

All That Jesus Taught Bible Study - Part 52

by Zac Poonen

Jesus' life teaches us the importance of recognizing our weakness and helplessness, praying to overcome temptation, obeying God's commands, and having faith in Him to overcome the law of sin and death.

Duration: 24:49

Scripture: Matthew 14:23-28, Luke 5:16, Hebrews 4:15-16, Hebrews 5:7, Hebrews 12:1-2

Topics: "Following Jesus", "Faith And Doubt"

Description

This sermon delves into the teachings of Jesus, emphasizing the importance of following every aspect of His commands. It explores the humility of Jesus despite performing miracles, the significance of getting alone with God after being used by Him, and the lessons learned from Jesus walking on water, encouraging believers to focus on Christ amidst life's storms and to cry out to Him when sinking in doubt or failure.

Transcript

We've been thinking together in these past many weeks and months about all that Jesus taught based on the last verse of the Gospel of Matthew going to all nations and teach them to do every single thing that I commanded which I often call the most neglected part of the Great Commission to teach Christians every single thing that Jesus taught. This is the burden of our series studies. So we reached Matthew chapter 14 and verse 22 now.

Immediately after feeding the multitude it says he made his disciples to get into the boat and go ahead of him to the other side while he sent the multitudes away and after he had sent the multitudes away he went up to the mountain by himself to pray. This is something that Jesus often did. After he had done some tremendous miracle like healing many sick people or feeding 5,000 with five loaves and two fish he would go alone to get alone with the Father.

Do you think Jesus was tempted to be proud? Well, all you got to do is read Hebrews 4 15 and you'll know the answer. He was tempted in all things exactly as we are. Supposing you had fed 5,000 people with five loaves and two fish, would you be tempted to be proud? If you had healed hundreds of sick people miraculously, would you be tempted to be proud? You know the answer.

We would be. Jesus was tempted, but he never became proud for a single moment. But it was not automatic.

Holiness was not handed over to Jesus on a platter. What do we learn from Jesus' life? What does he teach us from his life? That after God has used you, get alone with God and give him the glory and acknowledge that it was through his power that it was done. Remember Christ lived on earth as a man.

That's why he could say to us, follow me. If he lived on earth as God, he would never need to pray. He would never be tempted because God is never tempted and he could never say to us, follow me.

An angel flying with wings across a river could never ask us to follow him. And if Christ had come to earth as God, he could never say the words, follow me. We could boldly say to him, Lord, we cannot follow you.

Don't tease us. You have powers that we don't have. He could say to all his disciples and to us today, follow me.

In his life, we don't have the same ministry he has. For that matter, you and I don't have the same ministry. Even on earth, as human beings, we all don't have the same ministry.

You can't do what I do and I can't do what you do. We have different functions in the body. The hand cannot do what the liver does and the legs can't do what the kidneys do.

We have different functions in the body and the body of Christ also. We all have different functions. So when it comes to ministry, we can't do what Christ did and you can't do what for that matter what I'm doing and I can't do for that matter what you're doing.

Ministry is different. But I can follow your example if you're following Christ and you can follow my example if I'm following Christ. And in Christ's life, in the way he lived, by the principles by which he lived, there I can follow him.

We read in Luke chapter 5 and verse 15, the news about Jesus was spreading further. And great multitudes were gathering to hear him, to be healed of their sicknesses. And thousands are being healed.

Literally healed. Not this fake type of healing that you see in healing campaigns today, where some guy's invisible backache is healed or little hearing problems improved ten percent. Not these type of fake healings, but our psychosomatic healings, where changed mental attitude brings healing.

These were absolutely supernatural healings. People born blind, lame blind, born lame, were being raised up and healed completely. Hundreds and thousands.

Immediate. It was not a gradual sort of thing that took place over a period of months. Immediate, instantaneous, miraculous healing of hundreds and thousands.

Was Jesus tempted to be proud? Sure. But he never became proud. Not for a fraction of a second did he have an atom of pride in him.

He because, Luke 5 16 says, he would often slip away into the wilderness to pray. That's what I learned from Jesus' life. That's what he teaches me.

That when we are used by God in some wonderful way, I need to slip away into the wilderness to pray. I like that word slip away. Slip away means, you know, while a number of people are talking together, say 10 or 12 people talking together and involved in the conversation, all of a sudden they look around and say, hey, where's Jesus? He left us.

When did he leave us? We don't even know when he left us. That's the meaning of slip away. It's not getting up and saying, hey fellas, I'm going for a time of prayer, excuse me.

It wasn't like that. No, there was no announcement. He just quietly, while the conversation was going on, he would slip away quietly in such a way they wouldn't even know that he's gone.

That's the way to go, get alone with God and pray, not to make big announcements and to speak later on about it. During my time of prayer, God spoke to me and all this pompous stuff. Or while I was fasting for three weeks, the Lord said this to me.

All this type of garbage, complete disobedience to what Jesus says in Matthew chapter 6, that when you fast, don't tell anybody about it. When you pray, don't let anyone know that you're praying. I have seen that Christians who fast and pray are the ones who disobey that command the most.

They have a tremendous lust to inform others how long they fasted, that they fasted. They have a tremendous lust to inform others how long they prayed. How do you know these men of God pray for two hours every day like you hear stories? They must have told someone.

I mean, if their family members may know it, if it's spoken by others, it's okay. But if they themselves inform others, they are violating, disobeying Matthew chapter 6. Where he said, when you pray, don't let anybody know about it. When you fast, don't let anyone know about it.

When you give money, don't let anyone know about it. Much disobeyed commands by Christians. So Jesus would slip away and pray, and that's what we see here after feeding the 5,000 in Matthew 14 and verse 23.

He went up to the mountain to pray, and when it was evening, he was there alone. That's why in his entire life, he never sinned. Not even for a moment.

There was not a, or even for a fraction of a second was there pride in him. He was tempted. Thoughts of pride would be flashed into his mind by the devil, I'm sure.

He overcame them, because he'd get alone with his father. Now if he was not like us, he had come here as God, and he would not need to get alone like that in prayer. Prayer is the expression of weakness and helplessness.

It's only a weak person who prays. It's because we think we are so strong that we don't pray so much. It's because we think we're so capable that we don't depend upon God for our service, and that's why our results are so shallow, and that's why we so frequently fall into pride and many other sins.

But Jesus recognized his limitation as a human being. He told his disciples, Watch and pray, said in Gethsemane. Otherwise, you will fall in the time of temptation.

You will definitely fall. But Peter and James and John were self-confident like a lot of Christians today in Garden of Gethsemane, and they said, oh, we're okay. We're praying.

We are not going to fall, and they went to sleep. But Jesus prayed. Because he said, I'm a man.

I'm weak. I need to pray, and the disciples did not recognize their weakness, and they slept. What happened in the moment of temptation? Peter took out his sword and chopped off somebody's ear.

He fell in the moment of temptation. But Jesus did not because he had prayed. He healed the man's ear.

This is the difference, and I want to tell you in Jesus' name. The reason why you fall and fall and fall and fall in temptation is because you have not listened to the words of Jesus saying, watch, be alert, and pray. Otherwise, you will fall into temptation.

Recognize your weakness. Recognize your helplessness. Lean upon God, and especially after God has used you in some wonderful way.

And so after he fed the 5,000, he got alone into the mountain to pray. This is what Jesus has taught us by his life. All that Jesus taught.

Here is what Jesus teaches me by his life, and I need to practice it. And now we read that. Remember, it was Jesus who urged his disciples.

It says in verse 22, it's a very interesting word. In the margin, it says literally the Hebrew, the Greek word means compelled. He compelled his disciples, Matthew 14, 22, to get into the boat and go to the other side.

Just think of it. That means they didn't want to go. They say, no, Lord, we'll stay here.

No, he says, you must go. You must get into the boat and go. They say, no, no, no, Lord, we'll stay here.

No, you have to go. He compelled them, and so finally, reluctantly, they got into the boat and went off. Now, there were two reasons for it.

One, Jesus wanted to be alone. There are times when we need to send everybody away. Even when they don't want to go, you've got to compel them to go and say, listen, I've got to get alone now.

So he didn't tell them why he was sending them away, but there were two reasons. One, he wanted to get alone for prayer. And the second was he wanted to teach them something in the lake.

When they, the boat was already many, some quite a distance from the land, many stadia, that means many hundreds of feet from the land, it was battered by the waves, for the wind was contrary. Now listen to this. What do we learn from this, of Jesus' dealings with us? If they had disobeyed God, if they had disobeyed the Lord, and not got into the boat and gone into the lake, they wouldn't have faced the storm.

They wouldn't have been battered by the waves. It's when they obeyed the Lord that they faced the problems. Don't you see that? He compelled them to go.

Finally they went, and they faced the waves battering their boat and the storm. And verse 24, the wind was contrary. Look at that.

When do we face storms in life, contrary winds and trials? It's when we obey the Lord. If you disobey the Lord, you probably won't face many problems. That's what we learn from this passage.

When we obey, we face storms, the winds battering our life and our home. Disobedient people usually have a comfortable life, at least temporarily. In the long run, they reap what they sow and find judgment and sorrows and problems.

But I'm talking about earthly problems are faced more by wholehearted disciples than by half-hearted ones. Half-hearted ones tell lies, compromise, do wrong things, and have a pretty easy way through life. It's the wholehearted radical ones who face storms, battering waves, and many, many trials in their life.

But they are the fortunate ones because they are the ones who experience the Lord stilling the storm and quieting the waves. They are the ones who experience that, the Lord stilling everything and solving the problem. Now let me ask you, would you rather go through life without problems, as a lot of Christians would like, or would you like to face problems and see Almighty God delivering you from one after the other, and you have a remarkable testimony to give to others? So don't ever pray, Lord, don't give us any problems.

Think of a Sunday school, children were being taught stories like this. Jesus went to a marriage in Cana, and fortunately they had ordered enough food and wine for everybody, they never ran short. Children say, that's a boring story, I don't want to hear that.

But when they say, hey, the wine ran out and Jesus turned the water into wine, wow, look at that. Or a story like this, there were 5,000 men and many women and children who were sitting listening to Jesus, and then they were all hungry, but fortunately everybody had brought their lunch packets, so they opened it and started eating. That's boring, but that Jesus took 5 loaves and 2 fish from one little boy and fed the 5,000, that's an interesting story.

So it's when we face shortage, trials, difficulties, limitations, that's the time we can experience the mighty power of God. That's what Jesus teaches me through these experiences in the Gospels that are written down for our instruction. And same way here, the wind was contrary, and in the fourth watch of the night, verse 25, Jesus came walking on the sea.

Every miracle is a parable also. We saw a list of parables in Matthew 13. Here is a parable, this miracle is a parable.

Why? Because no human being can walk on the sea. That's impossible. The law of gravity pulls everybody down, they'll drown in the sea.

I mean look at the millions of people who have drowned in the sea, just because gravity pulls them down. It's not like land, nobody drowns on land. In the sea, millions of people have died through the years, pulled down by gravity.

And when Jesus walked on the water, he was saying, I can overcome the law of gravity. The law of gravity is still operating, it's not canceled out in that area. But Jesus could overcome that by the power of God.

And the picture there is, the parable there is, the law of gravity is like the law of sin, which pulls us down all the time. Paul speaks about a law of sin and spiritual death in Romans 7. A law of sin and spiritual death that's operating in every part of the world, and it's always pulling us down like the law of gravity. Every single moment, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, the law of gravity operates upon us, and the law of sin and death operates upon us, upon every human being, Christians included, all the time.

But when Jesus was walking on the water, he was saying, I can overcome that by the power of God. He never sinned. The law of gravity pulled him down, the law of sin and death pulled him down, but he never sinned.

He walked over it. It says in Hebrews 5, 7, that Jesus prayed with loud crying and tears to be saved from that law of sin and death. And he was heard.

The law of death couldn't pull him down. He was heard, because of his godly fear. He overcame the law of sin and death, constantly, all the time, every single moment, and never sinned.

Hebrews 4, 15 says that. Hebrews 4, 16 says, therefore, let us go to the throne of grace and ask God for the same grace. That's the point.

It's not that there we look at Jesus as someone whom we admire. That would be one thing. But Jesus never said, admire me, admire me, admire me.

Never. He always said, follow me, follow me, follow me. We set up our lives as objects for others to admire, but objects for others to follow.

So Jesus never said, admire me. So if you're admiring Jesus, you're not a disciple. You follow.

When you break bread at the Lord's table, you're not admiring Jesus. You're saying, Lord, I want to go the same way. I want to be broken the way you were broken.

I want my life to be poured out. When you drink the cup, you're saying, like you shed your blood, I want my life to be poured out for you. If you're only admiring Jesus, then when the bread comes your way at the time of the Lord's Supper, you must just look at it, admire it, and say, wow, what a lovely bread, and pass it on to the next person without touching it.

Because you don't want to follow Jesus. You just want to admire him. Be honest.

If you're taking part in the bread, then you're saying, I want to follow. And follow means, hey, I can also overcome. And that's the most important part of this miracle.

Because when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were frightened. And they said, hey, this is a ghost. They cried out for fear.

They had fear of ghosts way back there in the first century too. And immediately, Jesus spoke to them saying, take courage. It is I, be not afraid.

What a word. Never be discouraged. Because the Lord says, it's me.

I'm here, don't be afraid. As long as I'm here, you don't have to be afraid. And Peter said, bold Peter, Lord, if this is you, command me to come to you on the water.

Now I want to apply this spiritually. Bold Christians look up to Jesus and say, Lord, if you lived on earth as a man, and you had only the resources that other human beings, other Christians have today, the power of the Holy Spirit, then bid me also to step out and overcome the law of sin and death like you did. If you can do it, I can do it.

That's the boldness of faith. And Peter was the one who said it. The others said, oh, we're not so sure.

We better stay in the comfort of this boat because the law of sin and death will take over and we'll drown. The law of gravity will take over. But Peter said, if you can do it, Lord, I can do it.

Come, tell me to come. And the Lord said, come. I want to say to you, my dear brothers, if you could hear that word.

Some of you who are defeated by sin, the law of sin and death is pulling you down every single day. And you're falling, falling, falling, getting discouraged and downcast. The Lord is saying to you, come.

Come and overcome the law of sin and death by looking at me. Looking at my example, I will give you the same power to overcome. And Peter stepped out.

I don't know how many others in the boat called him a heretic for trying to believe that he could overcome the law of sin and death. It certainly happens today that if anyone preaches that sin shall not have dominion over you because you're under grace, grace is more powerful than the law of sin and death, Romans 6.14. They call you a heretic for believing scripture. That's the tragic state of Christendom today.

That if somebody preaches, no, no, no, we can never overcome sin. We just keep on sinning till our dying day. It's not possible for sin to be overcome.

They say, you're a true servant of God. The devil succeeded in turning the truth of God upside down so that the true servants of God are called heretics and the heretics are called true servants of God. Can you imagine what a work the devil has done? And I'm surprised that the thousands of blind and dumb Christians who sit like idiots and believe all this rubbish.

Contrary to God's Word. Like those disciples who'd like the comfort of the boat. Thank God for every man like Peter who steps out and says, Lord, if you can overcome the law of sin and death, so can I. Because you are a man like me and the power of the Holy Spirit worked in you.

The same power of the Holy Spirit you have given to me today. Unlike in the old covenant where they did not have the power of the Holy Spirit. So Peter steps out and lo and behold, here's the greater miracle.

A greater miracle than Jesus walking on the water is Peter walking on the water. Don't you agree? For Jesus to walk on the water is not such a great thing. But for Peter to walk on the water is an amazing thing.

For Jesus to overcome sin is not such a great thing. But for you and I to overcome sin, wow. That's really amazing and that's what the Lord says he'll do for us.

It's not without his power. With his power, of course. And Jesus walked on the water and came to Jesus.

And here's where he made a mistake. As long as we run the race looking unto Jesus, like it says in Hebrews 12, verse 1 and 2, we will endure till the end. Without failing, without sinking.

But the moment we turn our eyes away from the Lord, like Peter, he turned and began to look at the wind and the waves. When we turn our eyes away from Christ and his example and begin to compare ourselves with other people who are drowning in the sea and become proud, I'm not drowning. You begin to drown that very moment through pride.

Or you look around at others and start criticizing them for something or the other. You drown. Or you look around at others and listen to their opinions about you and you get discouraged.

You drown. What's the solution? Don't look at them. Don't listen to them.

Look at Jesus. Let us run the race. And one translation says looking away from everything else unto Jesus.

Looking away from everyone else unto Jesus. Jesus is fixing and focusing our vision on Christ alone who has overcome everything. He's overcome sin, the world, the devil, everything.

The flesh and the world and the devil has all been overcome. And he says to us, follow me. And so we read here that when Peter began to sink, what shall we do if we fail? There's a whole message here for the entire Christian life.

What shall we do if we did turn our eyes away from the Lord in stupidity? And we begin to sink. We begin to fail. Is all hope gone? Do we have to drown? No.

You've got to cry out saying, Lord save me. And immediately Jesus stretched, I like that word, immediately. That's the word I love in verse 31, Matthew 14, 31.

Immediately Jesus stretched out his hand and said, oh you have little faith. Why did you doubt? He held him first. He didn't give him a warning or exhortation first.

He held him and made him stand, then gave him the rebuke. He didn't rebuke him first because if he'd done that, Peter would have sunk to the bottom by then. And the Lord holds us first and then rebukes us.

Isn't that wonderful? That he makes us stand first before correcting us. But the thing I want you to see is, you've got to cry out saying, Lord save me immediately. And it says here when Peter was beginning to sink, not when he hit the bottom of the sea.

Don't wait until you hit the bottom of the sea before you call out. Ask him now while you're beginning, the very beginning of sinking. Call out to him and say, Lord save me.

And immediately you'll find he stretches out his hand to help you. We'll continue our study in the next episode.

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