

All That Jesus Taught Bible Study - Part 29

by Zac Poonen

The main message of the Sermon on the Mount is to describe the type of life that leads to eternal life, which is characterized by humility, freedom from the love of money, and a desire to do God's will.

Duration: 25:23

Scripture: Ezekiel 28:14, Matthew 7:21, Luke 10:42, James 2:26, 1 John 3:5

Topics: "Personal Holiness", "False Prophets"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and living a life of holiness, contrasting the significance of genuine repentance and faith over mere works or gifts. It warns against false prophets who may focus on outward displays of miracles and gifts but lack true transformation and obedience to God's will. The message stresses the need for believers to bear good fruit, reflecting a heart that is aligned with God's will and free from sin, as the ultimate criterion for entering God's kingdom.

Transcript

We turn today again to our subject, all that Jesus taught, every single thing that he commanded us that we are to do, that we should be doing if we are his disciples, and if we are to fulfill the great commission that he gave us in Matthew 28, verse 18 to 20, and if we are to be the light of the world as he wants us to be. And we've been looking at the Sermon on the Mount, and we are now in the concluding paragraphs of Matthew chapter 7. In our last study, we were looking at the importance of looking for gifts if we are to identify false prophets. When we read in its context, he was saying that the way that he has shown here is a very narrow way.

The way to life is as described in the Sermon on the Mount. This is not the way of salvation. Salvation is only through faith in Christ.

It's not by works. It's not by keeping the Sermon on the Mount that we get life. No.

It's by, first of all, coming to Christ and acknowledging we are sinners, and that we can do nothing to get our sins forgiven, and believing that he paid the entire price for all our sins on the cross. And when he died, and that he rose again from the dead, we receive forgiveness of sins as a free gift from God. But it comes only when we have turned from our sin, repentance.

If I have not turned from my sin in repentance, it's no use believing that Christ died for our sins. Because salvation is offered to those who repent and believe, not just to those who believe. There are many who believe.

The world is full of Christians who believe that Christ died for their sins. But 95% of them haven't repented. Well, then they haven't received anything.

They're still facing their sins and asking God to forgive them. They need to turn around. But how do we know whether our faith is genuine? James says in his letter, Faith without works is dead.

That's where the Sermon on the Mount comes in. If our faith is genuine, it will produce a desire to live the type of life described in the Sermon on the Mount. Just like a human being has different desires from an animal, a Christian has got heavenly desires.

When God created Adam, He breathed into him the breath of life. But Adam also had a flesh. So there were two pulls in him.

One was the downward pull to earth because he had a flesh just like the animals. And the other was the upward pull from God because of the divine life, divine breath in him. And he responded to the downward pull in the Garden of Eden.

That's how he sinned. And when we keep responding to the downward pull, man becomes like an animal. You find around the world most men behave like animals towards each other.

And animals don't have any interest in God and a lot of people don't have any interest in God. They're just like animals. But when we respond to the voice of conscience that's reminding us of God, that helps us to turn towards Him.

And that's the first step to salvation. And when we respond to that and are really born again, it'll produce in us a desire to live the type of life that's described in the Sermon on the Mount. In fact, the way James describes it is like this.

He says, As the body, James 2, 26, without breath is dead, so faith without works is dead. So he compares faith and the doctrines of Scripture like all the parts of our body. You may believe every single truth in Scripture.

That's like saying this person has got ten fingers, ten toes, two ears, two eyes, one mouth, all the internal parts of the body, liver, kidney, a heart, they're all there, but he's dead. What's the use of that? Then it doesn't matter if he has no hands and no eyes and no legs and no heart and no kidney. If he's dead, everything is useless.

So what's the use of all the doctrines? Believing all the doctrines, if the breath is not there, if the Holy Spirit has not brought in us the desire to live according to what is described here, faith without works is dead. That's a very interesting verse, James 2, 26. It's exactly like a body.

It's got all its parts, but no breath. So where a body has breath, you know it's living. And it's better to have a body with one hand that's living, than to have two hands and be dead.

So we shouldn't glory in our doctrines. We shouldn't even glory in our gifts. So that's the point.

The way to life is narrow, and when a false prophet wants many people in his church, he's going to widen that gate. That's exactly what many preachers have done. Widen the gate so that many people would come in.

Noah in the Old Testament is a great example of a man who did not widen the gate. He was living in a time of tremendous sexual sin, immorality, and violence and evil. And Jesus said the last days would be like the days of Noah, something like today.

But Noah kept the gate narrow so that nobody could get in unless they were willing to fulfill the conditions. Ultimately it was only his own family members that fulfilled those conditions and stayed in that church. Noah's church comprised of eight members.

He, his wife, his three sons, and their wives. His whole family, but nobody else. It's not because he didn't want anybody else.

He preached to the whole world of his time to enter into the ark, but only these eight wanted to enter in. Now if he had lowered the standard, Noah is called a preacher of righteousness. If he had lowered the standard, he could have got many more people.

He could have got 80, 800. But none of them would have qualified to get into the ark and the entire world would have been destroyed. You and I wouldn't be living today.

We've got to thank God for Noah's faithfulness. And if the last days are like the days of Noah, there's got to be a few people like Noah in the last days too who don't lower God's standards, who are preachers of righteousness, who keep the gate as narrow as Jesus made it. Not those legalists who try to make it narrower than what Jesus made it.

I'm sorry to say there are some people like that too, who add to scripture, who say things that Jesus never said and try to make it narrower than what Jesus made it. No, we've got to make it the right size and that's why we need to know scripture. And false prophets are those who widen that gate.

And we could also say false prophets are those who make it narrower than the way Jesus made it, like a lot of legalists. You will know them by their fruits. The test always is the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

That's why I say the fruit of the Holy Spirit is much more important than the gift of the Holy Spirit. Both are necessary, but fruit is more important. Jesus had the fruit of the Spirit for 33 1/2 years.

He had the gifts of the Spirit for 10% of that time, 3 1/2 years. So which is more important? Well, you get the answer there. The fruit of the Spirit was 10 times more important than the gifts of the Spirit in Jesus' own life.

Do we need both? Yes. But both are not equally important. And that's what comes up in the next section of this chapter, Matthew 7 and verse 21.

In the earlier section, verse 13 to verse 15 to 20, he's talking about the importance of fruit. Good trees produce good fruit and you will know them by their fruits. He begins that section by saying that in verse 16, ends it with the same sentence, you shall know them by their fruits.

The same sentence repeated in verse 16 and 20 emphasizing fruit. And then he compares it with gifts. He says in relation to gifts, he says, not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of

heaven.

And he describes fruit now as doing the will of my Father in heaven. Here's a beautiful expression of what fruit is. The fruit I'm speaking about, Jesus says, is doing the will of my Father, whatever it is.

And that means denying your own will. You can't do the will of God if you don't deny your own will. Jesus could not do the will of the Father in Gethsemane if he did not say, not my will.

It's that not my will which is described in verse 19 as cutting down that which doesn't bear good fruit. My will is always in contradiction to God's will. It's contrary to God's will.

Man's human self-will is contrary to God's will. Otherwise, Jesus would not have said, not my will. In heaven, before he became a man, he could say, I do my own will.

Because it's the same as my Father's will. But the moment he came as a man, he said in John 6, 38, I came from heaven not to do my own will. Why not, Lord? Because it's not the same as my Father's will.

I came to do not my own will but the will of my Father. We can describe it like this. In a cross, my will crosses God's will.

And that's where I've got to die. And if I die there, I do God's will. So, not everyone who just says to me, Lord, Lord, is going to enter God's kingdom.

There are a lot of people who say to the Lord, Lord, Lord, but they're not going to enter God's kingdom. The fact that he says, Lord, proves that his doctrine is right. The fact that he says, Lord, Lord, indicates that he's emotionally excited about the fact that Jesus is his Lord.

But he doesn't realize that Jesus is not really his Lord because in his daily life he doesn't do the will of the Father. So, it's the one who does the will of God, that means the one who dies to his own will and does the will of God and is crucified with Christ, that's the one who is going to enter God's kingdom. Now, do you qualify according to this verse? And then, he talks about those people and many of them.

He says, in verse 22, many, not just one or two, many means thousands. In the day of judgment, many are going to stand before God and say, Lord, Lord, they're going to use the right words. Didn't we prophesy in your name? Prophecy is one of the greatest gifts of the Holy Spirit that we are encouraged to seek for in 1 Corinthians 14 verse 1. It is to proclaim God's word as his mouthpiece.

It's not just like a teacher who is teaching God's word. Those are the scribes. The scribes are different from the prophets.

Prophets are people who have an understanding of God's word, to proclaim it prophetically according to the need of people. It's a supernatural gift. And the Lord says here about many people who will come to him and say, Lord, we prophesied in your name.

We blessed people with the spirit of prophecy. And then many others will say, in your name we cast out demons. So many demon possessed people we came across in our life and we cast them out.

And a third group of people will say, we performed not one or two miracles, but many miracles in your name. Now these are genuine miracles, not like the fake counterfeit miracles that a lot of people claim to be doing on television and on public platforms today. Genuine miracles.

And all of these say, we did it in your name, in your name, in your name, three times. You find that expression coming in verse 22, in Jesus' name. And I will declare to them, I never knew you.

You did miracles in my name. I don't question that. I mean, they can't be daring to tell lies to Christ if it didn't actually happen.

Today somebody can fool you, saying he's doing a miracle. It may be a magician's trick. Or very often people boast about miracles that happen in other places.

A lot of preachers talk about miracles that happen in other places. Jesus never spoke about miracles he did in other places. He did a miracle right in front of people.

So, a lot of deceivers today. And here, he says to them, I never knew you. Depart from me, you who practice lawlessness, or you who live in sin.

The important issue there was, what was their attitude to sin? Not how many demons they cast out. Not how many miracles they did. And not how much they prophesied.

What is their attitude to sin? Now I want to ask you dear friends, do you believe that these are words of Jesus? Do you believe that it's going to be exactly like this in the Day of Judgment? That many of these great healers whom you have seen on television, and whom you've seen on platforms, who preach so well and so eloquently, many of these men and women, who preach so well and teach so well, and whom you admire so much, and many who you think are doing great miracles, and casting out demons, do you believe that many of them will be cast out into hell in the final day? I don't think many of you Christians do that. I'm not surprised by these deceivers who get up and swindle people of their money with all their fake gifts and miracles. I'm more surprised by the millions of people who are so gullible and dumb and blind spiritually, to swallow all their gimmicks and imagine that these are men of God, who don't seem to look for their fruits.

Is this man free from the love of money? Is he using my money to live in a luxurious lifestyle himself? Is he a humble man? Is he leading me to godliness? Is he living in sin? Is he divorced? Is he fooling around sexually? Hardly anybody seems to worry about these things. And Jesus says to such people, I never knew you. Depart from me.

I don't want to have anything to do with you. I want to say, I believe these are the exact words of Jesus and it's going to happen exactly like this when Christ comes again. Whether you believe it or not, it's going to happen like this because I believe the word of God.

That there will be many, which means thousands of people who will come to Him. Some of these great so-called men of God, who you think are great men of God, you'll discover that day they were swindlers and crooks and not men of God at all. What are they going to say to the Lord? Lord, we preached on television for so many years.

Millions listened to us. Millions sent us their money for these programs, enabled us to live in great style. We cast out demons in Your name.

We preached powerful messages in Your name that held people spellbound for hours. We performed many, not one or two, but many miracles in Your name. And He will turn around and say, get away from me all of you.

I never knew you personally. I didn't have a personal relationship with you. You had certain doctrines that you proclaimed.

You know like a chemistry teacher who can get up in a class and teach chemistry because he studied chemistry? These people can teach the Bible because they've studied the Bible. But they didn't have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. If they did have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, they would have imbibed the nature of Christ, which is one of humility, freedom from the love of money, never exploiting the poor, and always seeking the good of people and no showing off or drawing people to themselves.

We would be drawing people to Christ. So, it's a good question to ask ourselves. What is important in the final day? Is it gift or freedom from sin? Why is He sending them away? He says, all these things that you did count for nothing.

Listen to this. All these miracles and casting out demons and ministry and prophecy, God says, as far as I'm concerned, it counts for zero if you're not free from sin in your life. The important thing is to be free from sin.

You who practice sin. Sin is lawlessness. We read that in 1 John 3 and verse 5. Sin is lawlessness.

You who practice sin. So, the important question in the final day, dear friends, is going to be what is your attitude to sin? Not how many miracles you did or how much you preached or how many tracts you distributed or how much evangelism you did or whatever else. Not your ministry but your attitude to sin.

Now, many people satisfy themselves today that they're doing some ministry for the Lord. That's not what's going to be primary in the final day. What is your attitude to sin in your heart, in your personal life? That is the essence of the Sermon on the Mount.

He's concluding the Sermon on the Mount and there's nothing about ministry in the Sermon on the Mount. It's all about your personal life. And he says that's the important thing and that's the way to distinguish a true prophet from a false prophet.

A true prophet will emphasize freedom from sin. Holiness. Not gifts.

You will know them by their fruits and not by their gifts. So, what he said earlier in verse 16 to 20 is in contrast what he says here. Don't go by that doctrine.

They may say, Lord, correct, Lord, Lord, right but look for their fruit and don't be deceived by their gifts. Then you may say, how do they exercise these gifts? Well, we can ask ourselves, how does Satan have supernatural gifts today? Satan has such tremendous supernatural abilities. He gives that to witch doctors.

We read in the Bible the first person who brought fire down from heaven was not Elijah. It was the devil in the book of Job. Job lived before Moses who wrote Genesis.

Job was the first book of the Bible written. And there we read in chapter 1 of fire coming down from heaven. You know who sent it? The devil.

He sent it on Job's property. He has supernatural power. He has supernatural power to stir people to attack God's servants like we read in Job chapter 1. He has power to give sickness to people as you read in Job chapter 2. So Satan has tremendous supernatural power.

You see that in the witch doctors of today. And people who are in contact with the devil. Black magic and all that.

Satan has tremendous supernatural power. Where did he get it from? He couldn't have, a created being cannot have supernatural power. He got it from God.

Now the question is, why did God give Satan all these supernatural abilities? Or when did he give it? Was it after he became the devil? Or when he was the head of the angels before he became the devil? Well it's obvious. God would never give the devil any gifts after he became the devil. They were gifts that God had given him before he became Satan.

You read about that in Ezekiel 28. That he had so many abilities. He was full of wisdom and beauty and he had all these supernatural gifts that God gave him.

When he was a holy angel. Anointed angel we read. He's called in Ezekiel 28 the anointed cherub that covers.

And anointing always refers to supernatural gifts. Ezekiel 28 verse 14. The anointed cherub.

But he's using those gifts for himself. And for purposes to promote himself, not to promote God. And how did some of these people who are doing certain supernatural things today as Christians in Jesus name preaching.

Once upon a time maybe they were sincere Christians. Who sought God. And who received gifts.

But then they began to use the gifts for themselves. It's like the prodigal son. Who came to his father received the gifts and then went away and used it for themselves.

That's a perfect picture of many preachers today. They come to God. Receive the gifts from him.

And go out and use it to promote themselves. The opposite of Jesus. Jesus wouldn't even use the gifts to make bread for himself.

He did make bread for 5000. But he wouldn't do it for himself. That's the mark of a true servant of God.

But these preachers have used God's gifts to promote themselves. And gradually what happens to such people is they drift away into sin. And Jesus attitude to them is I never knew you.

I forgave you once upon a time. But you drifted away from me and you've lost that forgiveness. You've lost your salvation.

And you never came into a personal relationship with me. Does God give gifts to people who don't know him? Knowing is a word used in the Old Testament for husband and wife. Adam knew his wife.

I never knew you means I never had a relationship with you as a bride bridegroom and a bride. Do you know that God never has that relationship with any angel? It's only with man redeemed by the blood of Christ. Christ was never the bridegroom of any angel.

He's a bridegroom of the church. Those are redeemed by his blood. And so Satan even when he was a holy angel, he was not the bride.

He had no personal knowledge like spoken here. Knowing like a husband knows his wife. And but he had gifts and a lot of people like that today who have gifts but they are not in that intimate I never knew you means I never had a bridegroom bride relationship with you.

My dear friends, that is the important thing that will matter in the final day. Christ is coming for a bride not for people who exercise gifts and who serve him in this ministry and that ministry. Ask yourself what is important to you in your life? Is it like Martha doing a lot of things for the Lord? Or is it like Mary having that bridal attitude sitting at Jesus' feet and loving him? A bride and a bridegroom love to be with each other.

It's not what they do for each other that is important but their attitude towards each other. They know each other. And that is going to be the most important thing in the final day.

Do you know the Lord? Do you know him intimately as a bride knows a bridegroom as a wife knows her husband? That's what the Lord is telling these people. You can exercise so many gifts. You can do so much of work for me.

You can distribute thousands of tracts, raise so much money, travel here and there and preach and do so many wonderful things but if you don't have a bridal relationship with me I will say to you I never knew you. He told Martha one thing is needful and that is that bridal attitude that Mary had who sat at my feet. Not all the work you do for me.

He said that's a distraction. Luke 10 42 he said Martha you're distracted by your work for me. He did not even appreciate the fact that Martha was doing so many things unselfishly and these people also blessed many people with their healing ministry and demon casting out ministry and preaching ministry but that didn't bother Christ.

He was not impressed with that. He said more than your work I want you. I wish we would recognize this and realize what it is that the Lord wants from us and what it is that's going to matter in the final day.

That's why the sermon on the mount is so important. That's why it's very important to go through Matthew 5, 6 and 7 to see whether you're obeying these things. That will prove whether the Lord knows you.

Whether you know the Lord. Whether you have a bridal relationship with Him and then He will receive you. He will not say to you oh but you never cast out demons.

Oh you never prophesied. He's never going to say that. That's not important.

If God gives you the gift you do that. The important thing is a bridal relationship with Him. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father we thank you for your word. Thank you for the clarity that prepares us for the day when we will see you face to face. In Jesus name.

Amen.

Video: https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/_YI-CIYUgSM.mp4

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/zac-poonen/all-that-jesus-taught-bible-study-part-29/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net