

All That Jesus Taught Bible Study - Part 26

by Zac Poonen

Jesus' teachings are crucial for our spiritual growth, and we must be wise in what we speak to whom, giving spiritual truth to those who appreciate it and need it.

Duration: 24:53

Scripture: Isaiah 50:4, Matthew 7:6, 1 Corinthians 2:2, 1 Corinthians 14:1

Topics: "Discernment Ministry", "Foundational Truths"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of discernment in sharing the message of God, highlighting the need to give appropriate truth to individuals based on their spiritual level and readiness. It explores the significance of understanding the foundational truths of Christianity, such as Christ's sacrifice and resurrection, before delving into deeper teachings like the Sermon on the Mount. The sermon also underscores the need for prophetic insight and discernment in ministering God's Word effectively to address the specific needs of each person.

Transcript

We continue our study today on all that Jesus taught and commanded us to do. The importance of this is because this is what our Lord said we must proclaim in every nation once we have made people his disciples. And this is a lifelong thing, it's not something that we can finish in a day or two.

Every single thing that Christ commanded is something that we are to do and if we have not done it, we have not completed the Great Commission. So we've been looking at the Sermon on the Mount and we've looked at nine right attitudes that he spoke on in chapter 5 and nine wrong attitudes in the remaining chapters up to chapter 7. And we now look at chapter 7 and verse 6. Beginning at this verse we have as it were the concluding paragraphs, the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount. Do not give that which is holy to dogs and do not throw your pearls before swine lest they trample them under their feet and turn and tear you to pieces.

Here we read that we have to be wise concerning what we speak to whom. In the book of Proverbs we are told in Proverbs 27 that we're not to answer a fool according to his folly. When you look at Jesus' own example, he's the example when we try to understand a verse.

When we look at a verse like this, it's not that we treat anybody like dogs or treat anybody like swine. We are all sinners, every single person. We're all sinners.

Some of us are saved by the grace of God with our sins forgiven. Some are still in their sins but we are basically all sinners to start with because we have inherited that from Adam. So there's no question of one thinking that he's better than the other or looking down on another like a dog or a swine.

We need to understand what Jesus was saying here. The principle is what we need to understand. Right through the Sermon on the Mount, for example, when he said pull out your eye or cut out your hand, he wasn't referring to us actually cutting out our hand, amputating it or plucking out our eye.

It's the principle behind it when he spoke about eating his flesh and drinking his blood in John chapter 6. It's not his physical flesh and physical blood. He was talking about a participation in his death which some people took literally and got offended and left. And he turned around and said to them, the words I speak to you are spirit and life.

He said in John 6 and verse 63, the flesh profits nothing. There was another instance where when Jesus was going to Syrophenicia, when he went to Syrophenicia to the land of Tyre, he went there all the way that distance about 80 kilometers just to help one Canaanite woman. It's amazing how Jesus would walk 80 kilometers one way and 80 kilometers back, over 150 kilometers up and down just to help one person.

But when he got there, and he was led by the spirit obviously, as a man he didn't know what he was going to find. But when the spirit leads, you obey and you discover there's something wonderful at the end of the journey. But we read there in Matthew 15 and verse 21 onwards, this story.

And this woman came asking for help for her daughter who was demon possessed. And Jesus turned around and said, it's not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs. Matthew 15 verse 26.

And some people have questioned that. Was Jesus calling her a dog? Would you walk 150 kilometers? How long does it take to walk 150 kilometers? A couple of days at least. Would you walk that much distance to help one single person? There you can see the intensity of Christ's love.

But the Lord was testing her to see whether she was willing to take any lowly position, recognizing that she deserved nothing from God. And when she said, that's fine, I am a dog, but can I get the crumbs that fall from the table? And Jesus said, oh woman, your faith is great. It's only twice that Jesus ever said that to anybody.

And to both were to non-Jewish people. One was to a Roman centurion, and the other was to the Syrophenician woman. Look how he appreciated her.

So when it speaks about dogs and swine in scripture, it's not despising people, but recognizing that we don't deserve anything at all from God. Anyone who thinks, I deserve that God should do something for me, hasn't understood man's position before God. I'll tell you the only thing you and I deserve is hell.

If we go to God and say, Lord, give me what we deserve, it's hell. Anything better than that is God's grace. So when we recognize that position, then we get a lot from God.

But most people don't recognize that position. So Jesus was saying, don't give that which is holy to dogs. That means don't give something which people don't appreciate to them.

What a dog wants is a bone. That's what he wants. He doesn't want something holy.

And when a human being is more interested in material things on earth than God, there's a sense in which he's no better than an animal. What do you live for? Just to bring up children, have sex, sleep, eat good food. Well, that's what all the animals are interested in too.

Animals are always interested in earthly things. You see, dogs are always looking down on the earth. Swine are always looking down on the things of the earth.

You never see a dog looking up to heaven. You never see a swine looking up to heaven. Animals are looking down at the things of the earth.

And that's the meaning of this. People whose mind is set on earthly things. A true Christian has got his head lifted up.

He's looking at things above. And people are not interested in the things above. It's pointless giving to them that which is holy.

It's like casting pearls in front of swine. What swine need is a lot of rubbish. That's what they love to eat.

And so it's pointless giving that which is holy. He's talking in relation to the Sermon on the Mount. The Sermon on the Mount is not meant for unbelievers.

Basically, that is the point of Matthew 7 verse 6. Don't give this message to those who are not born again. Because they cannot appreciate it. What people who are not born again need to hear is the message of repentance.

They need to know that they are sinners. They need to know that they deserve hell. They need to know that they are lost and cut off from God and are going to an eternal destiny in hell.

That's what the message that non-Christians and even people born in Christian homes who are not born again, who have not come into a living connection with Christ need to hear. Every human being, if he does not give God first place in his life, is really like an animal. An animal has no interest in God, no interest in prayer, no interest in hearing what God has to say.

And when you have a human being living on earth, no interest in prayer, no interest in God, no interest in hearing what God has to say to him, he's no better than an animal. An animal is interested in sex. When a man is primarily interested in sex, he's like an animal.

Every animal is interested in sex. Every animal is interested in food. And when human beings are interested only in food and sex and sleep and having children, well, the animals do all that.

So there's a difference. You know, when God made Adam, He made Adam from the same dust that He made the pigs and the dogs and all the animals. It's exactly the same dust.

And if you look at the internal organs of dogs and swine, there's a lot of similarity there between man's internal organs of these animals. So what the Lord was saying is that physically, both of you are from the same material. And that's why God made animals and man on the sixth day.

The first part of the sixth day, He made the animals. And the second part of the sixth day, He made man. He made swine and dogs in the first part of the sixth day, and man, Adam, in the second part of the sixth day.

But there was one big difference. With the animals, God didn't breathe on them. They automatically had breath when they were created or made from the dust.

But as soon as man was made, God breathed into him, and he became a living soul, we read in Genesis chapter 1. And that was the thing that distinguished him from the animals immediately, the breath of God. If God had not breathed into him, he may have looked like a man, but he'd have been like an animal. But the moment God breathed into him, he became a living soul.

He became an eternal being, unlike animals who are not eternal. When an animal dies, it just becomes dust. But when God breathed into man and man became a living soul, he became an eternal being at that moment, an eternal being answerable to God.

He didn't have eternal life, because eternal life refers to life that had no beginning, and only God has that. But we can receive that eternal life when we repent of our sins and come to Christ and receive him as our Lord and Savior. Then we have eternal life.

Otherwise, we're just eternal beings and people who go to hell, dwell there for eternity, separated from God. So what the Lord is saying here is that there are two distinct categories of people on this earth. There are those who live just like animals, like dogs and swine, and there are others who recognize that they are supposed to be children of God, and who recognize that God has made them eternal beings answerable to him.

So when God breathed into man, he was made of dust, but with a conscience that made him aware that he's answerable to God for his actions and his words. Now, animals don't have a conscience. They don't have any sense of guilt when they do something wrong, whereas man, even if he's completely illiterate and a barbarian in a jungle, he has a sense of guilt because he's got a conscience.

Even the barbarians in the jungles bow down and worship maybe a rock or a stone or a sun or something. They have some awareness that there is some creator eternal being whom they are answerable to, and you never find a religious dog anywhere, or a religious monkey or swine. Why is it that even barbarians have that sense of awareness of an eternal being whom they are answerable to? That's because they've got a conscience, and every man's got a conscience, and that's what distinguishes man from swine and dogs and animals.

So we need to recognize what truth we can give to each person. That's what Christ is saying in this verse. The apostle Paul says here in writing to the Corinthians, he says, I decided, 1 Corinthians 2.2, that when I was with you, I will only speak about Jesus Christ and him crucified.

Now, some people have misunderstood that verse as if that is the only thing we are ever to speak on. If ever you take one verse out of a context, out of its context, you can get a wrong doctrine, and that's how many cults are built. Whenever you read a verse in scripture, remember it is part of a letter, and if you take one sentence out of page two of a letter, you can get a wrong understanding.

Read the whole paragraph, the whole letter, and when you read the whole paragraph, you read that Paul is telling the Corinthians, with you people, I could only speak about Christ dying for our sins, because in chapter three, he says, you're like babes, and babes can only drink milk. You don't put solid food in the mouth of a one-month-old baby, it'll choke to death. So what do you give a one-month-old baby? Milk.

What do you give a newly born baby? Milk. You cannot put solid food into that child's mouth, because it can't chew it. And so that's what he's saying here, but he says, in 1 Corinthians 2, 6, we do speak wisdom among those who are mature, and you guys are not mature, so I can't speak God's wisdom to you people.

I can only tell you Christ died for our sins, because you're constantly falling into sin, and asking God to forgive you, and again falling into sin. What do you need to know? You need to drink milk. Christ died for your sins, repent of your sins, confess it, ask God to forgive you.

But he says, how long are you going to be babies? You need to grow up. That's what he told the Hebrews also. The writer to the Hebrews says in chapter 5, he says, you people only can drink milk.

You're not ready to eat solid food, the food of righteousness. Hebrews in chapter 5, he speaks about that to Christians who should have become more mature. He says in Hebrews 5, 12, by this time you should have become teachers, but you still need somebody to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you need milk and not solid food.

So just like we don't give pearls before swine, and we don't give that which is holy to the dogs, we don't give solid food to babies. So the point here is, we need to give appropriate truth to people according to their spiritual level. If they're not even converted, it's no use taking a Bible study on the Sermon on the Mount to them, because that is not meant for them.

That's meant for disciples. So if a person's unconverted, what he needs to hear is about his sin. He needs to hear how terribly guilty he is because of his sin before God, how he's headed to an eternal hell, how he's a rebel against God, and how God's wrath and judgment are resting upon his head, and he needs to turn and be broken and humble before God and ask God for his mercy.

That's the message for the sinner, not the Sermon on the Mount. Forget it. Then, when the person's converted, then we can teach him, first to begin as a babe with milk, and then go on to mature, teaching God's wisdom.

Then we can, once he's a disciple, we can teach him the Sermon on the Mount. Now, this is a very simple principle, because there are many people in the world who think Christianity is following the Sermon on the Mount. No, it isn't.

The first step of Christianity is laying a foundation, and that foundation is, you're a sinner, and you're on your way to hell. You're a rebel against God, and you need to repent of that and come back in brokenness and humility and repentance, feel sorry for your sins, and want to turn away from your sins and believe that Christ died and took the punishment for all your sins upon the cross, and he proved that that was the only way of salvation by rising from the dead. The thing that distinguishes Christianity from all other faiths is one, two, two great truths.

One, nobody even claimed to die for your sins except Jesus Christ. Nobody ever rose from the dead proving that what he said was true except Jesus Christ. If you remove these two truths from Christianity, Christianity is like any other religion.

Do good, help the poor, be kind, don't hurt anybody, etc., etc., etc. That is the superstructure of Christianity. The foundation is Christ died for our sins and rose again.

That foundation is what is lacking in all religions. The superstructure may look the same. It's like the man who built on the sand and the man who built on the rock.

Both houses look the same, but one didn't have a foundation. So a lot of things in Christianity look similar to what is taught in other religions, but look at the foundation. There is no foundation there.

Here is a foundation that someone died for my sins and took my punishment, which is the greatest need that human beings have, and nobody did that except Christ. And how do we know that's true? He rose from the dead. On that foundation, we lead people to follow in Jesus' footsteps and become disciples, to give all to Christ.

When a person has come there, the foundation has been laid, then we can teach him the Sermon on the Mount. So that is the point of Matthew 7 and verse 6, that we're not to give truth to those who do not appreciate it. And that's why we need to have wisdom whenever we talk to people.

We're not to just have a standard message for everybody. We need to seek God to hear what God wants me to say to each person. Even Jesus lived like that.

Let me show you a passage in Isaiah. In the prophet Isaiah, we read in Isaiah 50 and verse 4, a prophecy concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, which is very appropriate for those of us who are preaching the Word. What am I supposed to give to a person as God's message? I need to first discern what is his spiritual condition.

This is why I need prophetic insight from God when I speak God's Word to anybody. Giving God's Word is a supernatural thing. To give a lecture like teaching chemistry, you can teach the Bible anytime to anyone.

But if you want to minister God's Word according to the person's spiritual level and need, you need to have supernatural insight, which only God can give. And here we read in Isaiah 50 and verse 4, the Lord God, this is referring to Christ, the Lord God, the Father has given me the tongue of a disciple, that I may know how to sustain the weary one with a word. And in order to get that right word for that weary one who comes across my path, God my Father awakens me morning by morning every day.

And he awakens my ear in the morning to listen as a disciple. So Jesus is saying there, he would listen every day. And he would listen constantly so that he could give the appropriate word to the people who came to him.

Think of one example of this. In John chapter 8, we read of the Pharisees bringing a woman who was caught in adultery to Jesus and quoting the Old Testament scriptures, which clearly said that she was to be stoned to death. And Jesus did not disagree with that because he knew the Old Testament scriptures.

He had given it himself to Moses hundreds of years earlier. And so what does he do? It says here that Jesus did not reply. They kept on accusing this woman and Jesus, John 8 verse 6, just stooped down with his finger and he was doodling on the ground.

He was waiting for a clear word from the Father. What shall I give these people? What is the appropriate word to give these people who want to stone this poor woman to death? I'm not going to contradict scripture. No, it's the scripture which he himself gave to Moses.

And so he just straightened up and said to them when he had a word from his father, John 8, 7, he who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw a stone. Go ahead. You can stone this woman according to the law, but the one who's without a sin can throw the first stone.

And it says here they all went away beginning with the oldest because they had sinned the most. And so we see one word was enough, not a sermon. There were other times where we read that Jesus would say nothing.

When somebody asked him a question and he said, let me ask you a question first. The baptism of John, was it from heaven or from men? And they began to dispute. If we say it was from men, the people will be upset because they consider John a prophet.

If he says from heaven, Jesus will ask us, why didn't you believe him then? So they didn't know what to say. So they said, we don't know. We're not going to say.

And Jesus said, well, I'm not going to reply your question either. So you see, Jesus didn't have a standard way of dealing with everybody. Sometimes when people came to him and asked him a silly question, like a man died and his wife was married by his brother.

And like that seven brothers at him, who is going to be her husband in the resurrection? Jesus gave a reply to them. He didn't just walk away. He said in the resurrection, there's no marriage.

But if you look at the replies that Jesus gave, it was not a fixed, like getting a fixed answer, like looking up a computer program and saying, what reply to this? He was listening to the Holy Spirit. And that's a very important principle that we need to learn here in Matthew seven, verse six. We need to know what is the appropriate word for this particular person.

It is so important in all ministry to know exactly what is the right word to give to this people. Why does the new Testament say that we must covet to prophesy? In one Corinthians and 14 and verse one, every believer is told that he must earnestly desire to prophesy. The reason is that in a meeting, in a new Testament church meeting, if all prophesy, if all have the gift of prophecy, all are not prophets, but all can prophesy.

If all prophesy and what happens? It says here that if someone, when all prophesy one Corinthians 14, 24, and someone comes in who is an ungifted man, who probably doesn't believe in these gifts, one Corinthians 14, 24, he's convicted by what he hears and the secrets of his heart are disclosed. Verse 25, because he heard a word exactly according to his need. And he falls on his face and worships God and says, boy, God is certainly here because I got a word according to my need.

And I want to say, dear friends, that every single church meeting should be like that. All of our churches should have people who prophesy prophetic words. You need to wait upon God.

You need to surrender everything to God to do that. And if you're not doing that, you're not fit to be a preacher of God's word. You need to know exactly what is appropriate to give to a person.

That is the point of what Jesus is saying here. When you see someone who's like a swine, give him what's appropriate to him. When you see someone who's like a dog, give him a bone.

You can't give him the Sermon on the Mount. In prophecy, as we seek for the gift of prophecy, God gives us the ability when we get up to speak to discern exactly what is the need of the people who are in front of us. And God will give us the word to their need.

So this is a very important principle that Jesus concludes the Sermon on the Mount with as something very, very important for us to understand, especially for those of us who are called to preach God's word, whether to unbelievers or to believers. We don't despise anyone. If you despise someone, you're not fit to be a servant of God.

Jesus didn't despise the worst of sinners. But we need to have an appropriate word according to the need of the people. And that is the point of Matthew 7, verse 6. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, we bow before you and we pray that you will give us understanding and discernment about those to whom we share the word of God with, whether as preachers or as individual witnesses for you. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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