

All That Jesus Taught Bible Study - Part 39

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen explores the teachings of Jesus in Matthew 10, emphasizing the importance of context and the principles of ministry in the New Covenant.

Duration: 25:03

Scripture: Matthew 10:1

Topics: "Christian Living", "Holy Spirit"

Description

This sermon delves into Matthew chapter 10, exploring Jesus' commission to his disciples, the principles of ministry, and the enduring truths applicable to believers today. It emphasizes the need for discernment in applying biblical instructions, the importance of trusting God for provision, and the balance between innocence and shrewdness in Christian living. The sermon also addresses persecution, the role of the Holy Spirit in speaking through believers, and the endurance required to remain faithful till the end.

Transcript

Today we continue our study in all that Jesus taught that we've been considering from the Gospel of Matthew. Today we go to Matthew chapter 10. And Jesus having summoned his disciples, twelve disciples, gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.

And the names of the twelve apostles are listed here in verses 2 and 3 and 4. Then it says, These twelve Jesus sent out after instructing them, saying, Do not go in the way of the Gentiles and do not enter into the city of the Samaritans, but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as you go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons.

Freely you receive, freely give. Do not acquire gold or silver or copper for your money belts, or a bag for your journey, or even two tunics or sandals or a staff. For the worker is worthy of his support.

And into whatever city or village you enter, inquire who is worthy in it, and abide there until you go away. And as you enter the house, give it your greeting. And if the house is worthy, let your greeting of peace come upon it.

But if it is not worthy, let your greeting of peace return to you. And whoever does not receive you, or heed your words, as you go to that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet. Truly I say to you, it would be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah, in the day of judgment, than for that city.

Is this the commission that the Lord gave to his apostles temporarily for the period before the new covenant was established? Or is this a commission that's valid for us today? This is a very, very important question to answer. Because a lot of people have gone to this passage and sought to apply it to gospel preaching today. But if you look carefully, you find that those people are being selective.

They pick out some verses and leave out other verses. For example, there are people who say, Jesus said in Matthew 10, verse 9, saying, Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. So shouldn't we do that? But, he also said, don't acquire any gold.

They leave out that. They go around collecting gold. He said, freely you receive, freely give.

They don't give freely, they collect tithes. And, he said, don't take a bag for your journey or two tunics. These preachers have got multitudes of tunics and coats and suits bought at the expense of poor believers.

So, why do they pick out one part? Not only that, Jesus also said, in verse 5, don't go to the Gentiles. He said, only go to the Jews and don't even go to the Samaritans. Go only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

So, whenever you find Christians being selective, picking out a verse and making that the commission for today, you can see there's something wrong. Either take the whole thing or dump the whole thing. Now, here he said that you shouldn't take any sandals or staff or money in verse 9 and 10.

But, when you compare Scripture with Scripture, at the Last Supper, Jesus changed this. And, it's very important to understand that. In Luke 22, at the Last Supper, he said this.

Verse 35, Luke 22, 35. And, Jesus said to his disciples at the Last Supper, when I sent you out without purse, without a bag, without sandals, that's referring to Matthew 10. Did you lack anything? They said, no, nothing.

The Lord provided for our need all along. But, now. It's a very important phrase in verse 36.

But, now. Things are different now. We're coming to the end of the Old Covenant.

Jesus was about going to die the next morning. And, in a few days, the New Covenant would be established when the Holy Spirit would be poured out. And so, he said, but now.

If you have a purse, take it along. And, if you have a bag, take it. And, not only that.

Amazing words. If you have no sword, sell your robe and buy a sword. What does that mean? That means be prepared to defend yourself when you're attacked.

Now, when Peter took that sword, you know, they said, Lord, verse 38, 38, he said, there are two swords here. He said, that's enough. You got two swords, enough.

He was saying that when you go into the Garden of Gethsemane and the Roman soldiers take out their swords to fight against you, if you lift up your hand, your hand will get cut. Lift up a sword and defend yourself so that you can protect your face and your hands. Otherwise, they'll slash your face.

But, he said that as a principle for ministry in this new covenant age also, that we can defend ourselves if we are attacked. When Peter took out that sword and began to attack the Roman soldiers and cut off somebody's ear, then Jesus said, put it back, because he who takes the sword will perish with the sword. But, Peter could have turned to the Lord and said, Lord, you're the one who told us to take a sword.

Yes, but the Lord would have told him, I didn't ask you to bring a sword to attack people. I asked you to bring a sword so that you could defend yourself when others attack you. So, we're not called as Christians to attack others, but we are permitted to defend ourselves if we are attacked.

Now, this is something which many Christians don't understand. They take a verse like in Matthew chapter 5, which says, resist not evil. And verse 39, resist not him who is evil, but if someone slaps you on the right cheek, turn the other cheek, and if someone wants to sue you, take your shirt.

And they don't compare that scripture with this scripture we read in Luke 22, which says, if you don't have a sword, sell your robe and buy a sword. We need to put both scriptures together to understand what Jesus is saying. Our attitude is one where we don't sue people and we don't attack people, but if people do attack us, we defend ourselves.

If people take us to court, then we seek to defend ourselves in court. But we don't desire any evil for others. So, you see, Jesus modified the instructions he gave in Matthew chapter 10, because that was only for the period when they were going to the nation of Israel.

Now, after the new covenant is established, he was going to send them into all the world and into a lot of non-Christian nations and they needed to proclaim there, not what he said here in Matthew 10, that the kingdom of heaven is at hand. He told them what to preach in Matthew 10, verse 7. The kingdom of heaven is coming. But that's not the message we are preaching.

We are preaching the kingdom of heaven has already come on the day of Pentecost. We can have a heavenly life now. Christ is risen, and he can lift us in our spirit into the heavenlies now.

So that is a big difference. So don't go to Matthew 10 to get your commission for preaching the gospel today. That is not for today.

It was for that particular period. Like some of the other things that Jesus spoke when he was on earth. Go and show yourself to the priest, he told the lepers.

And he said to the Pharisees to pay their tithes. That's all changed after the day of Pentecost. So we need to distinguish between the things that differ.

It is written. Satan quoted a verse of scripture to Jesus. Jesus said it is also written.

We need to understand this principle that the whole truth of God is not found in it is written but in it is written and it is also written. Two passages of scripture relating to one another need to be considered simultaneously if we want to understand the truth. So we must bear that in mind over here.

But there are certain principles here that we can see that the Lord wants us to live trusting him. The laborer is worthy of his support. Verse 10.

That is something which is quoted even in the New Testament by the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians chapter 9. He says the Lord himself has directed that those who preach the gospel 1 Corinthians chapter 9 are to be supported by the gospel. The laborer being worthy of his support in 1 Timothy 5 as well. That those who serve the Lord are entitled to be supported.

Not that they get a salary as much as they can receive gifts from people who want to support them in their work. That principle remains. So it is always by comparing scripture with scripture that we can understand the whole truth.

All that Jesus taught we must compare scripture For example this principle Jesus spoke about going to a house where there is peace and they receive you with peace. If the house is worthy Matthew chapter 10 verse 13. How do you find out if a house is worthy? Again compare scripture with scripture.

In Luke chapter 10 similar instructions he said when you go to a house see verse 6 Luke 10 6 if a man of peace is there if it is a quarrelsome house don't stay there. But if there is a man of peace and there is peace in that house stay there he said in Luke 10 7 and don't keep moving from house to house because you will hardly find many houses like that. You will probably be lucky if you find one in a village.

So that principle remains even today. That Christ seeks for houses where there is peace and the responsibility for that peace is primarily upon the man of the house the husband, the father. This is almost the most important thing that a man should seek to have in his house peace.

No quarreling no fighting no murmuring no grumbling. It's the responsibility of every head of the house to ensure that his house is a house of peace. That is where servants of the Lord should stay.

That's where the Lord himself stays. And people who reject God's word this principle is also true it will be more tolerable in Matthew 10 verse 15 for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city because those who went to Sodom and Gomorrah were not as important as the Lord's servants who go out today. Who went to Sodom and Gomorrah and asked them to repent? Lot was a backslidden person who was living there.

Two angels went there just to rescue. God punished them but today God sends his servants to the gospel and if they are rejected it's a very very serious crime. We move on to Matthew chapter 10 verse 16.

He continues to speak to his disciples certain principles and how we are to go out and these principles remain even though the exact details of not taking money and sandals he changed. He did not change what he says here in Matthew 10 verse 16 I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. That applies even today.

Christians go out into a world which is full of wolves and they go out like sheep. Now sheep are helpless. Sheep is a picture of an innocent helpless person going into the midst of wolves.

What is the reason for that? Why does God send his servants out like that? So that they will depend upon him. Why did Israel have so many enemies surrounding them in the Old Testament period? So that they would not depend on themselves but would depend on God and this is a fundamental principle that we can learn here that God sends us out not as wolves to go to the sheep. When a Christian acts like a wolf

who is trying to get money from others and trying to lord it over the others or goes like a lion you know some preachers are like lions not in the pulpit but in the way they seek to lord it over others.

A sheep doesn't seek to lord it over anyone. He said I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Babylon Babylon in Christianity is full of wolves.

True Christianity a Christian is like a sheep but he is not foolish. Sheep are foolish but he is not. He is shrewd as a serpent.

Look at Matthew 10.16 His character is one like a sheep where he is not seeking to fight with people. Sheep don't fight but he is shrewd as a serpent. He is not a foolish dumb character and at the same time he is as innocent as a dove.

See the pictures the lord uses from the animal kingdom as sheep in the midst of wolves shrewd as serpents but innocent as doves. And he said be careful of men. This is all that Jesus taught.

This is how we must be. We must have the shrewdness there is no virtue in being gullible the shrewdness of a serpent. There are a lot of deceivers in Christendom.

There are a lot of deceptive reports that come about Christian work in every country that are distributed to wealthy countries so that they can collect money from them. We must be shrewd as a serpent. Some of those reports may be true many of them may be false.

We must be shrewd as a serpent in accepting what is true and rejecting what is false. Innocent as doves but beware of men because they will deliver you up into the courts scourge you in their synagogues. The Lord did not promise that we will be protected from persecution.

He warned them right at the beginning you're going to be persecuted and you shall even be brought before governors and kings for my sake as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. Notice now he speaks about the Gentiles. So you see that he's moved out from what he said earlier where he said in verse 5 don't go to the Gentiles.

In verse 16 onwards he's talking about what's going to happen in the new covenant age. You will be brought before governors and kings for my sake as a testimony to the Gentiles. So to the Gentiles when we go out in the midst of the Gentiles to the non-Jewish nations we're going out as sheep in the midst of wolves and we can expect persecution.

Some of God's servants in the old covenant were protected supernaturally. Elijah, Elisha when armies came to catch them God protected them supernaturally. God protected Daniel and his three friends and many others.

But there were many others whom he did not protect. Isaiah for example tradition says he was sawn asunder and Jesus spoke about Zachariah when Zachariah who was killed and so there is much more of that in the new covenant where God's servants almost always throughout new covenant history true servants of God who stood up for the truth never compromised were persecuted brought before kings and governors taken to court falsely accused delivered up and in all those situations he said in verse 19 don't be anxious about what you're going to speak or how you're going to speak because in that hour God will give you the words to speak. Now this is not referring to standing up in the pulpit.

A lot of people misquote scripture by saying when the Lord said don't think about what you're going to speak when you're going to stand in a pulpit and there are a lot of people who don't prepare when they come to share God's word in a pulpit and get up and waste everybody's time. Unfortunately a lot of preachers like that today you should not get up into a pulpit to preach God's word if you have not prepared well and lived before God. The preparation is primarily living before God's face but also becoming familiar with the word which you have to share to the people and when you're young you probably need to do a lot of preparation before you get up to speak.

Don't claim this verse out of its context and say that in that moment when you stand in the pulpit it will be given you what to speak. You'll find nothing is given to you. But as you grow in the Lord and become more and more mature and are able to discern the Lord's voice more clearly then you'll find God speaking to you even as you get up to speak.

But that is 40 years after you've been a believer probably not before that. But here it's speaking about even a new believer who is persecuted and made to stand in a court for the sake of his faith he doesn't have to prepare beforehand what he's going to say when they ask to give him a testimony. At that moment the Holy Spirit will give him the right words to speak.

That's what it's referring to here. Because he says in verse 20 it's not you who's going to be speaking but the Spirit of the Father who will speak in you. You know, just like evil spirits can possess people control them give them strength and even speak through them the Holy Spirit can also dwell in us.

There's one big difference however before in one big difference in the way the Holy Spirit speaks through us and the way evil spirits speak through demon possessed people when an evil spirit possesses a person the person has no control over his tongue. He may want to say something but the spirit evil spirit overrules that and makes him speak words that the man himself or the woman does not know what they're saying and they cannot change it because the evil spirit is speaking. That's why it's called demon possession complete possession.

But when the Holy Spirit comes into a person and controls him he doesn't possess him he fills him. There's a lot of difference between demon possession and spirit filling. Demons don't fill people they possess people and this Holy Spirit doesn't possess people he fills them.

That means he gives them freedom. He's not going to speak through your tongue just like a demon speaks through the tongue of a demon possessed person. He will instruct you in your mind but you use your tongue even speaking in tongues.

Nowhere in the Bible does it say the Holy Spirit spoke in tongues. Acts 2 verse 4 says they the disciples spoke in tongues as the spirit gave them utterance. And that is how any genuine speaking in tongues is.

The believer speaks in tongues usually spoken to God but the believer himself moves his tongue and speaks to God but utterance is given by the Holy Spirit. Fundamentally different from a demon possessing a person where the demon himself speaks. And demons can also make a person speak in tongues because they've got supernatural power.

And there will be a world of difference. In one case the difference is this when a demon speaks through a person whether in a known language or in unknown tongues the person doesn't have any control over himself. But when the Holy Spirit gives utterance to a person to speak in unknown tongues he has

complete control over himself because the fruit of the spirit is self-control.

So when a person says oh I couldn't control myself I just went on and on and on and on and on and on I couldn't stop that must have been a demon because only demons control people's tongues like that. When the Holy Spirit gives utterance and I've experienced speaking in tongues for 38 years I found that it's me who speaks to God. It's I who move my tongue but the spirit gives the utterance.

So we need to understand this fundamental principle when the Lord says it's not you who speak but the spirit who speaks in you. There is a difference between the way the Holy Spirit speaks and demons speak. Demons possess but the Holy Spirit gives utterance and we speak.

That's a fundamental principle in everything. Demons do not allow a person to have freedom. They completely possess and there are so many things like automatic writing and so many things that demons do.

They completely possess the person. That's why demon-possessed people can sometimes be so strong that even if it's a woman you need 3-4 men to hold the person down. They have tremendous strength because demons have come in and taken over.

Whereas the Holy Spirit when he comes and dwells in a person he gives him the power but he expects the person to use that power himself. He gives us instruction in our mind but gives us freedom to obey him or not obey him. It's the same when we speak in a pulpit.

The Holy Spirit can mightily anoint a person but it's the person himself who speaks. He's using his mind but his mind has been renewed by the Holy Spirit. This is the principle by which the Holy Spirit works.

It's so important to understand this in this day when there's so much of deception and people don't understand what is the difference between being filled with the Holy Spirit and being possessed by a demon. So, he also says in relation to persecution that brother will deliver a brother to death verse 21 father his child there'll be enmity within the same family you'll be hated by all people on account of my name but it is the one who endures to the end who'll be saved. Say Lord I want to be faithful to you till the very end.

And he also said there's no virtue in facing persecution and trying to be brave if they persecute you in one city verse 23 flee to the next one but truly I say to you you will not have finished going through the cities of Israel until the Son of Man comes. So here he says that there's no virtue in standing up and facing persecution unnecessary. If it's unavoidable well praise the Lord God will give you grace but if you can avoid persecution avoid it.

Don't force yourself to be a martyr to get some honor or self-satisfaction whenever they persecute you in one city flee to another. Please remember that these simple principles concerning our speaking our witnessing for the Lord and how we face up to persecution and to face the reality that people will hate us when we stand up for the true faith. The true Christian is not going to be a popular person.

God bless you and we continue our study in the next episode.

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