

# All That Jesus Taught Bible Study - Part 60

by Zac Poonen

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*Zac Poonen emphasizes the critical importance of forgiveness, God's design for marriage, and the value of children in the kingdom of heaven while addressing misconceptions about salvation and divorce.*

**Duration:** 25:43

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:15, Matthew 18:35, Matthew 19:6, Matthew 19:23

**Topics:** "Forgiveness", "Divorce"

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## Description

This sermon delves into the importance of forgiveness as a key principle in Christianity, emphasizing that without forgiving others, God will not forgive us. It addresses the misconception of once saved, always saved doctrine and highlights the significance of genuine forgiveness in securing God's forgiveness. The teaching also explores the topic of divorce, revealing God's original plan for marriage and the seriousness of divorce in God's eyes. Additionally, it touches on the attitude towards children and the challenge of wealth hindering one's entrance into God's kingdom.

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## Transcript

Once again we continue our study in all that Jesus taught, looking at the gospel of Matthew, seeking to obey the last verse of that gospel, to teach all nations of all that Jesus commanded. We've come to Matthew chapter 19 and verse 1. In our last study we were looking at the unmerciful slave who would not forgive a fellow slave when he had been forgiven so much. It's a very important principle to recognize that if you don't forgive others, God will not forgive you.

So shall my heavenly Father do to you, Matthew 18 35. If you don't forgive a brother from the heart, even in the Lord's Prayer, what is commonly known as the Lord's Prayer, Matthew 6, Jesus said at the end of it, if you do not forgive men their sins, not only brothers, your men, Matthew 6 15, your father will not forgive your transgression. Your father means he's already your father, he's born again, but he will not forgive your sins even though he's your father because you didn't forgive somebody else.

Now what happens if you die in that state, where you had become a child of God and at some time in your life you didn't forgive somebody and you keep that unforgiving attitude and that bitterness and you die in that state. But personally if you ask me, I have absolutely no doubt where you will go. You'll go to hell because there's no chance after death for God to forgive you.

The only place where God can forgive somebody is here on this earth. But you say what if that person has lived 40 years in faithfulness to the Lord and then didn't forgive somebody. Ah, then you probably believe the all the religions in the world that God weighs all the good deeds versus the bad deeds and says, oh well, he's done so many good things for 40 years, but he didn't forgive somebody, so we'll ignore that.

Is that the religion you believe? That's not Christianity. No, we're not saved on the basis of good deeds versus bad deeds. It doesn't matter if you live a hundred years in faithfulness.

The word of God is still true. Jesus said, if you do not forgive men, your father will not forgive your transgressions. And I'll tell you this, if in the final day God forgives those who did not forgive others, well, I would say he'll turn out to be a liar.

That means Jesus was a liar when he said that your father would not forgive them. Then he finally ends up forgiving them. No, dear brothers and sisters, don't take a chance.

Believe God's word. Heaven and earth will pass away, Jesus said, but my word will not pass away. Matthew 6 15 is true.

If you, who have a heavenly father, who just prayed our father who art in heaven, you don't forgive men, your father will not forgive your transgressions. There are lots of believers who are living under the delusion that just because they asked Christ to come into their life once, they're just going to go to heaven. It's guaranteed.

It doesn't matter how they live. It doesn't matter how many people they don't forgive. I want to tell you in Jesus name, that is the greatest delusion that is being preached in Christendom today.

There are more people who go to hell because of this once saved, always saved doctrine than perhaps any other doctrine under the sun. And they live in sin, they don't forgive others, and they think we're going to go to heaven. Where do you get that in scripture? If you do not forgive men, your heavenly father will not forgive you.

Please keep that in mind and let the word come in the day of judgment to remind you that somebody warned you about it before you got there. Now is the time to set matters right. And forgiveness is such an easy thing.

You don't even have to go to that meet that person. You may never meet that person in all your life. From your heart, forgive him.

That's it. It's an act of a moment. You can do it on a deathbed, but don't wait till your deathbed.

Do it now. Matthew 19 verse 1. And it came about that when Jesus had finished these words, he departed from Galilee and came to the region of Judea. And great multitudes followed him and he healed them there.

Another example of healing, as far as we know, everybody. Some Pharisees came to him, again testing him. You're going to notice the number of times these Pharisees are out to catch him, catch him, catch him, just like I have seen in my life so many people who try to come after me in the same way.

Testing, provoking, trying to find out, asking questions. Only exactly like the Pharisees to catch Jesus in some word and then to quote that and then to tear a person's reputation. Well, the Pharisees are around

today.

The generation of vipers are still alive. And you may find them attacking you as well if you're a true servant of God. And some of the Pharisees came testing him saying, is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any cause at all? There was a law in the Old Testament, you know, which said they didn't command divorce.

God has never commanded divorce. He hates divorce. Malachi chapter 2 makes that very clear.

But there was a law in the Old Covenant which said that if a man divorced his wife, he should give her a certificate of divorce. It's in Deuteronomy 24. You can read in the first four verses there.

But I want to show you something in this connection, the way people quote scripture because that happens even today. What it said in Deuteronomy 24 verses 1 to 4 was this, that if a man takes a wife, marries her, it happens that she doesn't find favor in his eyes because he's found some indecency in her. And it's not specified what it is.

It could be a sexual immorality prior to marriage. And he writes her a certificate of divorce, puts it in her hand and sends her out of the house. She leaves his house, goes and becomes another man's wife.

And if the latter husband turns against her and writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of the house, or if the her former husband who sent her away is not allowed to take her back again to be his wife because she's been defiled. And that is an abomination before the Lord and you shall not bring sin on the land which the Lord your God gives you as an inheritance. Was he commanding divorce there? Not at all.

He's saying if a man does it, make sure you at least give a certificate of divorce and send her away. Don't send her without it. But see how these Pharisees have taken that and twisted it and made it as if Moses commanded.

Verse 7. Why did Moses command to give her a certificate of divorce and send her away? That he did. Give a certificate of divorce and send her away. But they're implying that Moses permitted that divorce.

He did not. Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any cause at all? And Jesus answered very clearly in verse 4. Haven't you read that the one who created them from the beginning made them male and female? So the answer to all these things is what was God's original plan right in the beginning. When you have any doubt about some things, go back to God's original plan.

What was God's original plan for Adam? In many, many areas that gives us the answer. We don't have time to look into all those areas, but here is one. What was God's original plan for man? Did God make a number of women so that if God, if Adam got fed up with Eve, he could chuck her and marry some others? And if he was unhappy with one of them, he could marry another? No.

That is not what God planned for man in the beginning. God made one man and one woman. And that's what the Lord is saying.

From the beginning, the way God made it was this. And there's no question of being unhappy with the one God gave you. God gave one woman to Adam and said, this is your wife.

That's it. She may have weaknesses. Well, you have weaknesses too.

That's what the Lord would say to anybody today. And therefore, since God did that, he also says there in the beginning, in Genesis chapter 2, Jesus quotes that in Matthew 19, 5. For this cause, a man shall leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife and the two shall be one flesh. They're only two.

There's no question of them separating since they are no longer two but one. See what Jesus says. They are no longer two but one.

Before they got married, they were two individuals. Once they became one flesh in marriage, they have become one. They are no longer two.

And therefore, God has joined them together. Let not man separate them. Nobody should separate those whom God has joined together.

Any man who comes between a husband and wife is an agent of Satan. I have no hesitation in saying that. Anyone, if a father-in-law or a mother-in-law comes between a husband and wife, they are agents of Satan.

If a father or mother comes between husband and wife, they're agents of Satan. If a brother or neighbor or anybody comes between a husband and wife, a pastor comes between a husband and wife, he's an agent of Satan. The job of every true servant of God is to bring husband and wife closer to each other, not come between them.

You may be permitted to come between a man and his son if the man is rebellious to God and the son wants to be faithful, but never between a man and his wife. They must remain. You must teach the wife.

Supposing a husband is an idolater and the wife is a true believer, what shall you say? Separate from him? Certainly not. You don't have to bow down to idols like he does, because there's an authority above him which is God, but you've got to submit to him as your husband. That's what I would tell every wife.

And so, Jesus said, what God has joined together, wherever they were married, they may have been married in a temple or a mosque or a court, anywhere, wherever they were married legally, they are joined by God. It's not only Christian marriages that are accepted by God. Every marriage is accepted by God.

Then they said, why did Moses then command to give her a certificate to divorce and send her away? They have taken half the truth there in Deuteronomy 24. It's the man himself had decided to send her away. Moses didn't command the man to send her away.

The man decided, I don't want this wife, send her away. Moses said, in case you do that, give her a certificate of divorce. And Jesus said, it's because of your hardness of heart that Moses permitted you to divorce your wives.

But from the beginning, it was not this way. So we see that in the Old Testament times, people's hearts were hard. It was not soft.

It could become soft only when the Holy Spirit came. And God wrote his laws upon rock, rocks. It's as it were, he was telling human beings, I can't even write my laws in your hearts.

Your hearts are harder than these rocks. I can write my laws on these rocks, but not in your hearts. Your hearts are hard.

But there's a promise in Ezekiel where God says, I'll take away that hard heart. Ezekiel 36, 26 onwards. And I will give you a soft heart.

And I'll put my spirit there. So now that it takes place, now that we're living in the age of the Holy Spirit, anyone who divorces his wife except for immorality and marries another woman, verse 9, commits adultery. There's no doubt about it.

If you divorce your wife and marry another woman, you commit adultery. That is crystal clear. And that's very, very important.

And the disciples said, if that be the case, if the relationship of a man with his wife is like this, that he can never, ever leave her, then it's better not to marry because they must have seen so many unhappy marriages. And they said, boy, it's pretty tough to get married if you can never get rid of her. They said, that's it.

But to stay single, Jesus said, that's not something that all men can accept. But only those to whom it has been given. Now, there's one thing very clear as far as divorce is concerned.

And that is that God hates it. It is not God's will. And if a person divorces his wife except for one reason, immorality.

Because in immorality, if a wife has given her body to another man, then she has broken that covenant of one flesh with her husband. And if that's broken, then Jesus permits divorce. But that's the only reason why he permitted divorce.

He never permitted it for any other reason. And so, when we find Christians divorcing left, right, and center nowadays, we can see how far Christianity has drifted from God. When we see Christian leaders standing in pulpits who are divorced men, we can see how far Christianity has drifted from God.

I'm not saying that a divorced person cannot be restored to fellowship with God. But he cannot be given responsibility as an elder because his whole testimony is bad. He's divorced his wife.

So, that's very important to bear in mind in our day when standards are being lowered everywhere. And so, he said to them, not all men can accept the statement of remaining single, but some to whom it is given. And then he goes on to say, there are eunuchs who were born that way.

There are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men. And there are eunuchs who have chosen to remain single, as it were, for the kingdom of heaven. Only one who's able to accept it should accept it.

The apostle Paul was one of those people who felt he had the grace to remain single without burning. And he says in 1 Corinthians 7, how do you know whether you've got grace to remain single? You won't burn. He says in 1 Corinthians 7, it's better to marry than to burn.

So, if a man is burning with sexual desire that he cannot control, then that is an indication that he's not called to a single life. If he's called to a single life, he won't be burning with sexual passion. Such a person can choose a single life, one who does not burn with sexual passion.

But if there's burning of sexual desire within that's perfectly normal, then that is an indication that one should look for marriage. Jesus is very practical. And then he speaks about children.

He sees children. Then some children were brought to him so that he might lay hands on them and pray. And the disciples rebuked them.

See, the disciples had seen the Pharisees who were always driving children away and said, we don't have time for little children. We are serious. People are over 60.

We can sit and talk to them or 40 or 50. But these little children drive them away. They didn't even have time for young people, perhaps.

And all these old men would huddle together and talk. And the disciples had seen that, that great rabbi and all don't talk to children. And so, when the children were brought to Jesus, the disciples drove them away.

Say, get away from here. Don't you realize he's a rabbi? And Jesus said, don't do that. Let the little children come.

Don't hinder them. Let them come to me. For the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.

And he called these children. So there I see that this is Christ's attitude to children. If you're a man of God, your attitude to children is a pretty good indication of whether you're a real man of God or a hoax.

If your children are not drawn to you, if you are not, if you don't treat children nicely and kindly, if you don't welcome them, if you're not warm towards them, I'd say you don't know Christ at all. Children mustn't be afraid of you. They must warm towards you when you see them and they see you.

That's one mark of a Christ-like person. A Christ-like person is always very happy to be with children, not just with older people. And that's one way by which you can make out a fake man of God from a real one.

Not the only one, but it's one of the ways. Then after laying hands on all these children, he departed from there. And then we come to this story where a rich young ruler came up to him.

And it's a very interesting story because he's a very, very unusual person. First of all, he was rich. Second, he was young.

And third, he was a ruler. Rich, young, and a person of position in society. A person whom any pastor would love to have as his church member.

Rich, young, and a person with an eminent position in society, a ruler. He came to him and said, came to Jesus and teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may obtain eternal life? What is the one thing I can do to get eternal life? And Jesus said to him, why are you asking me about what is good? There is only one who is good. And that's God.

But if you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments. Now, Jesus was not saying thereby that I'm not God. There could be a number of interpretations to that.

Why do you call me good? Do you believe that I'm God? There's only one who's good, really. And that's God. Do you believe that? It could be the reason why he mentioned it like that, but it's not mentioned yet.

And we don't want to speculate. But he did tell him, if you want eternal life, keep the commandments. They were under the law.

There was no other message you could preach those days. It's not the message we preach today. And then he said to him, which ones? And Jesus said, you shall not commit murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not bear false witness, honor your father and mother, or in other words, love your neighbor as yourself.

Five commandments he mentioned here. Now, remember, there are 10 commandments altogether. The first four commandments was probably written on one tablet of stone related to man's relationship with God.

And the other six related to man's relationship with his fellow man. You know, the two big commandments are love God with all your heart and love your neighbor as yourself. So the first four related to that first great commandment, and the remaining six related to loving your neighbor as yourself.

The first four, hardly anybody in Israel was ever guilty of disobeying them. Those who accepted Jehovah Holy is the true God. Don't take the Lord's name in vain.

Don't worship idols and honor your father and mother. Generally speaking, most people obeyed it. So the Lord doesn't even ask him about those first, sorry, not honor your father and mother, but keep the Sabbath.

So the first one was to have no other gods but him. Don't worship idols. Don't take the Lord's name in vain and keep the Sabbath.

Now these four commandments, everybody kept in Israel. So there was no need to even ask anyone in Israel to keep them. That was understood.

People kept it. There was no problem. So that's why Jesus deals only with the second tablet.

The sixth commandment is given to man. You shall not commit murder. You shall not commit adultery.

Verse 18, you shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness. There's one more commandment.

You notice the one that was left out? You shall not desire your neighbor's wife. You shall not desire anything that belongs to your neighbor. Jesus knew that there's not a single human being who could ever keep that commandment because this is speaking about inner lust, desiring something, lusting after.

Lust is just another word for strong desire. So the nine commandments were all external, but the tenth commandment was the one commandment which referred to an inner life and the Lord kept it there to test people to see how many people would honestly acknowledge they couldn't keep the tenth commandment. Nobody in the world could keep the tenth commandment.

They could only keep the first nine. And so Jesus mentions only those five commandments related to man and leaves out the sixth one about desiring your neighbor's wife or your neighbor's daughter or anybody. And the young man says, all these I have kept.

Here was an amazing young man who had kept all the commandments faithfully. And Jesus said there's one more thing. You have a tremendous love for money.

In your case it's so serious that the only way to get rid of it is by giving it all away. Now that's not the case with everybody. There's a little bit of love of money in everybody.

But in some cases the situation may not be so bad. The cancer may not have spread so much that you have to eliminate an entire organ or something like that. It's just sort of beginning so you don't have to do such radical surgery.

And so in this case it was a terrible disease. The whole thing had to be given up. So he said go and sell all your possessions.

Give it to the poor and you'll have treasure in heaven. Come and follow me. But when the young man heard this he went away grieved for he was a man who owned much property.

And he said well if that's the price for eternal life then forget it. I'm not interested in eternal life. I'm interested in this life.

I want to have a good time here on this earth. See that was the test. Do you want this life? A good time on this life? Or an eternal life? He said I want a good life here on this earth.

I don't want to give up everything I have. I don't want to sell all that I have. Now today what does it mean to have eternal life? I don't have to sell everything I have.

There's no command in the New Testament in the to sell all that we have. But I must not possess it as if it's mine. I must keep everything I have in my open palm.

Say Lord I have it but it's not mine. I don't possess it. I keep it in open palm.

It's yours. I'm a steward. I hold it.

But there must not be a single thing that I say that's mine. I won't let go let that go. I mean Almighty God can't take it away from me.

Then I can't be a disciple of Jesus. I have to forsake all that I have. All that I possess.

Not all that I have but all that I possess in order to be a disciple. I can have them but not possess them. And when the man went away Jesus didn't go after him.

Jesus didn't say okay why don't you come back we'll talk about it. Maybe 10% now another 10% next year in a few years you can give up everything. No.

It was radical discipleship. In your case this sickness is so bad that you've got to be freed from it right now. And so he says give it all up and he never went after him.

One of the things we see about Jesus. All that Jesus taught. He taught by his actions.

We don't go after people who are not willing to pay the price for discipleship. We don't go begging and pleading with them and say okay we'll lower the standard slightly for your sake. Nothing of the sort.

If you don't want to be a radical disciple forget it. And Jesus made the conditions of discipleship plain right at the outset. He didn't wait till the end to slowly indicate what the cost of his discipleship was.

And then Jesus said to his disciples you know it's so difficult for hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. It's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. That means rich in wealth, rich in intellect, rich in anything.

If I do not know what it is to say Lord I don't have an interest in any of these things. I want you more than everything else. It's very difficult to enter God's kingdom.

The disciples said in that case who can be saved. And Jesus said it's true. With men this is impossible.

But only possible with God. God can save anyone. God can deliver a man from attachment to material things.

Do you know that attachment to material things can hinder you from God's kingdom? It's not preached so much today but it's the truth. May God help us to be free. With God all things are possible.

We'll continue in our next episode.

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