

All That Jesus Taught Bible Study - Part 30

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of obedience to God's will, highlighting the difference between building a house on the rock and building a house on the sand.

Duration: 25:45

Scripture: Matthew 5:3-10, Matthew 5:21-30, Matthew 5:33 - 6:18, Matthew 6:25 - 7:5, Matthew 7:24-27

Topics: "Obedience To God", "Spiritual Authority"

Description

This sermon delves into the importance of obeying all that Jesus commanded, emphasizing the significance of not just hearing His words but also doing them. It contrasts the wise man who builds his house on the rock by obeying Jesus' teachings with the foolish man who builds on sand by neglecting to follow through. The sermon highlights the critical role of yielding our will to God, denying self-will, and living out the principles outlined in the Sermon on the Mount. It stresses the need for a strong foundation in our inner life, unseen by others, as the key to enduring faith and spiritual authority.

Transcript

We turn today to continue our study on all that Jesus taught. We have been looking at how to fulfill the command of Jesus in his Great Commission in Matthew 28, verse 18 to 20, which I have called the neglected half of the Great Commission. First part of the Great Commission is Mark 16, 15.

The second part is here, Matthew 28, verses 18 to 20. All that Jesus commanded must be taught to disciples all over the world in every nation. We come now to the last part of Matthew chapter 7, verses 24 to 29.

It's the concluding paragraph of the Sermon on the Mount. Here Jesus says, Everyone who hears these words of mine and does them can be compared to a wise man who built his house upon a rock. It's not that he didn't hear the words of Jesus, he heard it.

It's referring to Christians who go to church, read the Bible, they hear and these words of mine specifically refer to the Sermon on the Mount. This is the conclusion to what began in Matthew 5, verse 3. These words of mine and does them. He's like the man who's built his house on a rock.

The rain descended, the floods came, the winds blew, burst against that house, but it did not fall. But the one who hears these words of mine, that means he reads the Sermon on the Mount, he believes it, he

believes it as the word of Jesus. He goes to church and listens to the preaching, reads the Bible, but he does not do it.

He understands it, he's excited about it, but he doesn't do it. He has built his house upon sand. Now the rain descended, the floods came, the winds blew, burst against that house and it fell and great was its fall.

So what is the difference between these two? The children sing a chorus, build your house on the rock. The wise man built his house upon the rock. The foolish man built his house upon the sand.

And then it goes on to say, so build your house on the Lord Jesus Christ. So many people think that if I have accepted Christ as my Savior, I built my house on the rock. Now there's a sense in which Christ is our foundation, he's the only foundation.

But here, if you read carefully, what did Jesus say is the proof that a man has built his house on the rock. It is that he obeys. Not that he just said, Lord, I'm a sinner, please come into my heart and forgive my sins.

What if a man says that? And there are multitudes of Christians who have said those words, who imagine themselves to be born again, but who don't care one bit for the commands of Jesus in Matthew 5, 6, and 7. They don't seek to overcome anger. They don't seek to overcome sexual lust. They're not careful about speaking the truth and many, many other things.

They don't love their enemies. But they have said, Lord Jesus, come into my heart. They're living in a world of deception.

They're like the man who hears these words and does not do them. Maybe he understands them. Maybe he's excited about them.

You know, in our previous study, we were looking at people who said, Lord, Lord, in Matthew 7, 21 and 22. When he says, Lord, it means his intellect is right. He's understood the truth.

When he says, Lord, Lord, it means his emotions is right. And he's excited about it. But his will is wrong.

Our human personality consists of three parts, our soul, intellect, emotions, and will, mind, emotions, and will. And we may have understood the truth in our mind and be excited in our emotions about it, Lord, and Lord, Lord. But if we don't yield our will to do the will of God, we're deceiving ourselves.

It's the same here. What is the sand? The wise man is the man who penetrated all the way through the sand and hit rock. This becomes clear when you read the parallel passage in Luke 6. There he said, the wise man is Luke 6, 48, the one who dug deep and hit rock and there laid his foundation on the rock.

In other words, he dug through the sand. They were both building in the same area. The surface was sand.

The foolish man built on the sand. The wise man dug through the sand till he hit rock and blasted the rock and laid his foundation there. What is the sand? The sand is our intellectual understanding of God's word.

The sand is our emotional excitement about God's word. You can intellectually understand everything. He who hears these words of mine, understands them, is excited about them, calls me Lord, calls me Lord, Lord, he's still on sand.

When his will is blasted, when he yields his will and says, Lord, I will not do my will but your will, when this self-will is shattered and he dies on that cross where he says no to his will and does God's will, that's the moment he hits rock. So that's what he's saying here. One who hears these words, excited about these words and does them, not just hears and is excited.

In other words, it's the will, it's the yielding of the will that finally plants our house on the rock. It's the yielding of the will that goes beyond saying Lord, Lord. In the Old Testament tabernacle, the soul was represented by the holy place.

The outer coat represented the body and the spirit of man is represented by the most holy place and between the most holy place and the holy place, there was a thick veil which was closed in the Old Testament times which was torn when Jesus died on the cross. What did that tearing of that veil symbolize when Jesus died on the cross? Hebrews chapter 10 explains it to us by saying in Hebrews 10 20, Jesus inaugurated a new and living way into the most holy place through the veil and that symbolized his flesh and flesh means self-will. Jesus did not have sin in him when he came to earth.

He was born as the angel Gabriel said as a holy thing but he did have a self-will, otherwise he couldn't be a man like us and that's what the Bible calls flesh. When it says Jesus came in the flesh, it means he came with a will of his own. He said that very clearly himself in John 6 38.

I came from heaven to deny my own will. He had a will of his own that had to be denied. Why should it be denied? Because it was contrary to his father's will to deny my own will and to do the will of my father and that's what we see in Gethsemane.

Not my will but thine be done. It is a classic example of he didn't want to drink the cup so he struggled for one hour and said okay father if you want me to drink the cup, I'll do it. He denied his own will and did the father's will but that was true not only in Gethsemane, it was true all through his life.

In temptation, the essence of temptation is to do your own will and not to do the will of God. In Genesis 3, God's will was don't eat from that tree of knowledge of good and evil. Eve wanted to eat of it.

It made her mouth water. The devil told her it'll make you wise and she did her own will. That was the origin of sin.

Doing your own will and denying God's will. Salvation came when Jesus did the opposite. He denied his will and did God's will.

It's so simple as that and so we see it's the will that's important. Not it's a question about how much you understand God's word or how excited you are in God's word. You can feel so spiritual when you're emotionally thrilled singing those songs on Sunday morning in your church service which you call praise and worship.

It's not worship at all. Worship is when you deny your own will. That's only emotional praise or thanksgiving.

It's not worship. Worship comes when we deny our own will. When Abraham offered Isaac on the altar giving up his own will, he said I'm worshiping God.

You read Genesis 22, the first time the word worship comes in the Bible. That is worship where you deny your own will and it costs you something. Like it cost Abraham something to put Isaac on the altar.

That is worship. That is the denial of one's will which opens the way into the most holy place and so when the veil was rent, when Jesus died on the cross and he said it's finished, what he was saying was I have faced the entire range of temptations, Hebrews 4.15, that any human being can ever face. Not all the circumstances but all the temptations and he said no to his own will in every one of those thousands or millions of instances in 33 and a half years.

He never did his own will or in other words he never sinned. In other words he said no to that will of his which is like the flesh, the veil and so the veil was rent. So the veil being rent was symbolic of the fact that Jesus in his entire life when he died on the cross had never done his own will and opened what he calls a new and living way.

What is this new and living way? The veil is a way, not a door, a way. A way means something that we had to walk on consistently. It's the way of denying our own will and doing the father's will so that we can live in the father's presence forever.

In whose presence there is fullness of joy, Psalm 16 11. At whose right hand there are pleasures forevermore, Psalm 16 11. Why do people seek the pleasures of the earth? Because they haven't seen the eternal pleasures in the father's presence.

Why are people discouraged and gloomy and in bad moods? Because they haven't enjoyed the fullness of joy there is in the father's presence because they don't deny their own will. The devil has fooled even Christians by saying you'll be happy when you do your own will. It's a lie.

You're miserable when you do your own will. Jesus was constantly happy, always rejoicing because he did his father's will. So this is the point here.

Everyone who hears these words of mine and does them, if he doesn't do them he's still on sand. However much he may have understood them, however much he may be able to take a Bible study on the Sermon on the Mount, however much he may be excited about it. What are the things we have to do if we have a quick look through of what we have covered in our study of the Sermon on the Mount? Let's have a look.

The nine right attitudes. Seeking for poverty of spirit, a constant sense of our own need, mourning for our sin and mourning that we are not more Christ-like, meek so that we don't fight for our rights. Matthew 5 verse 6, hungering and thirsting not for money or healing but for righteousness, merciful to others no matter what wrong they have done to us, forgiving them.

Verse 8, pure in heart, not just pure on the outside but pure in heart, wanting only God and not anything else. A good conscience means I'm free from sin, pure in heart means more than freedom from sin, I desire nothing but God, I only want God, nothing on earth other than God. Peacemakers, always pursuing after peace with all people, believers and unbelievers, willing to stand up for righteousness.

Verse 10, even if it means persecution, suffering, loss, unashamed to confess Christ even if it brings loss and persecution. Verse 11, these are the nine right attitudes and then he speaks about the importance of being salt, the salt of the earth, the light of the world in verses 13 and 14 and then he goes on to speak about the nine wrong attitudes that we can have which is first of all anger. Man who hears these words,

what are these words? Anger can finally lead you to hell, Matthew 5.22. He hears these words and fears anger and wants to turn away and get rid of anger completely from his life, Matthew 5.22 and who takes sexually sinful ways of thinking seriously and wants to get rid of it not 90% but 100% from his life because he sees that can also take him to hell.

Verse 29 and 30. These are serious, a man who hears these words and does them, Lord I want to have a radical attitude in this area of sexual way of thinking, in the area of pornography and internet pornography and everything else, I want to cut it off completely and to be as radical as pulling out my eye and cutting off my hand, I want to take sin as more serious than losing my hand. How many of you believe that sexual sin even in the thoughts is more serious than losing your right hand or losing your right eye? The wise man does that.

If you don't have that attitude to sin, I see you're not a wise person, you're not building a house on the rock. Many people take this so casually and then the third wrong attitude is in relation to lying, is lying, to be absolutely truthful in our heart. And number four, revenge is another wrong attitude, verse 38 to 42 of Matthew 5 and then the fifth wrong attitude is hatred, to eliminate all hatred from my life.

The sixth wrong attitude is seeking the honor of men, Matthew 6 verses 1 to 18. The wise man seeks to be completely free from seeking the honor of men, just like he seeks to love all his enemies, he wants to be completely free from the honor of men. And the seventh wrong attitude is the love of money.

The wise man doesn't just hear about it, he wants to be completely free from the love of money. It's not a question as I said of whether you're wealthy or poor. Poor people love money and wealthy people love money.

And it's possible to be poor and free from the love of money, it's possible to be wealthy and free from the love of money. The one Timothy 6 says, charge those who are rich, not to give up all their riches, but to share what they have with others and to provide for the need of other poor believers. The eighth wrong attitude is anxiety, Matthew 6 verse 25 to 34.

It's a evidence of a lack of faith in a loving father, when we are anxious as to what's going to happen to us in the future, when we can't trust that God will provide all our need. He who feeds the birds and cares for the flowers, that he won't care for his children. Jesus said, even the hairs on your head are numbered, you're a more value than many sparrows.

It's a great insult when a person believes that his heavenly father will not provide for him. When we have to go and ask people for money, like a lot of preachers do, and a lot of people, when they go and borrow from people, they are saying, I'm not content with what God has given me, or God's let me down. Can you imagine Jesus going to somebody in the days when he was preaching and say, can you give me some money? Because I'm a bit hard up, my heavenly father has let me down.

It's so ridiculous to even think of that. But that's how it is when many preachers and many people, when they go begging for money. A lot of Christian preachers are just dignified beggars.

What about your heavenly father? Isn't he the one who rules the universe? He didn't care for you? If the richest man in the world, if his son came to you asking for money, what would you say to him? Hey, are you the son of the richest man in the world? Why are you asking me? Probably your father has disinherited you, right? That's why you're hard up. And so when a Christian goes begging for money from

other people, what he's saying is, my heavenly father has disinherited me. I'm no longer his child.

He's given up on me. And that's why I'm hard up. I'm like the prodigal son far away from the father's house.

And I have to eat what the pigs are eating. I have to go around begging for money. Every Christian who has to go around begging for money is like the prodigal son far from his father's house.

Can you imagine a son who's in his father's house having to beg for money? Completely out of the question. If you have to get into debt and you have to beg and borrow, it is one indication that you are far away from the father's house. And if you're anxious and worried about where your provision will come from, you're not in the father's house.

Anyone who's in the father's house is not anxious. The prodigal son was anxious not when he was sitting at the father's table. He was anxious when he was far away.

So anxiety is a wrong attitude. And the ninth wrong attitude is judging others. The Bible says in James chapter 4, there is only one judge.

This is such a simple truth, yet we need to hear it again and again. James 4 verse 11. Do not speak against one another, brethren.

If you speak against a brother or judge's brother, you're speaking against the law. The law says you must love your brother as yourself. But you speak against him, judge him, you're judging the law itself, the law of God.

But if you judge the law, you're not a doer, but a judge of it. Then it says in verse 12, there is only one lawgiver and judge. And this is an important word because lawgiver and judge are put together here.

When the Bible says in Matthew 7 verse 1, do not judge. He's saying there is only one lawgiver and judge. Remember that.

A judge has a right to lay down the law. You and I don't have any right to lay down a law. And so when I see Christians making rules for other Christians, Christian preachers making rules for other Christians, which are not found in scripture, they have become lawgivers.

This is a mark of a legalist. A legalist lays down rules for other people which are not found in scripture. Now to teach the principles that Jesus lived by and to explain to people how that principle applies in a particular situation is a different thing.

But to lay down a law for other people in an area where the Bible doesn't lay down a law but gives us a guideline, you're becoming a lawgiver. There are many, many areas and lawgivers also judge other people when the other people don't keep the laws which they have made. Are you a lawgiver? Then you're taking the throne of God.

You're sitting like God on his throne. We have no right to make laws for other people except what is written in scripture. And if somebody does not obey that law, we have no right to judge.

God is his judge. Unless God has appointed us as a sub-judge, as it were, in a sphere where God has given us responsibility, like a father over his children, like an elder over his local church, and like an

employer over his employees. In that sphere, outside of that, we're not called a judge.

It's so important. Now if a man hears all these things and does not do them, he is building his house on sand. One day the flood will come and everything will collapse.

Now both houses may look alike and on the surface, the superstructure may look alike, but the wise man is a man who has paid a price which is invisible. The most important part of a house is its foundation. You're teaching us that the most important part of your life is that part which other people cannot see.

Every house has got two parts. What can be seen above the surface of the ground, what cannot be seen. And the most important part is what is beneath the ground.

So in all these areas which we were just considering about the Sermon on the Mount, if you hear these words and you don't do them, you're like a person who's got no foundation underneath. In your inner life, you're not obeying these things that are written here, but your superstructure looks okay because you're serving God, you're going to church, you're singing in the church meetings and doing many things that Christians do and you look like a Christian in all your activities. But one day God is going to test not the superstructure but the foundation.

What did the flood come and test? The flood didn't come and test what material the superstructure was made of or how attractive the superstructure was. The point of this is the flood came and tested the foundation. And you'll find in the final day when Christ comes again that what is going to be tested is not what other people thought about our life, the outward part of our Christian life, but that part which nobody could see like we read in 1 Corinthians 4, 5 which we considered earlier.

The hidden part, the part under the ground, the foundation which nobody knew. Perhaps your wife or your husband even don't know what your inner life is like. So the Sermon on the Mount concludes with the foundation is more important than the superstructure and you must be willing to pay a price to go through the sand to dynamite and blast the rock.

The man who's not willing to pay a price for his inner hidden life is a foolish man. Many people don't want to pay a price to walk that inner walk with God. They are foolish.

When Jesus finished these statements it says here, the multitudes were amazed at his teaching because he was teaching them as one having authority. You know the great need today in the pulpits and Christendom is for spiritual authority. Jesus had lived what he had preached and one paraphrase says it was obvious that he was living every word that he was preaching.

That is how we get spiritual authority. When we have preachers who live every word that they are preaching, they have spiritual authority. That's the type of authority we need in our pulpits and that is sadly lacking because people want to have a cheap easy way to minister God's Word.

Go and study in some Bible school, get a degree and preach. It costs far more than that. In our hidden life we have to pay a price of yielding our will at every one of these points that Jesus brings out in the Sermon on the Mount and to obey them.

But if we do that, great will be our reward and great will be the long-term permanent eternal results of our ministry. May it be so in all of our lives. Amen.

Let us pray. As we conclude this study, Heavenly Father, we pray that we shall take your Word seriously. Lord Jesus, help us not only to hear your Word, not only to be excited about it, not only to say to you, Lord, Lord, but to do, to yield our will, to deny our self-will and to do your will every single day of our lives till we see you face to face so that one day we can hear from you those wonderful words.

Well done, good and faithful servant. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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