

(Basics) 37. Jesus Valued All People

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen's sermon emphasizes that true love, exemplified by Jesus, values all people and integrates holiness with compassion and truth.

Duration: 13:06

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Matthew 23:27, Matthew 23:33, John 1:14, 1 Corinthians 13:1-3, Ephesians 4:15, Ephesians 5:2

Topics: "Loving All People", "Gods Grace"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of balancing grace and truth in our lives, using the example of Jesus as the perfect model. He compares the need for bones in our physical bodies to the need for balance in our spiritual lives. The speaker highlights the significance of loving and valuing all people, regardless of their social status or appearance, as they are made in the image of God. He emphasizes Jesus' love for humanity, which led him to willingly sacrifice his life to free people from sin. This love gave Jesus the authority to speak against sin with conviction.

Transcript

And today we want to think about a word that many people use, love, but which most people don't understand. True love is unselfish. The love which many people think of is actually selfish lust.

And we want to consider what it means to really love, as seen in the life of Jesus Christ, our Lord. When we speak about holiness, many people think of holiness as dry, starchy religion, repulsive, hard, strict. But that's not the holiness Jesus manifested.

God is holy, absolutely holy. But the Bible says God is love. True holiness is perfect love.

I want to say that again. Did you hear it? True holiness is perfect love. If you have holiness without love, it's not the holiness of Jesus Christ.

It's the so-called holiness of the Pharisees. It is self-righteousness. It's maybe a disciplined life, and maybe you pay your taxes, you pray, read the Bible, and tithe, and do so many things.

But you're like a skeleton, and you can't draw people. People are not attracted to a skeleton. Supposing you're walking down a dark street one night, and you see a skeleton walking towards you.

Just a skeleton, a skull and bones, walking towards you from the other direction. What would you do? Would you feel like embracing that one, running forward to meet that? Or would you feel like turning around and running away? That is how the Pharisees were. People felt like running away from them.

And unfortunately, that is how many self-righteous Christians are. Even many Christians who say we are in the separated assemblies. We are not like the dead denominations.

We are separated from all that. We are holy. But they're like skeletons.

People run away from them. They're like the Pharisees. But Jesus was not like that.

Yes, we need to be holy. We need to have truth. But the Bible says that the glory of God, John 1.14, was seen in Jesus full of grace and truth.

There's a balance. See, in your body, do we need bones or not? If you didn't have bones, you wouldn't be able to stand up. You wouldn't be able to sit down.

You'll collapse like a jellyfish that has got no bones in it. And spiritually speaking, some people are like that. You know, there are certain disadvantages in having bones.

For example, you cannot squeeze through a very narrow opening. But a jellyfish can squeeze through anything. It just becomes thin because it's got no bones and slides through it.

It's like a sponge. You can squeeze a sponge through any opening, any shape, any size. But we can't go through because we've got bones.

And some people spiritually are like jellyfish. They compromise. They have no convictions.

They don't stand for the truth. They don't stand for holiness. They're like people without any bones.

That's certainly not God's will. But on the other hand, if we are only bones, like I said, you'll be like a skeleton. You'll scare people away.

But God has made this body so beautiful. What is it that makes our body attractive? The bones are covered over with flesh. When you say somebody is handsome or a girl is pretty, what do you mean? It's not their skeleton.

I mean, if you pull off their flesh, their skeletons look the same as the ugliest people in the world. It's the flesh on top of that skeleton, beautifully featured, that makes somebody attractive. Now, apply this to the Christian life.

It's not just truth. It's grace on top of the truth that makes the words attractive. It's love and holiness.

God is light and God is love. The two are inseparable. True holiness is full of love.

And true love is perfectly pure. So, in a sense, they are not different. And people say they have a great love for everybody.

But if they don't live in purity and righteousness, that's just not divine love. That's just wishy-washy sentimentality. But those who claim to have great holiness but don't have compassion and love for people, they are just Pharisees.

So, how is it with Jesus? He was not a skeleton and He was not a jellyfish. He had all the truth. He stood for everything that the law of God stood for, more than the Pharisees did.

But He was not just bones. The bones were covered over with flesh, as God intended human beings to be. And this is the balance of the divine glory that the Holy Spirit has come to communicate to you and me.

Not to make you like a skeleton, a Christian who drives other people away. Neither does God want us to be like wishy-washy jellyfish, just compromising and able to fit into any type of opening. No, God doesn't want that either.

We read that Jesus spoke the truth, but He spoke it in love. His words had authority, but they were also gracious. When it says that God is love, it doesn't mean just that He acts lovingly.

Now, a person can act lovingly without being loving in his heart. It may be just an external action, which is just done to impress others. Jesus did not just go around doing acts of love.

Now, we can imitate somebody and do acts of love, you know, help the poor and do good. No, Jesus' love came from deep within His heart, just like holiness and humility. It can be put on on the outside, but that's just a garment that a person can take off or put on.

But the Bible says, Jesus said, He who believes in Him from his innermost being, rivers of living water will flow. The spirit-filled man is a man from whose innermost being humility, holiness, love flow out. Our thoughts and our attitudes become holy and loving.

Not just the words and our actions, that can be just diplomacy. You know, when we do something or say something, our thoughts and attitudes towards that other person or towards those people give a certain odor or smell to our life. And others can easily detect it.

Words and actions of love count for nothing if our thoughts and attitudes towards others are still critical and selfish. The Bible says in Psalm 51, verse 6, David said that after he had sinned, God desires truth in the innermost being. He wants love to flow from our hearts.

That's how it was with Jesus. And so as we look at the life of Jesus, we can see what the Holy Spirit wants to make in our own life. Let me say first of all, that if you love a person, you will value him.

You see, Jesus placed a very high value on all human beings. It didn't matter whether they were cultured or intelligent or clever or smart or rich. You know, it's very easy to place a great value on cultured, intelligent, rich people.

But a godly man would value all people, whether he's dressed in a suit and a tie or whether he's a beggar. If you can't value a beggar as one of God's creation, as one who is made in the image of God, do you know that the Bible says in James chapter 3 that all human beings are made in the image of God? Yeah, you read that. In James and chapter 3 where it speaks about our use of our tongue, it says in verse 9, men have been made in the likeness of God.

What about that beggar with his ragged clothes and lack of culture and illiterate? Is he made in the image of God? If so, you will respect him. Jesus respected all people. He did not make any difference between the rich and the poor, educated, the uneducated, the cultured, the uncultured, or even between the righteous and the sinner.

He valued everyone because everyone was made by God. Everyone was loved by God. He came to die for everyone.

We can think that when we start loving our fellow believers in our local church, that itself is something wonderful. It certainly is. But Jesus loved all men.

Do you think he healed only the sick who believed in him for salvation from sin? No. He healed so many sick people who were not interested in receiving anything further from him. That was how his goodness was.

Jesus never despised anyone because they were poor or ignorant or ugly. No. Jesus once said that the whole world was not as valuable as one human soul.

That's how he valued men. You know, just like you value your treasures, your stocks and shares, your house and land and bank account and gold bars and whatever else you have, your car. Put it all together.

For Jesus, one human soul was worth more than all that and much more than that. He said it was worth more than the whole world. And that's why he delighted in men.

He valued them. He delighted in them. He saw those men as people who had been bound by Satan, deceived.

And he longed to bring them to the light and to set them free. And his love for man was so great that he was willing even to pay the ultimate price of death in order to free men from sin's grip over their lives. And it's because he was willing to die for men to save them from their sins that he had the right to preach against sin so forcefully.

You know, Jesus turned around to the Pharisees and said, You generation of vipers, do you think you and I can say that to religious people even if they are as bad as the Pharisees? Well, you can say that if you love them enough to die for them. Otherwise you can't. It's very easy to get up and say it.

Any fool can get up and say such words. But to say it in the spirit of Christ is quite another thing. Remember, he was willing to die to save them from their sin.

And that's why he had the right to use such strong words. We have no right to preach against sin if we are not willing to do anything to save people from their sin. This is what it means to speak the truth in love.

To speak the truth is easy. Anybody can do that. Some people think, I'm a great prophet.

I'm going to speak the truth. But to be like Jesus, we got to do it in love. And so let's look at the life of Jesus more carefully.

And see how this love came from his heart. And ask the Holy Spirit to fill your heart with that same love.

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