

All That Jesus Taught Bible Study - Part 27

by Zac Poonen

Jesus teaches us to ask, seek, and knock with persistence and faith to receive from God and to be good to others as God has been good to us.

Duration: 25:21

Scripture: Jeremiah 29:13, Matthew 7:7, Matthew 19:26, Matthew 28:18-20, Luke 11:5-13, Luke 18:1-8, Ephesians 4:32, James 4:2

Topics: "Great Commission", "Holy Spirit"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of fulfilling the Great Commission by making disciples and teaching them to obey all that Jesus commanded. It highlights the high standard set by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, showing that living up to it is impossible without God's help. The message encourages believers to ask God for the power of the Holy Spirit to live according to His standards and to seek Him wholeheartedly, persistently, and in faith. It also stresses the need to pray not just for material things but for spiritual growth, holiness, and the ability to serve others with the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Transcript

We continue our study today on all that Jesus taught. We have been looking to fulfill the command of Jesus, which we know is the Great Commission in Matthew 28, verses 18 to 20. Our responsibility is to make disciples in every nation and teach them to do every single thing that Jesus commanded.

And when we look at the state of Christendom today, even those who claim to be born again Christians, we can see a terrible lack in this area. Most people don't even know what Jesus commanded, leave alone do it. And the fault lies with their leaders, who have not taught them and not taught them to do.

Not even taught them and not taught them to do because the leaders are not doing it themselves. So we've been studying it, looking at Jesus' words in Matthew 4, 5, 6, 7. And today we reach Matthew 7, verse 7. Here again, we've come to the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount. And when anyone reads the Sermon on the Mount, if you've been following these studies in these past days and weeks, you would have noticed that the standard that Jesus expects us to live by is so high that it's impossible, humanly speaking, to live there.

And that's why most people look at it and just give up and say, well, nobody can live like that. Nobody can be completely free from anger. Nobody can be completely free from lusting with the eyes.

Nobody can be completely free from the love of money. Everything that Jesus speaks there, nobody can speak the truth all the time. Everything that Jesus says, Christians look at it and say, that's impossible.

Nobody can pray without caring at all for the opinion of men of their prayer, about what they pray. Every single thing, nobody can live without judging others. So you take every single thing mentioned here, and the answer of even many Christians is, you can't live at that level.

And they're right in a sense that with human strength, it is impossible. But Jesus once said, with men, this is impossible, but not with God. For with God, all things are possible.

That's a very lovely verse that we can look at in this connection where Jesus spoke in Matthew's Gospel when a rich young ruler came to him and he said to him to sell all that he had and he couldn't do it. And Jesus said these words in Matthew 19 and verse 26. With men, this is impossible, but with God, all things are possible.

That's a lovely verse to write at the end of the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 7, 5, when you come to the end of that section where Jesus has given these exhortations. We can put this verse, with men, all that you have read so far is impossible. But that's not the end of the sentence.

But with God, this is possible. And so that is why we come to Matthew 7 and verse 7 where Jesus says, you need to ask, otherwise you won't receive. You need to ask and then it will be given you.

What do you need to ask for? You need to ask for power to be able to live according to this standard. See, that is the meaning of that verse in this context. Now very often we ask God only for material things.

Lord, I need a house, I need a car, I need healing from my sickness, I need this or that and the other, it's usually almost entirely worldly things and I need this for my family, for my children, again all worldly things. There's not much difference, to tell you honestly, between the prayers that believers pray and the prayers that unbelievers pray. The prayer that non-Christians pray in their mosques and temples are almost similar to the prayer that many Christians pray in their private lives.

It's almost 99% concerning material things. The one spiritual thing they may pray for is, Lord, forgive my sins. But nothing more than that.

For example, when was the last time you prayed that you would learn to forgive every single person? When was the last time you prayed that you would love all your enemies? When was the last time that you prayed that you'd be completely free from sexually sinful ways of thinking? When was the last time you prayed that you'd be 100% free from anger? And persisted in that prayer? When was the last time you prayed that you would speak the truth 100% all the time? Or that you'd be completely free from the honor of men or that you'd never judge others? We hardly ever pray for these things. We're praying for material things just like the non-Christian. And so there's essentially not much difference between the non-Christian and the Christian because the standard of Christianity today is so pathetically low because their teachers have never taught people to do all that Jesus commanded.

And because people have not experienced a genuine fullness of the Holy Spirit. There's a lot of fake, counterfeit fullness of the Holy Spirit just like fake, counterfeit diamonds and golds and currency notes. When people are genuinely filled with the Holy Spirit, they'll become holy.

I mean, everybody knows that unclean spirits make people unclean. Evil spirits make people evil. Well, what does the Holy Spirit do? Some people say the Holy Spirit just makes you make a lot of noise.

That's not true. The Holy Spirit makes you holy. I remember one man came to our church in Bangalore once and he was of some particular denomination that believed in making a lot of noise in their Sunday morning meetings.

And he came to me after the service and said, you don't have the Holy Spirit here. I said, how do you know? Have you lived in our home and seen how we live? Whether we live holy lives or not? No, he said, you don't have enough noise in your meetings. Oh, I said, your trinity is Father, Son and Noisy Spirit.

My trinity is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The third person of your trinity makes you make noise. The third person of my trinity makes me holy.

Which is the third person of the trinity in the Bible? Noisy Spirit or Holy Spirit? It's as simple as that. Even a little child can understand. But if we don't desire that, we will never have.

That's why Jesus said, ask and you will be given. And James in his letter says this. In James in chapter 4 and verse 2, the last part.

You do not have because you do not ask. Remember this little sentence at the end of James 4.2. You do not have something God wants you to have because you do not ask. There are many things that Christians have not received, which God wants to give them because they do not ask.

Take this verse in Luke chapter 11 and verse 13. How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him? There are millions of things that Christians have missed just because they don't ask God. Why does God wait for us to ask Him? Because He wants us to appreciate what we give Him.

What He gives without our asking, we don't usually value. Even forgiveness of sins, which is the most important thing of all. Didn't you get it by asking for it? Would you have got it if you didn't ask for it? Would you have received salvation if you didn't ask for it? There are millions of people on earth who have not saved because they don't ask for it.

They don't humble themselves to acknowledge that they need it. So, what are the requirements to receive God's highest spiritual blessings? First of all, we must have a desire, a thirst. And then we must ask in faith.

Asking speaks of that desire and He speaks about faith later on in Matthew 7 verse 11, where He says, if you know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more your heavenly Father will give good things to those who ask Him. So, let's look at Matthew 7 verse 7. Ask and it will be given you. Meaning that if you don't ask, you won't get it.

If you seek, you will find. If you want to know the truth, you've got to seek. There are treasures in God's Word.

There are some things on the surface which everybody can receive, but its deepest treasures are down inside where you've got to seek for it. Just like, you know, there are a lot of valuable things on the surface of the earth, like fruit, mangoes and coconuts and so many other good fruit on the surface. But if you want

the really expensive treasures like gold and diamonds, you have to dig thousands of feet into the ground.

It's like that. There are certain things you get on the surface of the Bible, how our sins can be forgiven, Christ died for our sins. But if you want the deepest truths of Scripture, how to live a spirit-filled life, how to partake of God's nature, how to overcome all sin, how to overcome anger, bitterness, unforgiveness, jealousy, sexual lust, etc.

You've got to dig deep. And if a person doesn't dig deep, God sees he's not really interested. Ask and you will be given.

Seek with all your heart and you will find. Jeremiah 29, 13 says, When you seek me with all your heart, you will find me. That's a promise.

If a person has not found God and the wealth there is in God, I can say without a slightest hesitation, that man has not sought God with all his heart. He's sought half-heartedly, and there is no promise for the half-hearted in Scripture. There's no promise for the three-quarter-hearted, but tremendous promises for the whole-hearted.

So you can be so close, you can give 90% of yourself to God and get no more than the person who gave 10% to God. But when you give 100% to God, you get everything. When you give 90%, you're just the same category as the person who gave 10%.

And that's what Christians don't realize. You seek me when you search for me with all your heart. What if a person seeks God with 10% of his heart? He doesn't find Him.

What if a person seeks God with 90% of his heart? He doesn't find Him. Seek God with all your heart and you find Him. Seek and you will find.

Knock and it will be opened to you. These are promises. God never breaks His promises.

For every single person who asks, receives. Why haven't you received? Obviously, you haven't asked in the way God wants you to ask. Everyone who seeks finds.

Maybe you haven't sought the way God wants you to. Everyone who knocks, it will be opened. You haven't knocked sufficiently.

And then he says about faith. First, about a thirst and a persistence in asking, seeking, knocking. There are two parables that Jesus spoke in this connection.

Where in both of which, He emphasizes persistence. One is Luke chapter 18. Where He spoke about prayer and He said, Men are always to pray and never to lose heart.

Luke 18 verse 1. And then He speaks about a judge who didn't fear God or man. There was a widow there who was being oppressed by her neighbor. Perhaps a neighbor, an enemy.

And she didn't want to trouble the enemy in any way. She said, just protect me. Give me legal protection that the enemy does not take advantage of me.

Maybe encroach into my property or trouble me in ways that he has no right to do. Give me protection from my enemy. She was asking for her legal rights.

And the judge wouldn't help her. The judge was not willing, but she kept on at him. She went to his door at 2 o'clock in the morning.

And woke him up. And he said, get away from here. And she came again next morning at 2 o'clock or 3 o'clock in the morning.

Knocked day and night at his door until he got so fed up. And said, this widow bothers me. Verse 5. Okay, I'll give her legal protection.

Otherwise, she'll wear me out. And the Lord said, look at what an unjust judge does and says. Do you think a just God isn't better than that? Don't you think he will bring justice for his elect? Luke 18, verse 7. Who are the elect? Those who cry to him day and night.

Do you think he'll delay in answering them? No. He will answer them speedily. What a lovely promise.

God will answer me speedily if he sees that I'm earnest in asking God to help me to overcome Satan, my enemy. 100%. Lord, Satan has taken over certain areas of my life.

Certain areas of my home. Maybe he's come and taken over your wife or husband or children or someone. I want to drive him out.

Give me protection from my enemy. And I persist. You can be absolutely sure that God will answer.

And the other passage on prayer Jesus spoke about is Luke chapter 11. Where also the disciples asked him, saying in Luke chapter 11, Lord, teach us to pray. Luke 11, verse 1. And he taught them to pray and he gave a parable.

He said, supposing one of you has a friend. Luke 11, verse 5. And you have a visitor coming to your house at midnight. And out of courtesy and love for him, you ask this visitor, have you eaten your food? He says, no, I haven't.

And you look into your refrigerator and there's no food there and there's no food in the house. So what do you do? You go to your neighbor. Now, this is very rare.

Hardly anyone would go to their neighbor at midnight. Wake him up and say, give me some food for my friend. But this person does it.

He goes and knocks at his neighbor's house and says, please lend me three loaves. I'll return it tomorrow, but lend it to me now. Because a visitor has come to my house, a very good friend of mine.

And I've got no food for him. And now listen to this. Man from inside the house says, don't disturb me.

I'm in bed. My children are in bed. And you're disturbing me at midnight, waking us all up.

And you keep on banging at the doors. I don't care how long I have to knock. I'm not going to let you sleep until you give me this.

And the Lord says in Luke 11, wait. Even if he doesn't give him anything because he's a friend. Because of his persistence.

Because of his insistence that you have to give me this. Because of his shameless knocking at the door. He will get up and give him.

And this is a lovely expression. As much as he needs, Luke 11, verse 8. And then he says, I say to you, ask like this. See what we read in Matthew 7, 7 is also here.

But here we see the full story. This is the way we have to ask. By constant asking, seeking, knocking.

And then everyone who asks like this will receive. Now in Luke 18, the widow went and knocked for her own need. Here, the person went and knocked for somebody else's need.

We have two reasons why we go to God. One, first of all, for our own need. Lord, the enemy is oppressing me.

I'm defeated in certain areas by the enemy, by sin. He's taken over certain areas of my life. He's come and occupied areas in my home.

He's got a hold of some of my children. And I want them to be free. Personal need.

And the other is for the need of others. Ministry. Lord, I want you to give me that which will help me to meet this need of these people whom I have to serve.

When you have a burden for the people in your church to lead them to a godly life, to lead them to do all that Jesus commanded, to lead them to live according to the standards of the Sermon on the Mount, you will ask for the power of the Holy Spirit. You'll ask for a prophetic word from heaven that will meet the need of those people and deliver them from the clutches of the devil and bring them to a godly life. But if you love them enough, you'll be persistent.

Don't you think this person who went to his neighbor's house at midnight loved this visitor of his? He must have loved him so much that he was determined to get him some food that night. I mean, most of us, if we didn't have food at night and a visitor came, we'd say, well, I'm sorry, brother, we have no food, let's go to bed, I'll get you something in the morning. But this man loved this hungry visitor so much, he said, I'm going to get you something tonight, even if I have to be shameless before my neighbor.

It's a wonderful picture of getting, going to God with persistence and saying, Lord, give me the gifts of the Holy Spirit to serve these people. I remember when I sought for the baptism in the Holy Spirit and the power of the Holy Spirit to be an effective teacher of God's Word, to have utterance. I was a very shy person when I became a Christian and began to share God's Word.

I knew I needed the power of the Holy Spirit and if I got the power of the Holy Spirit, I'd be transformed into another person. And that's exactly what happened. And if you see God like that, for the mighty, supernatural anointing of the Holy Spirit, not for yourself, but for others, and you keep on knocking, say, Lord, give me bread to feed these people.

We saw that expression in Luke 11 and verse 8. As much as he needs, that's how God will give you. And then Jesus said in Luke 11, 13, I'm referring to the Holy Spirit. He made it clear what we are supposed to ask God for.

Give me the power of the Holy Spirit to serve others. My needs are met. We've gone past Luke 18.

Now I'm thinking about the needs of others. And that's a true Christian. Very often people are seeking for the power of the Holy Spirit to get some tickle down their spine, some electric shock, or the feeling of that, or some speaking in tongues, or something for their own benefit.

We need to seek for the gifts of the Holy Spirit to be able to bless other people. I remember when I sought God for the gifts of the Holy Spirit, it was to serve other people. And even if God gave me the gift of tongues, it was to keep myself fresh, because the Bible says, he who speaks in a tongue edifies himself.

So I wanted to edify myself so that I'd always be fresh when I'm serving other people. So even the gift of tongues was to benefit others, to keep myself fresh, and to build myself up. Nothing, no gift of the Spirit was for my own personal edification.

It was for personal edification that led to the blessing of other people. So we need to remember that all the gifts of the Holy Spirit are meant for others. The fruit of the Spirit, if I have joy, peace, that benefits me.

If I have the fruit of the Spirit of joy, the fruit of the Spirit of peace, that doesn't benefit you, it benefits me. But if I have the gifts of the Holy Spirit, whether it's prophecy or healing or any other gift, that benefits others. So we need both of these, and we need to ask God and ask Him to give us, and the next thing we need is faith.

If you being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give what is good, and especially the Holy Spirit and all His good gifts to those who ask Him? We need to have faith that we're coming to a Father. We're not coming to some CEO of some company who is very distant, we have to approach him through some secretary or something like that. We're coming to our Heavenly Dad.

What will He deny us? There's absolutely nothing good that He can ever deny us. And if God doesn't give us something, you can be absolutely sure that's not good for you. The Apostle Paul once had a sickness in his body which he called a thorn in the flesh.

He prayed three times for it to be removed. Second Corinthians 12, God didn't remove it, and he realized that was for his good, because that kept him humble and broken. So God always gives us what is good.

And when God is good to us like that, tremendously good to us, what should we do? We need to be good to other people. And so he goes on to this verse, verse 12, which is often called the Golden Rule. Therefore, since God has been so good to you to give you all that you need, you must treat people in a good way as well.

You receive freely, give freely. Freely you receive, freely give. God has forgiven you, forgive other people.

God forgave you all your sins, forgive other people all their sins. God is good to you, be good to them. Treat people in the way you want them to treat you.

How do you want people to treat you? Treat them in the same way. Don't treat people the way they treat you. A lot of human beings live like that.

They say, I treat people the way they treat me. If they're good to me, I'm good to them. If they're bad to me, I'm bad to them.

That's the law of Adam. But the law of God is treat people not the way they treat you, but treat people the way you want them to treat you. Do you want people to gossip about you behind your back? Do you want people to speak evil about you in their homes? No? Well, don't speak evil about them in your home.

Do you want people to spread bad stories about you, even if those stories are true? Supposing you slipped up and made a blunder somewhere, do you want everybody to broadcast that all over town? No? Well, don't broadcast the evil you know about others, either. Treat other people the way you want them to treat you. If you want them to be kind to you, be kind to them.

If you want people to speak graciously to you, speak graciously to them. What about husband and wife? Let me ask you husbands. How do you want your wives to speak to you? Graciously, respectfully? Speak to them graciously, respectfully.

And vice versa. So, this is certainly true when it's called the Golden Rule. Because, Jesus said, the entire message of the Bible, when he says the Law and the Prophets, it's an expression for the entire Old Testament.

The Law was the first five books of the Old Testament, and subsequently is the Prophets and history. So, the Law and the Prophets, in a sense, sums up the entire 39 books of the Old Testament, and today for us, the whole Bible. And what Jesus is saying here is, the message of the whole Bible is this.

God has been good to you. Matthew 7, verse 11. He gives you what is good.

Therefore, you have a debt and an obligation to be good to other people around you. You have to pass on that. Love that God gave you to them.

Treat them exactly, we would say, exactly like God treated you. And treat them the way you want them to treat you. You read, for example, in Ephesians.

And chapter 4, verse 32 says, Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other. Why? Exactly like God in Christ forgave you. Be kind to one another, like God has been kind to you in Christ.

Be tenderhearted to others, especially your children, when they slip up and blunder and make a mistake. Be tenderhearted towards your wife, towards your children, towards your husband. Because God has been tenderhearted towards you.

Forgive, like God forgave you. And then it goes on to say in the next verse, Be an imitator of God, as beloved children. That's a lovely expression.

Do you know that you're called to imitate God in the way He's tenderhearted and kind and good and forgiving towards you? We're supposed to reflect that to others, like the moon reflects the light of the sun. We're to be like that, reflecting the light of God, the goodness of God, to other people. And this is why we need to ask and keep on asking for the power of the Holy Spirit.

This is the message of the whole Bible. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you for such clear light that we get on your word.

Your word is so simple that even children can understand. Help us to live according to this light we humbly ask. In the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

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