. You shouldn't take it lightly and say well I'm just admiring a beauty that God has created.

There's so many ways in which we can justify this sin like a lot of people do and it's when a person is careless in this area that over a period of time you'll find he even falls into physical adultery like a lot of pastors have fallen throughout the world. Now as I said you don't need to have a bible to understand that this is wrong. Let me give you the example of a man who didn't have a bible and that is Job.

The book of Job was the first book of the bible that was written because there's no reference to Abraham, Isaac or Jacob in that book. Every other book in the bible has some connection with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob but not the book of Job. There's no reference to Moses.

He probably lived in the time of Abraham or somewhere certainly before Moses and Moses wrote Genesis and Job must have been written before that because there's so many accurate details of conversation here which could not have been written by anyone else other than Job himself. And so one of the things that Job says, remember this is a man who lived long before the law was given and who had no understanding of the ten commandments and who had no bible, who had no fellowship. He was a lonely godly man on the face of the earth.

One thing he did have was the fear of God, reverence for God and he turned away from whatever was wrong and sought to live uprightly as God himself gave a certificate about him in Job chapter 1 verse 8.

There's no one like him on the earth, a blameless upright man who reverences me and turns away from everything that's evil. What was his attitude towards women? He says in Job chapter 31, the book of Job in chapter 31 he says, I made a covenant with my eyes, verse 1, how then can I gaze at a virgin or a woman who's not my wife? Doesn't God see my ways, verse 4, and number all my steps? If my heart, verse 9, has been enticed by a woman or if I've lurked at my neighbor's doorway when he's not there and his wife is there, then he says may God punish my wife for that would be a lustful crime, verse 11. Now who taught him that? There was no old testament, there was no new testament in those days, there was no bible, but his reverence for God taught him that he, verse 1, that even if he sinned with his eyes it would be a sin against Almighty God and it would be disaster in his life as he says in Job 31 3. So what Jesus was explaining here was not something new in a sense that God-fearing men did not know.

I'm sure John the Baptist knew it even before Jesus spoke it. Job knew it. Anyone who reverences God even if he doesn't have a bible like Job will conclude that if I look with sexual lust at a woman who is not my wife it is a sin before God.

There's something within us that tells us that is wrong. It's like stealing. God hasn't given that to you.

I mean even if you don't have a bible your conscience will tell you that when you steal something that doesn't belong to you that's a sin. You don't need a commandment to tell you that. Reverence for God itself will tell you that and it's exactly the same here.

So it's a wonderful thing to remember and to see that what Jesus spoke here, Job knew 2,000 years before Jesus ever spoke it, before there was a available to anybody on the earth. So what excuse is there for a Christian today who has a bible and those of you got English you got the bible in 20-30 translations today every one of them tells the same thing. How is it that so many believers today have taken this matter of sexually lusting with their eyes so lightly? That's because there's a fundamental lack of reverence for God.

Job had it. Today's Christians have bible knowledge and no reverence for God. There are people who go to bible schools and get doctorates in theology studying the bible and still lust after women.

What does that teach us? That all that head knowledge of scripture and all that getting a degree from a bible seminary does not make you holy. There's so much of bible knowledge with the abundance of translations, concordances, we have the bible on a mobile phone and we have bible on CDs and people are listening to it when they drive down in their cars etc. In spite of all this abundance of knowledge there's very little reverence for God.

So what I want to say is here that in the sermon on the mount the things that Jesus taught there are many things there that we could know even without reading the sermon on the mount. If we have reverence for God some of these things become very clear to us that anger is sin, that lusting after women is sin and many other things written here and therefore it's not because of lack of knowledge that you continue in sin. It's because of a lack of reverence for God.

Reverence for God is the beginning of wisdom, is the ABC of the Christian life and if you don't have that any amount of bible study any amount of listening to messages it's not going to make us holy. Let's pray. Heavenly father as we bow before you in reverence to you and to your word help us to understand the seriousness of these sins how you hate them and how they destroy our relationship with you help us to learn the fear of God reverence for you we humbly ask in Jesus name amen.

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