

All That Jesus Taught Bible Study - Part 54

by Zac Poonen

Jesus teaches that spiritual mindedness is essential for living a life that pleases God, and that persistence in prayer, humility, and faith are key to receiving God's blessings.

Duration: 25:58

Scripture: Matthew 15:11, Matthew 15:18

Topics: "Spiritual Purity", "Faith And Prayer"

Description

This sermon delves into the teachings of Jesus from Matthew chapter 15, emphasizing the importance of what comes out of our hearts rather than what goes into our bodies. It highlights the need to be more concerned about spiritual defilement than physical sickness, urging believers to be vigilant about what they allow into their hearts through media and entertainment. The sermon also explores the powerful lessons from the encounter of Jesus with a Canaanite woman, showcasing persistence, humility, and faith in prayer. Additionally, it reflects on Jesus' compassion for the multitude, demonstrating his care for their physical needs and the significance of giving thanks.

Transcript

We continue our study now on all that Jesus taught by his life and by his words. We were looking at Matthew chapter 15 and verse 11, where Jesus said that it's not what enters into the mouth that defiles a man, but what proceeds out of the mouth. And Peter couldn't understand that.

He said, what does this parable mean? That only what comes out of the mouth defiles the person. And he explained to them in verse 16 saying, are you still lacking in understanding also? Jesus is always speaking strong words. Why can't you understand that? It's so simple.

Don't you understand that everything that goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and is eliminated. You know, if there's something defiling there, it just sort of gets pushed out. But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart and these defile the man.

For out of the heart comes evil thoughts and murders and adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders. These are the things which defile the man. But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the man.

I mean, it's good to wash your hands so that you don't get sick. But that's not as serious as our heart being defiled by impurity. There's a little principle here that we need to ask ourselves whether we have understood.

We're all very careful to ensure that germs don't get into our body. That's why we wash our hands. That's why we wash the plates that we eat in.

You don't use yesterday's unwashed plates to put your food in today. You wash the cups and plates and vessels. You don't allow food to remain there for days and then keep that vessel unwashed.

You'll get sick. We're so careful to cleanse and wash plates every single day. And our spoons and things, vessels, the utensils that we use, we're so careful.

Why? Because we know that through that, little, little teeny-weeny germs can get inside us and make us sick. And what the Lord is saying is, if I were to paraphrase his words, if you are so careful about washing plates and utensils and to make sure that defiling things don't go into your body, which will never ruin you spiritually, why aren't you careful about the things that get into your heart that defile you spiritually? So the question here is, are you more afraid of sickness that comes through bad food than about sin that comes through reading things and seeing things that are not good, movies, on the Internet, pictures and other things that defile you. Are you more disturbed by that? Are you very careful about food, but you're careless about something far more serious? And here is where our Christianity is tested.

If you're really a spiritually minded person, this is one good test to find out whether you're deceiving yourself or whether you're really spiritual. If you're really spiritual, you would be more afraid of sin than of sickness. You'd be more afraid of sin that defiles your heart than sickness that comes through something you ate, something that went into your stomach and was a bug that caused you sickness.

Maybe you got typhoid or jaundice, hepatitis because of something you drank or ate. Are you careful about that, concerned about that immediately when you get it to seek to cleanse yourself and to avoid it? Look at the number of injections people take in order to avoid these sicknesses. But you're not careful about the things that go through your eyes into your heart, things that you read and see which defile you.

You know, there are movies which they put five or ten seconds of a sex scene sometimes just to stimulate people. And people say, well, most of the two hours is okay, it's just five or ten seconds. It's like saying the glass of milk is perfectly okay, it's just a couple of drops of poison in it, that's all.

You know, when people want to poison somebody, they don't give them a whole glass of poison. They put one drop of poison in a glass of milk, that's enough to kill somebody if it's a strong enough poison. And sexual scenes are pretty strong poison, I'll tell you that.

And to say that only five seconds of it in a two-hour movie, that's the five seconds that you will remember for the next 50 years. When you've forgotten the story of the movie, it's that five seconds that remains in your memory, because that's the thing that appeals to your lusts. And that's why we've got to be careful about what goes into our heart, more than what goes into our mouth.

Because once it comes into the heart, from that heart will come out that which defiles our whole system. So that's the thing that we need to bear in mind. This is what Jesus taught.

Be careful of your heart more than your stomach. That's basically the thing. Be more afraid of sin than of sickness.

If you're more afraid of sickness than of sin, you're not really spiritual. You're just a carnal Christian. And you've probably never heard anybody say that, but that is the truth.

The mark of a spiritual man, one mark anyway, is that he hates sin more than he is afraid of sickness. And it's good to be careful about sickness. We want to remain healthy.

I'll tell you honestly, I'm far more interested in being holy than in being healthy. I mean, if there's a flu around town, it's possible that if we are careless, we can pick it up. If we are weak and our immune system is not so strong, we can pick it up.

That doesn't mean you're unspiritual. But there's defilement worse than the flu all around us in the world, particularly in the entertainment world, what comes over television and all that. And if you're not worried about that, if you're more worried about a flu or a chickenpox going around town than about the defilement that's constantly coming in the air through TVs and movies and CDs of music and etc., things like that, if you're not concerned about it, I wonder whether you're even born again.

A born-again person is very sensitive to these things. You see, it's only a person who's dead who is not disturbed by corruption around him. When we are spiritually healthy, you immediately react.

Think if some bad food were put into your mouth. You know, spoiled food that's been rotten for the last three or four days. As soon as it touches your tongue, you immediately feel the taste.

Hey, this is bad food. What do you do? You don't swallow it. You don't taste it for a few more seconds.

You spit it out immediately. It's an immediate reaction. As soon as bad food comes into your tongue, God has given us a sensitive tongue that it can immediately detect bad food.

And that's why he's given us a sense of taste. We immediately spit it out. That's a protection.

Our sense of taste is a protection for us. In the same way, as soon as anything that's sinful that's going to defile our heart comes, we should spit it out immediately. Do you do that? Then you're a spiritual man.

You read something. You look into a magazine. There's a picture there that tempts you.

Turn the page immediately. That's a spiritual man. It's like spitting out something from your mouth.

If you don't do that, and you're just happy that you go to church and sing songs and praise the Lord and everybody's happy with you, I want to tell you, you're just a Pharisee. You're just fooling yourself that you're a Christian. You're a Pharisee.

And the end of the Pharisees will be your end too. So this is what Jesus taught, and we need to take that very carefully. And then we see in verse 21 something wonderful that we can learn from the actions of Jesus.

As I said, we can learn from his words, and we can learn from his actions too. And Jesus went away from there and withdrew into the district of Tyre and Sidon. Now Tyre and Sidon was outside the borders of Israel.

Jesus hardly ever went outside the borders of Israel. This is one of the only times he went. And it's interesting why he went.

He once said, I'm only called to deal with people in Israel. He says that right here in verse 24. I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

That's it. Why did he go to Tyre and Sidon then when he was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel? That's a very interesting thing, and particularly when you see where he was. I mean, if you compare this to other Gospels, he was by the Lake of Galilee, the Sea of Galilee.

And from there, if you look at a map, Tyre and Sidon is probably about 80 kilometers away by road. And Jesus didn't travel by chariots. There was no other mode of transport available to Christ other than his own two feet.

Can you imagine how long it took for him to walk 80 kilometers? Or even if it was 60 kilometers? It would have taken him a whole day. I mean, if he was continuously walking, it would take 16 or 17 hours. Why did he walk such a big distance? It's a very interesting question.

And there, he beheld a Canaanite woman. Now, the Canaanites were the people whom Israelites were supposed to destroy completely in the Old Testament. All the Canaanites were supposed to be killed.

But you know, Israelites did not kill all the Canaanites. And because they did not kill all of the Canaanites, some of the Canaanites survived. And here's one of them, a Canaanite woman who survived all the way up to Jesus' time, from Joshua's time 1,500 years earlier, her ancestors down to this generation.

And she came out from that region. She had heard about Jesus. And she came to him and said, Have mercy, O Lord, son of David.

He was not an Israelite, but she recognized. And she said, O son of David, my daughter is cruelly demon-possessed. Now, she didn't bring her daughter with her.

Her daughter was in the house, maybe a few kilometers away. She came alone to where Jesus was staying. And he did not answer a word, or maybe on the road.

And his disciples came to him and kept asking him, Send her away, send her away. She's just following after us and shouting after us as we're going down the road. He answered and said to her, I was not sent to you folks.

I was sent only to the sheep of the house of Israel. Now, one would think that Jesus is being a little hard here. But very often when Jesus spoke to people, he was testing them.

Remember this, and when he speaks to you, he's testing you as well. He was testing her. I mean, she did not know that Jesus had walked a whole day, 17 hours, only to help her.

Because we read that immediately after that, verse 29, he departed and went back to the Sea of Galilee. So he walked 80 kilometers up and 80 kilometers back, 160 kilometers or at least 120 kilometers, I don't know the exact distance, to help one person. So how can we say that a person who walks 120 kilometers to help one person, was despising that person.

He was testing that person. And that's why he said, I wasn't sent for you. And she began to bow before him and said, Lord, please help me.

She wouldn't give up. See, this is something which God always appreciates. That when you come to him in prayer, and it looks as if he has not answered your prayer, you persist.

Do you do that when you pray for something? Or do you give up because you prayed once and you didn't get it? That's why you didn't get it, because you gave up. It looked as if the Lord rejected it. The Lord loves those who seek him with all their hearts, because I'll tell you why.

When you continue to seek God, you are thereby expressing your faith in the fact that God is a good God. If you give up and pray once and you don't get it, and you give up, you're thereby saying, well, I don't know whether God's a good God. He doesn't seem to care for me.

But when you persist, you're saying, I'm convinced that God is a good God. That's why Jesus said men ought always to pray and never to faint. Keep on asking, like that widow who went to the judge again and again and again and again and said, give me justice against my enemy.

And the judge finally answered her and Jesus said, how much more your heavenly father will do for you? Or that other man we read of who went to his neighbor's house and kept on banging at the door saying, I want some bread at midnight. In both these parables on prayer, Jesus was emphasizing persistence, persistence. I believe, my dear brothers and sisters, you will discover in the day of judgment when you stand in heaven, that there were so many things, so very many things, that God would have done for you if you had persisted a little more in asking in prayer instead of being lazy about it and asking once and giving up.

If she had asked once and then given up, okay, the Lord has said he's only sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and she goes back to her demon-possessed daughter and says, sorry, my girl, I went to Jesus, but he said he couldn't help us. But this mother wouldn't let go. Thank God she didn't let go.

Are your children suffering today because you gave up on praying for them? You prayed to Jesus for once or twice for them, for some son or daughter who's gone astray and you didn't get the answer immediately, and you gave up. You'd have experienced a miracle in your home. Your daughter and son would have been changed if you had persisted in prayer.

These are the lessons we learn from this example, a woman who persists in prayer for her daughter. What a lot a mother can do for her children. And she said, yes, Lord.

And then Jesus said in, sorry, Jesus said in verse 26, it's not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs. One more insult as it were. It was a test.

Let me see what she says. First of all, let me see whether she's persistent. Number one test.

She passed that test. Now let me see whether she's humble. Two tests.

Are you persistent? Are you humble? And she passed that test too. How wonderful. Both were tests, like examinations.

Tough examinations. But she passed. The Lord said, you're a dog.

I can't give it to you. And she said, yes, Lord. I take that place of a dog.

I'm nothing. I'm nobody. I deserve nothing from you.

But can't the dogs get at least the crumbs that fall from the table? And see how excited Jesus was when he heard that reply. That's what he was waiting for. When he tested her first, he wanted her to pass the test of persistence.

When he tested her the second time, he wanted her to pass the test of humility and faith. Humility and faith are very closely linked together as we have seen again and again and again. And she passed the test.

And she said, Lord, just give me a crumb. I'm not asking for the children's bread. One little crumb is enough to cast the demon out of my daughter.

Physical blessings, material blessings, my brothers and sisters, are the crumbs that fall from the table. We're not dogs. We're sons and daughters of the living God.

We have a right to eat the children's bread. We don't have to sit at the foot of the table like dogs and eating crumbs. The crumbs are material blessings.

Lord, bless me materially. Give me a better house. Give me a better car.

Give me physical healing of my sickness. I want to tell you in Jesus' name, these are the crumbs. And a lot of preachers are preaching the crumbs.

Treating people like dogs and saying, Hey you dogs, here are the crumbs the master is throwing down from the table for the dogs. Is that what you want? Or do you want the children's bread? What is the children's bread? The children's bread is to partake of God's own nature. Second Peter 1.4. The magnificent precious promises that enable us to partake of God's own nature.

And that help us to manifest the life of Christ in our earthly bodies. That is the children's bread. And all the other blessings God gives us are the crumbs that fall from the table.

So when she said that, Jesus said, Oh woman, your faith is great. It's very interesting to see that the only two instances where Jesus ever told anybody your faith is great were both to non-Israelis. Non-Jewish people.

One, a Roman centurion in Matthew 8 and the other a Canaanite woman in Matthew 15. Is it possible today that Christ would say to a non-Christian person your faith in me is great. Some of these Christians who claim to be born again believers they don't have 10% of the faith you have.

Yeah? I've seen non-Christian people who have trusted the Lord for something and found remarkable answers to prayer. And I've seen born again Christian people who trust in themselves and proud that they are born again who don't get 1% of what that other person got who came from some non-Christian faith. So what I want to say is if we come with persistence and faith and humility there's a lot we can get from God which we won't get if we don't come with that persistence or that humility or that faith.

And it says here the daughter was healed at once be it done for you as you wish according to your faith. You get it. How terrible it would have been if she had just gone away and missed that opportunity because Jesus never came back to Tyre and Sidon again.

Sometimes it's just one last opportunity you have to trust God and expect him to do a miracle for you and you can miss it. So those are the lessons we learn from this. All that Jesus taught by his life and by his words as to how we are supposed to live our earthly life today.

Then we read in verse 29 departing from there Jesus went along the Sea of Galilee and having gone up to the mountain he was sitting there great multitudes came to him and bringing with them the lame the crippled the blind the dumb and many others and they laid them down at his feet and he healed them all every single one. There's a number of times we read this happening in the Gospel of Matthew an attestation by God of the Messianic ministry of Jesus Christ. The multitude marveled as they saw the dumb speaking the crippled restored and the lame walking and the blind seeing and they glorified the God of Israel.

That's wonderful how Jesus deflected the glory away from him and made them glorify God for a healing so different from today's preachers who seek to turn all the glory upon themselves when they fulfill a ministry to get people to get up and testify hey how were you when you came to this meeting? Did you have some sickness? And how are you now? And you're healed. And though they say let's praise the Lord the person is actually trying to get glory for himself. Here it says they glorified the God of Israel with these amazing genuine healings of hundreds of people they glorified the God of Israel.

There are many things we can learn from the example of Jesus what he taught us by the way he lived. And now we go to Matthew 15 and verse 32 and Jesus called his disciples and said to them I feel compassion for this multitude because they have been with me now remained with me for three days and had nothing to eat and I do not wish to send them away hungry lest they faint on the way. Look at the consideration that Jesus had these guys have been with me for three days they haven't eaten a thing.

Now they walk back some of them will faint on the way the strong ones may get home but some may faint along the way and I don't want that to happen so he says we got to give them something to eat and he said I don't want them to send them away hungry and the disciples said to him where can we get so many loaves in a desert desolate place to satisfy such a great multitude and Jesus said to them how many loaves do you have? He said seven and a few small fish. This is the second instance of feeding the multitude and he took the seven loaves and the fish and gave thanks. This is Jesus habit always to give thanks before eating.

Father I deserve nothing but you give me food thank you so much. A thanksgiving is the expression of a humble man acknowledging that whatever he got is a gift of God a wonderful habit to develop. He gave thanks and he broke the bread and started giving them to the disciples and the disciples in turn to the multitude and they all ate and were satisfied they picked up what was left over the broken pieces seven large baskets full and those who ate were four thousand besides women and children and again he sent away the multitudes and he got into the boat so here again we see a second instance where Jesus fed the multitude he was always concerned but the other thing that struck me here was have you ever seen anyone spending three days at a conference without eating they were not thirsty they probably drank something but they were hungry but they never complained and this is not a small number there were four thousand men plus women and children verse 38 means probably seven eight thousand people there and they were with Jesus for three days listening to him morning noon evening sleeping on the hillside in the evening children too waking up next morning another day of that sleeping there waking up next day another day of that three day conference morning till night and no food boy we'll have a revival if we have conferences like that where food is not the main thing but we're so eager to hear the word of God we'll

close there and continue our study in our next episode

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