

# All That Jesus Taught Bible Study - Part 43

by Zac Poonen

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*God's revelation is hidden from the clever and intelligent, but is revealed to those who come to Him with humility, simple trust, and openness to truth.*

**Duration:** 25:41

**Scripture:** Proverbs 3:5, Isaiah 55:8-9, Matthew 11:25, Matthew 16:17, John 1:18, John 14:9, Romans 8:16, 2 Peter 1:4

**Topics:** "Childlike Faith", "Spiritual Humility"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of humility, simplicity, and trust in understanding spiritual truths and receiving revelation from God. It contrasts the pride of clever and intelligent individuals with the humility of babes, highlighting the need for a childlike faith and openness to God's truth. The message stresses the significance of revelation in salvation, partaking of God's nature, and building a unified church as the body of Christ.

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## Transcript

We continue our study today in all that Jesus taught. We've been going through the Gospels and we are today in Matthew chapter 11 and verse 25. At that time Jesus answered and said, I praise Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, and Thou didst hide these things from the wise and the intelligent, and it's revealed them to babes.

Yes, Father, for thus it was well-pleasing in Thy sight. Here lies a fundamental principle for understanding Scripture that God has hidden His greatest truths from clever and intelligent people. Now in the world you need to be clever and intelligent in order to understand many things and to work in any earthly occupation, but in spiritual matters that is no advantage.

It can be a handicap. I don't think most people realize this. Many people think that if they've got a clever mind, they're intelligent, they can understand the Bible better, but it's exactly the opposite.

The cleverest people in Israel were among the Pharisees and they could not understand Christ. They studied the Old Testament carefully. They read the Scriptures, as it says in Acts 13, every Sabbath, but when the person about whom the entire Old Testament spoke, Jesus the Christ, came into their midst, they thought he was the Prince of devils.

How much wrong a wronger can anyone be than those people who considered the Son of God to be the Prince of devils? I mean, these are two extremes, whereas the Roman centurion of the cross who had never read the Bible in his life, he said, you're the Son of God, and so we see clever intelligent people in Jesus' lifetime missed the truth. When Jesus asked his disciples, who do you say that I am? You read that in Matthew 16. Simon Peter said, you're the Christ, the Son of the living God.

You're the Messiah. We know that. How did he know that? Was he cleverer than the Pharisees who had studied the Scriptures? The Pharisees had studied the Scriptures much more than Peter.

Peter was a fisherman. He was not a scribe or a scholar, but God revealed to him. Jesus said, blessed are you, Simon, son of Jonah, because flesh and blood, your human cleverness and intelligence did not reveal this to you, but my Father in heaven.

There's a great word in the New Testament called revelation. You don't find it so much in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament, the important thing was understanding, because if you look at the Old Testament tabernacle, which had three parts, the outer court visible to everyone, the holy place, most holy place, covered by a tent, corresponding exactly to man, who's supposed to be the tabernacle of God, created to be the tabernacle of God, the outer court symbolizing the body visible to everyone, inside two parts, not one.

One is soul, the other is spirit. 1 Thessalonians 5.23 is very clear. Spirit, soul, and body.

That's what man comprises of. And in that Old Testament tabernacle, there was a thick veil between the soul and the spirit, symbolically, between the holy place and the most holy place, symbolizing that man could not go into God's presence, into the most holy place, and symbolizing also that God could not come and dwell in man's spirit, because between the soul and the spirit, there was this thick veil. And that thick veil is what we call self-will, or the flesh in the New Covenant.

In the New Testament, the word flesh symbolizes self-will. When it says Jesus came in the flesh, he didn't have any sin in him. There was no sin in him at all, but he came with a will of his own, which he had to deny.

He said that in John 6.38, I came from heaven not to do my will. He never did his own will. And so, as far as he was concerned, the door to his spirit was constantly open to the Father, a perfect communication with the Father.

The more self-will you have, the less communication you have with God. And pride is one of those big things that blocks the spirit from being open to God. Jesus had zero pride in him, so we can say the veil was completely open and rent.

The more pride we have, the more we block off God and communication with God in our own lives. Now, why is God against clever and intelligent people? Not because of their cleverness and intelligence. Because we have an example, the opposite of Peter, which is the Apostle Paul.

Paul had a brilliant mind. He was one of the cleverest and most intelligent people in his generation. If he were living today, he would have been a top computer scientist or rocket scientist or, you know, any type of top businessman.

He was such a brilliant mind. But he got revelation just like Peter. It said, it pleased God, he says in Galatians 1, to reveal his son inside me.

What Paul saw on the road to Damascus was not just Jesus on the outside. He got a revelation inside as to who this was. So God is not against cleverness and intelligence, because that's something we are born with.

You did not create your cleverness or intelligence, neither did you acquire it by study. It's something you were born with exactly like the color of your skin and certain other characteristics in you which determine how tall you're going to be or how short you're going to be. These are natural characteristics that are in us.

And some are born with higher intelligence and some are born with less intelligence. So how in the world could God be against someone who he himself created with greater intelligence? He's not. He's not against intelligent people.

Then why does he say, you've hidden these things from the clever and the intelligent? It's because the more one has, please listen to me carefully, the more one has of anything which others don't have, the greater the tendency for pride in him. If everybody around you in your class, say you're a student in a class and everyone else is more intelligent than you, you won't be proud. You'll be pretty humble.

But you go to another school where everybody in your class is less intelligent than you, you'll be proud. See, pride comes by comparison and humility comes by comparison too. So when a person is very clever and intelligent and he compares himself with most of the people around him, he tends to be proud.

And it's that pride that hinders him from getting revelation. In another place, Jesus said how difficult it is for a rich person to enter God's kingdom. I mean, some people have inherited wealth.

They didn't go after money. Maybe their father was a rich man. They've inherited it and they are rich.

Maybe millionaires born into millions, what can they do? Is God against them because they were born into a million rupee inheritance? No. But the more a person has a wealth, he tends to look down on people who are poorer. So when it speaks about riches, it could be riches of intelligence, it could be riches of money, it could be riches of beauty, personality, attractiveness, gift or whatever it is, anything that makes us rich compared to others who are poorer than us in gift or appearance or beauty or anything.

If it makes us proud, it's impossible to enter God's kingdom. It's the same principle here. That's why God hides things from certain people.

But, and you see the truth of that in the rest of the statement, you have revealed them. Notice that word revelation. Revelation is a word used in the New Testament to mean God showing something to us which cannot be understood by mere academic study.

You can read the Bible and become a scholar. You can get a PhD in biblical studies just like somebody else gets a PhD in chemistry or physics. It's just academic study of chemistry or physics.

I remember in my younger days, I used to see a lot of Christian and Christian workers reading their Bible on their knees and spending hours studying the Bible. And I thought they'd be very holy people, but I would watch them during the day and they'd get angry and upset and they loved money and there was every evidence of carnality and everything in their lives, competition, jealousy, name it. And I was

confused because I was in my 20s and I said, Lord, what is this? How is it people who spend so much time with your word behave like this the same day? And the Lord spoke to my heart something that really opened my eyes.

The Lord said, even though they're on their knees, they're reading a book. It could be a chemistry book. It could be the newspaper.

It could be the Bible. They're not getting in touch with me any more than they don't get in touch with me if they read the newspaper. So I discovered that just because you read the Bible on your knees or you read it for one hour doesn't mean you contact God.

If you contacted God, your life would be changed. I have experienced times when I've spent 15 minutes listening to a really godly man and the effect of it is sometimes lasted for years. 15 minutes with a godly man changed the direction of my life sometimes.

Can you imagine how much, can you imagine what will happen if you spend 15 minutes with God himself? Here are people spending half an hour reading the Bible and their lives are not changed. They are not spending time with God. They are using their cleverness and intelligence to read the Bible.

Perhaps you're reading the Bible like that and you've got a lot of information but you still fight and quarrel at home. You criticize. You backbite.

You're jealous. You're in competition with others. You haven't got revelation.

You've got a lot of understanding. But the Bible says in Proverbs 3, 5, don't lean upon your understanding. It'll lead you astray.

Trust in the Lord. What we need is revelation and here in Matthew 11, 25 the Lord says to whom he gives revelation. All that Jesus taught.

Here's what Jesus taught. That with your cleverness and intelligence you cannot get revelation. What you need is the characteristic that babes have.

Matthew 11, 25. The father reveals his truth to babes. Now what do babes have which clever and intelligent people don't have? Well is there any book for example that only babes can understand which clever and intelligent people cannot understand? Can you think of any book on any subject which only babes can understand? Only little children can understand.

Clever and intelligent people won't understand it. There's only one book like that in the whole world and that's the Bible. Every other book in the world, if a babe can understand it, any clever person can understand it too.

But the Bible can only be understood by those who have this one characteristic of babes that Jesus emphasized. In Matthew 18 he picked up a child and said, humble yourself like this little child if you want to enter the kingdom of heaven. It's humility that's the primary characteristic of a babe.

And there are other characteristics too. Simple trust. The child simply trusts his mother or father.

Whatever the mother and father teaches it, it believes because it trusts. And even if it's given wrong information, it believes it. It's simple trust.

Now we can't trust men, human beings like that, but we can certainly trust God because he'll never give us wrong information. But it's that simple trustful attitude. Another characteristic of a child is it's constantly open to understand truth that it doesn't know.

It doesn't think it knows it all. As people grow up, they think they know it all. And there are many Christians I've met who think they know it all.

They won't get any more revelation. They can read the Bible and not get revelation. I've been reading the Bible for 53 years and I find I still get revelation on it when I read it now.

Because I say, Lord, there's a lot of truth here which I still don't know. Come to Scripture like a babe with a recognition there's a lot of things you don't know. That's how a little child learns.

Come to the Scripture with humility and come to the Scripture with simple trust in God and openness. Father, it was well pleasing in thy sight, verse 26, to do it like that. See, the reason is God gives grace to the humble.

God is a humble person. How do I know? Because he says in John 1, 18, Jesus explained the Father. That means he also said in John 14, if you have seen me, he said, you've seen the Father.

You don't need to see the Father. If you want to know what the Father is like, just look at my life. And I look at Jesus' life and what is the thing that strikes me the most? Humility.

Tremendous humility to wash the dirty feet of those poor fishermen. The Son of God doing that. And he said, if you've seen me, you've seen the Father.

He said those words immediately after washing their feet. He washed their feet in John 13 and he said those words in John 14. If you've seen me, you've seen the Father.

Have you seen me washing your feet just now? That's what the Father is like. When you see God the Father one day in heaven, you'll see he's a very humble person. He's not arrogant, dictatorial like so many Christian leaders are.

No. They give a false picture of Christ and of God. So God is himself of that nature of humility and he fellowships with people who have that nature.

And when he gives us his nature, 2 Peter 1.4 says, we can partake of the divine nature. How do you know that you've partaken of the divine nature? Well, it'll make you tremendously humble. If it has not, if your Christianity has not made you humble, I want to tell you, you've not partaken of God's nature.

You've still got the old Adamic nature of arrogance and pride and looking down on others. That's a characteristic of Adam. Most Christians that I have met, most so-called born-again Christians, don't know the slightest little thing of partaking of God's nature.

I've seen a lot of others who don't have so much understanding of Christianity, who don't claim to be filled with the Spirit and speak in tongues and all that, but who got humility. They're partaking of God's nature. That's more important than all the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

And so we see here, this is the way to get revelation. And revelation is the most important thing in the New Testament. It is through revelation that we get salvation, true salvation.

It's through revelation that we partake of God's nature. And it's through revelation that we build a church, the body of Christ. Very often we find churches that are congregations and not a functioning body.

The reason is they don't have revelation. Remember what Jesus said in Matthew 16, when he told Peter, blessed are you, because flesh and blood is not revealed to you, but my Father in heaven. He went on to say, after speaking of this revelation on Christ, Matthew 16, 18, on this rock, which rock? This revelation that you have got of Jesus as the Christ, on the revealed Christ, a Christ revealed by the Father, on this rock, I will build my church as the body of Christ.

Why is it we have churches where people fight and quarrel with each other? Your two hands have never fought with each other in all your life because they're members of one body. When we recognize ourselves as members of one body, we don't fight with each other. As long as we are on this earth, we may not always agree with each other, but we love one another.

We may not be able to work together with all believers for various reasons, but we love one another. Every part of this body loves the other part of the body. And if you cannot love fellow Christians who disagree with you, I wonder whether you're partaken of God's nature at all.

I would even question whether you're born again. By this we know that we are the children of God, John says, that we love our fellow believers. And so we see here, this is the result of revelation.

Revelation produces everything in the new covenant. There was no need for revelation in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament, only the prophets had revelation.

If you wanted to know God's will, you go to a prophet. Today the Holy Spirit dwells in all believers. You don't have to go to any prophet.

You can know it all yourself through the Holy Spirit, if you've got humility. We go to the next verse, verse 27. All things have been handed over, Matthew 11, 27.

All things have been handed over to me by my Father. The Father has given everything into the hands of Christ, the entire universe and all authority and everything else. He said that before he went up to heaven as well.

All authority in heaven and earth is given to me. He didn't say, I have it given to me. There's a humility in Christ, always in saying, it's been given to me, it's given to me, it's given to me.

So different from the attitude of many Christians and Christian preachers who act as though I have this, or I acquired this through a lot of study, or I acquired this through a lot of fasting and prayer. And all the stupid, foolish things that Christians and Christian preachers boast about that they think they got through many years of fasting and prayer, etc, etc. Jesus never said that.

He never said, I got all that I got through. Many times I fasted and prayed when I was in Nazareth. There was none of this empty boasting in Christ.

Everything he did was in secret before the Father. And he gave the glory to God by saying, I've got this. All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me.

And all things have been handed over to be by my Father. It's so wonderful to see this, dear brothers and sisters. If you can see it and be gripped by it, it'll change your life.

It'll make you a deeply humble person, constantly grateful to God for everything that you have, even for physical health. Constantly thankful for everything you have. We need more Christians like that in India, who are thankful, humble, grateful.

All things have been handed over to me by my Father. And listen to this. It says in verse 27, no one knows the Son except the Father.

Do you think you know Jesus Christ? If you really know the real Christ, that must have come through the revelation of the Father. I don't mean the external Christ. External Christ, a lot of Hindus and Muslims also talk about.

Even in the Quran, they talk about Jesus, who was born of Mary, and of the miracles he did, etc. And the Hindus, many Hindus, respect Christ, Jesus Christ. I don't mean knowing Christ in that way.

A lot of Christians know Christ only in that way, the external Christ. They haven't got revelation like Peter got, as this is God Almighty, who became a man, so that I can become a son of God. This is the one whose nature I can partake of.

They haven't got, they don't know Jesus that way. No one knows the Son except the Father. But the Father revealed the Son to Peter.

We saw that in Matthew 16. And what he did for Peter, he can do for you and me. Reveal the Christ to us.

And that's what we need. And further he says, no one knows the Father except the Son. It's the other way too.

And anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal him. A lot of Christians do not know the Father. They say God is our Father.

But I'll tell you how you can know whether you really know God as your Father. Do you get anxious about something? Do you get into a panic in different situations? I want to tell you, you don't know the Father. When you have a problem, do you turn to God first? Or do you turn to man? If you turn to man, you don't know the Father.

These are the practical ways in which we know whether we know the Father or not. I mean, for example, if your father was the Prime Minister of India, your own father, and you had a serious problem, some problem with the government or with the town or society or something, who would you go to first? Would you go to the local inspector of police? Or would you ring up your dad, the Prime Minister of India? You know that. You wouldn't go to some junior person.

You wouldn't even go to the Director General of Police, who's a junior person compared to the Prime Minister of India. You would say, hey, why do I need to go to the Director General of Police? My dad's the Prime Minister. I want to ask you, do you believe Almighty God is greater than all the rulers of Earth and all the greatest dignitaries and powerful men in society? Is he really your dad? Is he really your dad? Do you know him as dad? The Bible says in Romans 8 that the spirit within us cries out saying, Abba.

Romans 8 16. Abba is a translation of it into English would be daddy. That the Holy Spirit, when he comes within us, cries out looking up to God saying, Daddy, you've become my father.

You've become my dad. Not with the formal title of father, but daddy, that intimate title, Abba. And that is the person who knows the father.

And the test is in the different circumstances of life. We can pray our father who art in heaven. I prayed that for years before I knew God as my father.

I accepted Christ when I was 19 and a half. But I would say for 16 or 17 years after that, I really did not know God in a personal way as my dad, whom I could go at any time with any need, any need. If I was sick, I could go to him and ask him to heal me.

If I had a financial need, I could go to him. Any problem, if people were troubling me, I didn't have to hate them. I didn't have to go here and there.

I'd go to my dad. Because he's the most powerful person in the universe. When you see Christians begging, Christian preachers begging others for money, isn't that an insult to their heavenly dad? Supposing your father was the richest person in the universe, would you go to some man for money? Never.

These are some tests by which we know whether the father has been revealed to us. Let's go to the Lord and say, Lord, reveal the father to me. We'll continue our study in the next episode.

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