

All That Jesus Taught Bible Study - Part 24

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen emphasizes the biblical perspective on anxiety, urging believers to trust in God's provision and seek His kingdom first.

Duration: 25:28

Scripture: Matthew 5:27

Topics: "Sin And Anxiety", "Kingdom Living"

Description

This sermon delves into the teachings of Jesus in Matthew's Gospel, focusing on various wrong attitudes highlighted by Jesus, including anger, sinful desires, lying, revenge, hatred, seeking man's honor, love of money, and anxiety. The speaker emphasizes that many do not recognize these attitudes as sins, but Jesus came to save us from sin, not weaknesses. The message stresses the importance of not being anxious, trusting in God's provision, seeking His kingdom first, and living a life of contentment and wisdom in financial matters.

Transcript

Continuing with our study on all that Jesus taught, all that Jesus commanded, that we are told to proclaim to all disciples in every nation. We now turn to Matthew's Gospel and chapter 6. We've been looking at the things that Jesus commanded that we have been told to teach others to do. In our last session we were looking at the wrong attitude that people can have towards money.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus first spoke about nine right attitudes in verses 3 to 12 of chapter 5, and then he spoke about nine wrong attitudes in the remaining chapters. First we saw was the wrong attitude of anger, Matthew 5 verse 21 to 26. Then the wrong attitude of sinful sexual desire, Matthew 5, 27 to 32.

And then the wrong attitude of lying, verse 33 to 37, telling lies. And then the wrong attitude of revenge, verse 38 to 42. And then the wrong attitude of hatred, verse chapter 5, 43 to 48.

And then in chapter 6, 1 to 18, the wrong attitude of seeking man's honor. And then seventhly, we saw in our last study, chapter 6, verse 19 to 24, the wrong attitude of the love of money. And now we want to look at an eighth wrong attitude.

It's chapter 6, verse 25 to 34, and that is anxiety. Now a lot of people don't think of anxiety as a sin. It's just like a lot of people don't think of anger as a sin.

A lot of people don't think that the love of money is a sin. A lot of people don't think that seeking honor from men is a sin. A lot of people don't think that if you hate your enemy, that's a sin.

And a lot of people don't think that if you tell small white lies, that's a sin. So many of the things that Jesus spoke here, a lot of, even a lot of Christians don't think it's a sin at all. Many people think of love of money as a weakness or anger as a weakness.

As long as you call it a weakness, you'll never be free from it. Jesus didn't come to save us from weaknesses. He came to save us from sin.

So call something a sin and Jesus will save us from it. But if you try to give it a more polished name, you'll never be free from it. Call something by the dirtiest name you can think of.

Call lust adultery, call anger murder, call love of money the hatred of God, and you'll be free from it. Because you see what an evil it is. If you think of AIDS and cancer as as serious as just a cough and a cold, you're not going to take those seriously.

And many people take these sins very lightly even though Jesus spoke so strongly against them. And I don't blame most people because I'd say their leaders and their teachers have not taught these things to them. There's a great dearth, lack of Christian preachers and teachers who preach the whole truth of God, who do not seek the honor of men, who do not want anybody's money, but want to speak the truth to lead God's people to spiritual health.

It's like a doctor who's not interested in money, but is interested in leading you to health. There are very few like that. So here's anxiety, which is another thing which people call a weakness.

It's not a weakness. If you look here in this section, verse 25 to 34, three times Jesus Christ, Lord of the universe says, do not be anxious. Verse 25, I say to you, do not be anxious.

Verse 31, do not be anxious. Verse 34, do not be anxious. In the space of these 10 verses, three times the Lord says, do not be anxious.

It's the same Lord who said, do not commit murder, who said, do not commit adultery, do not steal. Put them all together. Do not kill, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not be anxious.

Which is the one which is not a sin? Can you say, oh well, I'm anxious only once, once or twice a week. That's like saying, well, I murder people only once or twice a week. It's like saying, well, I commit adultery only once or twice a week, not too often.

Why is it that we take some of those things seriously, which God has said, and some of these other things not so seriously? Well, I'll tell you why, because your teachers haven't taught you that these things are also what the Lord has said. Have you noticed, for example, until I pointed out to you just now, that Jesus says that three times, do not be anxious. That is the same Lord who also told people, don't commit murder, don't kill, don't steal, don't commit adultery, who said don't fear, for example.

Fear is not a weakness, it's a sin. Like murder is a sin. How do we know what's a sin? If God has said you shouldn't do it, that's a sin.

That's my definition of sin. What is the right thing to do? If God has said you must do this, whether people say it or not, it's the right thing to do. If God has said you must love your wife, even if your wife is an evil

woman, you've got to love her, because God said so.

And if God has said something, don't do it, that is evil, even if you don't think it is evil. It's not because I think adultery is bad. God has said don't do it.

God has said don't be anxious, don't be afraid. I want to look at these things which God has said don't do as evil. Anxiety destroys my fellowship with God, and anxiety is saying that God doesn't care for me.

It's an insult to God. What would you think of a four-year-old child who's eating from the garbage bins? There are a number of them like that in our country, unfortunately. They've got a father who doesn't care for them.

They've got a mother who doesn't care for them. Is our heavenly father like that? Does our heavenly father not care for us? It's an insult to put our heavenly father in the same category as those fathers of those children who are eating from the garbage bins. They don't know where their next meal is going to come from.

They have a right to be anxious because their earthly fathers don't care for them, but if you have a heavenly father and you're anxious, you're saying that your heavenly father is also in the same category. This reason I say to you, do not be anxious for your life. Verse 25.

Don't be anxious for your life, what you eat, what you drink, or for your body. Isn't your life more than food, body, and clothing? And then he takes the example of the birds of the air. Look at the birds.

They don't sow, they don't reap, they don't gather into barns, yet your heavenly father feeds them. How many times have you seen a dead bird on the road? It is such a rare sight to see a dead bird on the road. I think I can count on my fingers the number of times in my 72 years that I've seen a dead bird on the road.

Where have you seen birds starving? It's such a rare thing. There are millions and millions of these birds on earth and they get food even though they don't sow, they don't reap. They have to go looking for food here and there.

Who feeds them? Jesus said, your heavenly father feeds them. He is not their heavenly father. He is your heavenly father.

He is their creator. But as a creator, he feeds them. But with you, he's not just creator, he's your father.

Are you not worth much more than these birds? What a question that is. I read a little poem once, which is a very interesting poem many years ago that I haven't forgotten. It's about two little birds talking to each other, said the robin to the sparrow.

I would really like to know why these anxious human beings rush about and worry so, said the sparrow to the robin. Friend, I think that it must be that they have no heavenly father such as cares for you and me. Did you get it? Two birds talking to one another, saying, why are these anxious human beings always running around worried, their brows furrowed and wondering what's going to happen next? The other bird says, perhaps they don't have a father like we have who cares for us.

What an insult. That's what we see here. We need to remember that, not just as a lovely story, not just something that brings a little smile on our face, but Lord, I have insulted you by saying you don't care for me, by every anxiety.

To have a concern for our children, for example, is good. If your children haven't come home in time from school, and they should have been home by now, and one hour has gone by, they haven't come back yet, you wonder what's happened. Have they had an accident? And in some countries, have they kidnapped them? To be concerned is right, but to be anxious is wrong.

Like I said earlier, to have money is right, to love money is wrong. To be concerned for our children, to be concerned for their future education, et cetera, et cetera. To be concerned for their growth and their spiritual growth is right, but to be anxious, that's wrong.

Do not be anxious. Then Jesus says, by anxiety, can you add height to yourself? No. Why are you anxious about clothing? He says.

Look at the lilies of the field, how they grow. They don't toil and spin clothing for themselves. Yet I say to you that even Solomon, the great king, in all his glory, could not clothe himself like these flowers.

And if God can so clothe the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow thrown into the furnace, won't he do much more for you, O men of little faith? He's speaking to his disciples. He says, why are you so worried about what type of clothing you're going to wear, where you'll get it from, et cetera, food? God cares for the birds. He cares for the lilies, the grass of the field, which is not even the flowers, the grass of the field he cares for.

He clothes the flowers with such beauty. Won't he clothe you? He certainly will. So then do not be anxious saying, what shall we eat or what shall we drink or with what shall we clothe ourselves? For all these things the Gentiles eagerly seek, but your heavenly father knows that you need all these things.

You see, faith in this area is to say, my heavenly father knows what I need. Then you say, why should we pray? Because in prayer, we are expressing our need to God so that we come into fellowship with him. God wants to have fellowship with us.

And that's why he wants us to talk to him and commune with him. And God wants to commune with us. It's very, very important.

This is not possible in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament, God just spoke to the prophets. The prophets spoke to God.

Nobody could have a direct communication with God. But today, as God becomes a father, you know how much we love little children when they come into our home. Think of a couple that never had children for many years, and they have a little child.

How delighted they are to have that child. How much that mother talks to that child, even at a time when the child can't understand a word of what you're saying. The desire to communicate and how excited you are when the child speaks a few words.

Do you know that God is a loving father? He says in Isaiah 49 and verse 15, can a mother forget her sucking child and not care for the child of her womb? Even she may forget, a nursing mother may forget her nursing child, but I will not forget you. It's a beautiful picture how God is not only like a father, He's like a mother. He cares for us so intensely.

There are many people who are afraid. When I grow old, who will take care of me? I've heard people complain that to me. Brother Zach, my children are not taking care of me now I'm old.

And I took care of them when they were little children. They're not taking care of me when I'm old. And I asked him this question.

Did you bring up your children to take care of you? Or did you bring up your children for the glory of God? Don't bring up children to take care of you when you're old. Bring up your children for the glory of God. And if you want to know who'll take care of you, here's a promise for all of you old people from Isaiah 46 in verse 3 and 4. The Lord says to you, I have borne you on my back from your birth.

From your birth I've carried you. I carried you from your mother's womb. And even to your old age, I will be the same.

Even when your hairs are gray in your graying years, I will bear you. I have done it. And I will carry you.

I will bear you. What a promise. Trust in God.

You don't have to depend on your children. Trust in God. God can use anybody.

God can use means to provide your needs. You don't have to be anxious. The Bible says be anxious for nothing.

In Philippians chapter 4 verse 6. It's an absolute statement. Philippians 4 verse 6. Be anxious for nothing. But we need to do something about that cause of anxiety.

Maybe there's some problem you're facing right now and you don't know how it is going to work out. What should you do? He doesn't say don't do anything. He says pray about it.

And supplication means make a specific request to God. Tell God exactly what the problem is. That is supplication.

And then don't forget to complete the prayer with thanksgiving. Thanksgiving is saying thank you Father for having heard my prayer. Thank you for caring for me.

It's like the receipt that my letter has reached. God's presence. He received the letter.

Thank you for hearing me. And then when you do that. It says here in verse 7 of Philippians 4. The peace of God.

Which is the opposite of anxiety. The peace of God will. Which is beyond all comprehension.

Which we cannot even understand. Will guard. God is a military word like a fortress.

It will guard me and my heart and my mind in Christ Jesus. That is a command we must obey. Be anxious for nothing.

He doesn't say don't do anything about it. Make that request known to God in prayer. And in a specific request.

And God will make sure his peace like a military garrison surrounds your heart and your mind so that you can be free from anxiety. Only God can free us from it. I can't just you know work myself up to be free from anxiety.

And when I'm free from anxiety I'll be free from a lot of discouragement. This is a wonderful step that we must take. And then he goes on to say in Matthew 6 in verse 33.

If you want to be anxious about something. Let me paraphrase his words. Don't be anxious about all these earthly things.

But if you do want to be anxious about something. Be anxious about pursuing after God's kingdom first. And his righteousness.

In other words let those energies be directed towards seeking God's kingdom first. And his righteousness. And you'll find that all these earthly things which you're anxious about will be taken care of.

That's a wonderful promise. It's one of the most fantastic promises that Jesus gave. And it applies to anyone in any age.

That if you devote yourself to seeking the rule of God. The kingdom of God means the rule of God in your life. It's not the word kingdom.

It's not a word we use much nowadays. But it refers to the rule of God in our life. God is my authority.

He's the one who rules over me. He's the government of God. I submit to his rule in my life.

That is the meaning of seeking God's kingdom. And to seek his righteousness means to seek total purity in every area of my life. I long for a life of total purity.

I want God to rule over my life. Every area of my life. I want God to make me totally pure in my life.

In every area. And when I seek these things first. All my earthly needs will be added to me.

And I want to say to you my dear friends. Our life should be a testimony to the truth of this verse. I have sought to live following this verse for more than 50 years now.

Sincerely seeking God's kingdom and his righteousness first. To the best of my knowledge and ability. And I can testify that God has certainly added all my earthly needs to me.

I mean I've been, my wife and I have been through times of deep poverty. But we never got into debt in all my 72 years. I've never been in debt.

When we get into debt we're saying our father has forsaken us. If we trust in God he will provide our need. When the Bible says in Romans 13 and verse 8. Owe no man anything.

He's teaching us never to get into debt. I want to explain what a debt is. If you take a loan from the bank to build a house.

There is no debt there. Because for the money you borrowed there's an asset there which balances in the weighing balance. One takes care of the other.

Or if you take a loan to buy a car and it's insured. Then there is a balance there. There is no debt there.

But if you have borrowed money to spend it on yourself to go on a vacation or spend it on a wedding and it's evaporated. There's nothing there that's a debt. And we should not get into that type of debt.

We must learn to live within our income. But if we spend extravagantly there'll be plenty of reason for anxiety. The Gentiles live like that.

It says all these things the Gentiles eagerly seek. What are the things the Gentiles eagerly seek? The people of the world. They seek to live a very luxurious comfortable life.

And if they can't afford it they use their credit card to keep buying things and get into credit card debt endlessly. It's a shameful thing if a Christian is in credit card debt. Let me tell you that directly.

If you use a credit card make sure that it's paid within the month so that you don't pay any interest on it. Then it's okay. But if you are one who's getting into the habit of using credit card and getting into debt.

I want to say to you in Jesus name that you are living in disobedience to God. You have every reason to be anxious and worried. You're testifying that your heavenly father doesn't care for you.

You're trying to live beyond your means. You're not satisfied with what God has given you. I'm not speaking what I've not practiced.

I've been through times when we had very little my wife and I. But we decided we'd never get into debt. We live with what we have. And as God increased the circle of our finances we could buy more things.

And that has been such a tremendous education for us. That I can stand boldly before people today and say no matter what our circumstances I have learned to be content. Paul could say that in his late 60s.

I've learned to be content in all circumstances. I've learned to have little and I've learned to have much. That's up to God.

But I'm perfectly content. Godliness with contentment is great gain. It's very important for us to understand these simple principles of finances.

Because a lot of anxiety comes because of a wrong attitude in the area of money. It's a continuation from that statement that you cannot serve God and money that Jesus spoke about anxiety. He said for this reason he said in Matthew 6 25 do not be anxious.

So seek the kingdom of God first and therefore do not be anxious concerning tomorrow. For tomorrow will take care of itself. Matthew 6 34.

Each day has got enough trouble of its own. Just live for today and lay up for the future by all means. The Bible says go to the ant in Proverbs chapter 6. And because the ant knows that in winter time there won't be enough grain.

So it lays up for the future. There's nothing wrong in having a savings account. Jesus Christ had a treasure who kept money.

That was like a savings account. There's nothing wrong in that. You don't have to spend everything you earn today itself.

But it's not laying up a treasure for yourself. It's being wise about the future. Wise to provide for your children.

Second Corinthians in chapter 12 and verse 14 says second Corinthians 12 and verse 14. Children parents need to lay up for their children. That's the perfectly right thing to do.

You don't lay up treasure for yourself but you must provide for your children. That's right. 1 Timothy 5 8 says if you don't care for your family you're worse than an unbeliever.

So with wisdom we can be completely free from anxiety. We're not seeking for things that God hasn't given us. We're satisfied with what God has given us.

But we're not going to be anxious. We're going to live within our means. It's a good thing to ask ourselves this question.

This little phrase that Jesus used in verse 32. These things the Gentiles seek after. What are the things the Gentiles seek after? Ask yourself whether you're seeking after those things.

Are you seeking for the same things worldly people seek? Then you shouldn't be calling yourself a Christian. You should be calling yourself a worldly person. A Christian is one.

Matthew 6 33 who seeks God's kingdom first and his righteousness and finds that all the other things are added to him so that at the end of his life whether he's lived for 50 years or 90 years he can say I spent my life seeking God's kingdom first and his righteousness and I can testify at the end of all these years that God has added other things to me. I can certainly say that at the end of 52 years of being a born-again Christian. I spent my life seeking God's kingdom and his righteousness and God has added all that I need for me.

May that be your testimony too. Let's pray. Heavenly Father as we bow before you help us to have the values of your word and your kingdom in our life.

We humbly ask in Jesus name. Amen.

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