

# All That Jesus Taught Bible Study - Part 70

by Zac Poonen

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*Zac Poonen emphasizes the importance of readiness and faithfulness in light of Christ's imminent return as taught in Matthew 24 and 25.*

**Duration:** 24:42

**Topics:** "Second Coming", "Holy Spirit"

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## Description

This sermon delves into the importance of being prepared for the second coming of Christ, emphasizing the need for believers to have a genuine inner life filled with the Holy Spirit, likened to the wise virgins who had extra oil for their lamps. It warns against superficial faith and highlights the significance of time as a revealer of true devotion. The message stresses the necessity of being faithful and wise stewards of God's gifts, feeding His people with the right spiritual nourishment and avoiding beating them with harsh words.

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## Transcript

We continue our study today on all that Jesus taught, looking through the Gospel of Matthew. We have come to Matthew chapter 24, and we were looking at verse 35, where Jesus said, Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. And of the day and hour of his second coming, no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.

Now here is another proof that Jesus Christ had become completely man, that he had renounced or given up temporarily the privileges of deity. One of the privileges of deity, of God, is to know everything. It's called omniscience, omniscience, that means he knows everything.

End from the beginning, the future and everything. And Jesus Christ, being equal with the Father from all eternity, the Son of God, knew everything when he was in heaven. But when he came to earth, he took upon himself the limitations of man, and one of the limitations of man is we don't know everything.

Our mind is limited in knowledge and understanding of the future, especially. And so here he says, I don't know the date of my second coming. But that's not true today, because he's gone back to heaven, though he's a man.

He's gone back to that position of being equal with the Father, although he's willingly submitting to him. But he's back in heaven, and today he knows when he's coming. But on earth he did not, not even the angels of heaven do know that.

At that time, it was just the Father. But the coming of the Son of Man is like the days of Noah. For as in those days, which were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying, giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark.

And they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away. So shall the coming of the Son of Man be. That means judgment will come suddenly.

See, the people who were in Noah's time, they saw the animals getting inside the ark, and that itself should have woken them up. How in the world are these animals going in pairs inside this ark? There must be some truth to what Noah says. At least that should have woken them up, for some of them to come to Noah and say, hey, we want to repent and we want to get inside the ark, at least in the last minute.

But their hearts were so hardened that even when they saw that, they said nothing's going to happen. We don't know why these animals are going in. I don't know whether he's doing some magic and getting them in, but it's not going to change us.

We're going to enjoy our sin. Rain has never fallen on earth till today, from the days of Adam. We read that in Genesis 2, that there was no rain those days.

And this guy is preaching there's going to be rain. It's never happened till today. Where is it going to come now? Floods, completely unheard of.

We are on dry land. And all of a sudden, the rains came and flooded the earth and everybody was killed. So he says it's going to be like that, suddenly, without any warning, though these warning signs will be there, people will ignore it.

And that day, two men will be in the field, one will be taken and the other will be left. Two women will be grinding in the mill, one will be taken and the other will be left. It's going to be like that at the rapture.

Suddenly, judgment will come. Some will be taken up to be with the Lord. Others will be left behind.

Some will be judged and some will escape judgment. So what shall we do? We shall not concentrate on trying to find out when are these things going to take place because nobody knows the exact day or hour. We just see the general signs.

We see the sign of the fig tree, the nation of Israel. And we know he's near. And we also know that nobody knows the exact date.

But there's something we should do. The whole purpose of the Lord talking about his second coming was to enable us to be on the alert. Be on the alert, for you don't know which day your Lord is coming.

You don't know which day is coming, so always be on the alert. Be ready at all times. It's something like a bridegroom, a person who is engaged to a girl, a virgin, has gone on a long journey to a far country and says, Wait, I'm coming back.

Be ready. As soon as I come back, we'll get married. And a faithful virgin will keep on waiting, waiting, waiting, waiting.

And so many other people will want her hand in marriage. And she'll say, No, no, no, I'm waiting for my bridegroom to come. That's the way a true Christian should be waiting.

Not allow the world and other things to draw him away from devotion to Christ. And in this time, the Lord is testing his bride to see whether she'll be faithful. And those who are not faithful, what do you think of a girl who's engaged to a man and who's coming back, and meanwhile, she's fooling around with other men? You wouldn't call her a virgin.

You'd call her a harlot. And that's why you read in the last chapters of Revelation of Babylon the harlot and Jerusalem the bride. The difference is this.

In the period before Christ comes, and during their life on earth, not just at that time, there are two attitudes that so-called believers can have. One is of devotion to Christ, faithfulness to their absent bridegroom. And then the other is playing the fool with the world, living for themselves, and saying, Well, the bridegroom's coming is delayed.

It doesn't matter. Yeah, such people are going to get a tremendous shock when Christ comes back. And so he says, Be on the alert, for you don't know when the Lord is coming.

But be sure of this, Matthew 24, 43. If the head of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. For this reason, you'll be ready too, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you don't think he will.

See, if a thief had given advance warning to a house saying, Hey, fellas, I'm coming there at 2.45 tomorrow morning. Be ready. Well, the house owner would be ready.

But no thief gives warning like that. And so the coming of Christ is likened to the coming of a thief in the night, but not for believers. That's for the unbeliever.

That's very clear. A lot of people misunderstand that. They think Christ is coming like a thief in the night for believers.

Not at all. See, in 1 Thessalonians 5, 1 Thessalonians 5, verse 2, You yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. That's speaking about the coming of Jesus Christ, the day of the Lord, just like in 2 Thessalonians 2, verse 2, the day of the Lord.

Will come like a thief in the night. While they are saying peace and safety, then destruction will come upon them suddenly. Again, he uses the word birth pangs, like birth pangs upon a woman with child.

But you brethren, this is the important verse, 1 Thessalonians 5, 4, But you brethren are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you like a thief. The unbelievers, it will overtake like a thief. Because they're not even expecting.

But you, you should be, you're sons of light. You're not, you're sons of the day. We don't belong to the night or the darkness.

So then let us not sleep spiritually, that is, as others do, but always be on the alert and sober. Because those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. But since we are of the day, he says, let us have the helmet of the hope of salvation.

So, it's very clear there that for believers, the coming of Christ is not like a thief in the night. So when believers talk about, oh Christ is coming like a thief in the night for me, then you must be an unbeliever. Because a person who is a child of light is not living in darkness.

His life is in the light all the time. There is no darkness. Christ is coming and whenever he comes, it won't be like a thief in the night.

You see, Christ is coming for his own. A thief doesn't come to steal what belongs to him. A thief comes to steal something else.

But Christ is coming for his own. I belong to him. He's not a thief coming to take something that doesn't belong to him.

I belong to him. He's comparing, he's coming like as suddenly and unexpectedly, without warning, like a thief in the night for the unbeliever. It's very important for us to understand that.

And we must bear that in mind when we read Matthew 24 and verse 43. For this reason, be ready for the Son of Man is coming. He's coming at a time when you don't think he will.

There are warnings in scripture for general warnings for believers and unbelievers. Verse 45. Who then is the faithful and sensible slave, whom his master will put in charge of his household to give them their food at the proper time? This is a very important verse for all true servants of the Lord.

A servant of the Lord must be a faithful and a wise steward. There are two things required of anyone who's a servant of God. Faithfulness and wisdom.

Faithfulness in small things. And wisdom in handling his time, his life, his money, everything in a wise way. And the master puts such people in charge of his family.

You know, the master doesn't handle everything in the family himself. He's appointed apostles and prophets and elders to be in charge of his family. And their job is to give them their proper food at the proper time.

The right food at the right time. That's the calling of every true servant of God. And so the Lord says, whom can I appoint like this? I need somebody who's faithful and wise.

And who will stick to doing the job that God has given him to do. Blessed is that slave who, when his master finds him doing that, finds him doing that when he comes. That means when the Lord comes, he's faithful to do that particular thing which the master called him to do.

What will the master do when he sees his servant faithfully serving him when he comes and having faithfully served him all the years before he came? He will put him in charge of all his possessions. But if that slave says, well, my master is not going to come for a long, long time. And instead of being faithful to his job, he plays the fool and begins to enjoy himself and beats his fellow slaves and gets to eat and drink with the drunkards.

What does it mean to beat fellow slaves? A lot of preachers beat people in their messages. We're not supposed to beat people. There's a contrast given here between feeding them the food at the proper time, verse 45, with beating them in verse 49.

These are two ways in which you can preach God's Word. I'm speaking now to those who preach God's Word. Do you feed or do you beat? You need to ask yourself.

If you beat, you're not a faithful slave, not a faithful servant of God. You have to feed the people, not beat them. And then you see the difference between a true faithful servant of God and one who's not.

So those of you who don't preach but are listening to other preachers, keep your ears open. Do you sense that the preacher is trying to beat you? He's not a servant of God. Just ignore him.

Do you find that he's feeding you? That's a true servant of God. Now sometimes when a preacher tries to challenge you, he may look like beating, but you can sense from the spirit that he's trying to encourage you to a higher life. He's not beating you at all.

But you need to distinguish between that and the beating that some people give from a pulpit, saying, you're like this and you're good for nothing, etc., etc., etc. You've got to be careful. The master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him, at an hour which he does not know.

All of a sudden, he will come. And if he's beating his fellow slaves, this is a word to all those preachers who beat others from the pulpit, he will cut him in pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. It's a pretty serious thing to beat God's children from the pulpit.

God takes it very seriously. He says, I appointed you to feed them, and you stand up there and beat them. And you got away with it for a long time, but I'm going to deal with you now.

The Lord says to all preachers who beat others, just make sure, brother, when you speak God's word, that you don't beat people, but feed them. Be a faithful servant. God needs such servants in the last days.

And continuing the answer to the question, which they asked in the beginning, in relation to second coming, he already said when will it happen, and then he spends a long time, a number of verses from 24, 42 onwards, all the way up to the end of chapter 25, to tell people how to be ready. In fact, there's much more written on how to be ready than about the details of his coming. Now, a lot of people are very excited to study about the signs of the second coming of Christ, and there are people who write books on it and become millionaires.

But that's not the point. We are called to be ready for his second coming, not just to know all the signs. And so, he speaks about being ready as a servant of God in 24, 42 to 51, and then again in the three parables in chapter 25 that speak about being ready for his coming in different aspects.

First of all, concerning our inner life. In chapter 25, he says the kingdom of heaven can be compared to ten virgins who took their lamps, all ten took their lamps, and went out to meet the bridegroom. It's a picture of Christians waiting for the coming of Christ.

Five of them were foolish, and five were wise or prudent. And their foolishness and wisdom was seen in this. The foolish took their lamps, it was burning, but they didn't take any extra oil with them more than what was in the lamp.

But the wise took oil in a small flask along with their lamps. They had a little pocket, maybe in their gown or robe, in which they put this flask of oil. And while the bridegroom was delaying, they all got drowsy and began to sleep.

The bridegroom delayed. He didn't come when they expected him to come. And at midnight there was a shout, saying, Behold the bridegroom, come out to meet him.

Then all the virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. All ten began to trim their lamps, which means all of them, their lamps had been burning. But the foolish said to the wise, Hey, our lamps are dying out.

Our lamps are going out, please give us some of your oil. That shows that their lamps had been burning all that time. But now they were dying out.

So what does that teach? This is not talking about believers and unbelievers. Virgins, whose lamps are burning, these are not harlots. Virgins, whose lamps are burning, going out to meet the bridegroom, obviously born again Christians.

But something is missing in five of them. And that is this flask full of oil. And the wise answered, saying, How can we give you the oil? There won't be enough for us.

And this is not something we can give you. Go to the dealers and buy some for yourself. There again, buy.

The man who found the hidden treasure in the field sold all that he had and bought it. The man who found the pearl of good price bought it. And Paul says, I count everything but loss as rubbish for the sake of Christ whom I have found.

And there is a price to be paid here. Revelation 3, I counsel thee to buy from me gold tried in the fire and buy from me eyesalve that you can anoint your eyes and see, etc. So there are certain things in the Christian life that had to be bought.

That means, the meaning is, you have to pay a price for it. Forgiveness of sins is free. The baptism in the Holy Spirit, receiving the Holy Spirit is free.

There are many other things in the Christian life for which you have to pay a price. Development in character to Christ-likeness. You have to pay a price.

And so, the wise people say, Hey, there were dealers all along. You know, there are dealers who can give you oil. And I believe those dealers are the trials and circumstances that we face in life, which if we ignore, we don't get oil.

We must make use of all these dealers that come our way. There are many trials and circumstances that we face in our life and get oil from those circumstances. And if you don't do that, one day, when Christ is coming, you are not ready to meet him.

And while they were going away, verse 10, to make the purchase, the bridegroom came, those who were ready, went in with him for the wedding feast, and the door was shut. There's a time going to come when the door will be shut. And later, the other foolish virgins also came, saying, Lord, Lord, open for us.

But he answered and said, Truly, I say to you, I don't know you. So be on the alert, for you don't know the day nor the hour. So there we see that Jesus was speaking about people who would not be ready for his coming, even though they were virgins, and even though they had their lamps burning in the beginning.

Now, just think of this. Supposing the bridegroom had come one hour earlier, not at midnight, but had come at 11 p.m. The five foolish virgins would have looked like wise virgins because the lamps were

burning. See, when he started out, all ten had their lamps burning.

But it was the delay of the bridegroom that revealed the folly of the foolish virgins. Time has a way of revealing many things. So many believers who look to be very wholehearted and zealous, they always say, Let's wait and see.

Time will show whether this person is faithful and steadfast. Fruit will come from his life. Let's wait and see.

Let's not form a quick judgment and assume that he's wholehearted. Because many who appear to have their lamps burning, they don't have any oil in secret. They don't have a hidden life.

See, the wise virgins had a lamp burning on the outside and hidden in their pockets a flask of oil. It's a picture of a believer who's got a lamp, the light of his life burning clearly as a testimony to others. But he's also got an extra supply.

There are areas in his life where he's yielded to the Holy Spirit. He's filled with the Holy Spirit. That's the flask full of oil.

Oil is a picture of the Holy Spirit. He's got a flask full of oil, an inner devotion to Jesus Christ. A love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Spirit.

Love for God and love for one another. That's the fuel. That's the oil which he has within him.

Whereas the foolish virgins, they just live for the moment. So we're not worried about the future. We'll just make sure there's enough oil to burn right now.

Their life is very superficial, the foolish virgins. And time exposed them. So time is the great revealer.

In many, many circumstances, in many, many churches, when a new church starts, you just wait and see. Let's see how it progresses. Let's see over a period of time.

Some Christians are like shooting stars. They suddenly appear in the sky and they look like so zealous and on fire. But a year later, you don't know where they are.

They've gone. The lamp has died out. Time is the great revealer of everything.

And when Christ comes, then it is too late to go and look for oil and to try and build up the fullness of the spirit and to be ready with an inner life when Christ has already come. Now is the time. Now is the time, my brother, sister, to make sure your flask is full of oil.

That your heart is full of love and there's zero bitterness. There is zero unforgiving spirit. There is zero jealousy.

But every nook and corner of your heart has been filled by the Holy Spirit with the love of God. That is the flask of oil that will prepare you for the last days. There's so much of deception now in the world.

Make sure your heart is filled with the genuine Holy Spirit. A lot of people are just going around leading people to counterfeit experiences of the fullness of the Holy Spirit. The flask is empty.

It's not enabling their light to burn. If it is really the fullness of the Holy Spirit, what does oil do? Oil will make the lamp burn bright. The light is the life of Jesus.

In him was light, John 1, 4. And that life was the light of men. That is the thing that we need. And for that we need to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

That is God's will. So I want to encourage all of you. Seek to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Seek that your flask be full of oil so that your light can burn bright. The life of Jesus can come forth from you. This is the only way to be ready for the second coming of Christ.

We'll continue in our next episode.

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