

(Basics) 39. Jesus Was Unpopular

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen emphasizes Jesus' example of holiness and the importance of living a life that prioritizes God's will over popularity and personal comfort.

Duration: 13:06

Scripture: Psalm 119:11, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 22:16, Romans 12:2, Hebrews 4:12, James 1:22

Topics: "Following Jesus", "Holy Living"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of following the example of Jesus in living a holy life. Jesus' humility and holiness are highlighted as characteristics that we should strive to emulate. The speaker warns against reading the Bible solely for the purpose of preparing sermons or finding messages for others, instead urging listeners to first listen to what God is saying to them personally and obey it. Jesus' zeal for the purity of God's house is also highlighted, as he took action to drive out those who were defiling it.

Transcript

And today we want to consider a little further about the example of Jesus in His earthly life as a model for the holy life that He wants us to live. As we look at the life of Jesus, we have been seeing that God not only sent His Son to die for the sins of the world, but that the way He lived on earth is to be a demonstration to all of us as to how God wants man to live. And we saw His humility, we have seen a little bit about His holiness.

It was a life that overcame sin, it was a life of purity. What was the source of this? Jesus' holiness came out of a life of meditation in the word of God. We read in the scriptures in Luke, chapter 2, that when He was twelve years old, He knew enough of the scriptures to even confound the great scholars of His time.

And remember, in those days, there were no printed Bibles like we have today. People did not have a Bible in their homes. Nobody had a Bible in their home.

Bibles, the Old Testament was handwritten and only the synagogue in the village or town would have a copy. Only rich people could afford to have even portions of the Old Testament with them. So, it's only those who listened carefully when they were being taught by the rabbis in the synagogue who could know what the scriptures said.

And Jesus listened as a little boy. Remember, He had emptied Himself of all that supernatural ability He had as God. He came as a little baby and the Bible says He grew in wisdom.

In other words, His growth was just like ours, growing in the knowledge of the word. Only thus could He be an example for us. And from that meditation in the word of God, He saw and understood what the Father wanted, just like we can understand it.

And He saw that the word of God spoke more than what was written on the surface. He dug deep. The Bible says that if you dig as you would dig for hidden treasure, it's only then that you will find the knowledge of God.

To have a superficial knowledge of the Bible, that is easy. You can read the Bible like you read a physics book or a chemistry book and get knowledge. But to know God through His word, that's quite a different thing.

And that came to Jesus through not just meditation, but obedience to what He saw in the word. Many people read the Bible only to get messages to preach. Particularly if you are a preacher, you are in great danger of reading the Bible only to get messages, of reading books in order to prepare sermons, listening to tapes to get points for your sermons.

That's a very dangerous practice. Because you can be more interested in what God has to say to other people than what God has to say to you. Now the best way to prepare a sermon is to first of all hear what God is saying to you and to obey that and then from your life speak it forth as a message for others.

Then it has gone through you. The word of God is like a two-edged sword. One edge must cut you before you can use it.

The other edge in your ministry to expose sin in another. And when Jesus meditated on the word of God, He found there were a lot of things there which are completely contrary to the traditions that were being practiced by people in His time. It's not just meditation on the word.

Jesus depended on the Holy Spirit. The Bible says Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit. Jesus lived just like us.

His holiness came out of a life of meditation in God's word and being filled with the Holy Spirit. And if we follow in His footsteps, we too will get revelation on His word. Now life will come to holiness, genuine holiness, getting in line with God's thoughts.

The Bible speaks about our mind being renewed. That comes through meditation on God's word. And when He saw that God's word proclaimed a certain standard and certain things, He preached that, even though His preaching ran counter or against all the popular religious traditions of His day.

Jesus did not go forth as a scholar or as one who had graduated from some Bible school. He went forth as one who had meditated on God's word in secret, lived in secret and heard God speaking to him through the Spirit and spoke forth the word as a prophet, not just as a preacher. And He proclaimed it faithfully.

And this is what made Him expose the hypocrisy and the worldliness of the Pharisees. Now other people couldn't see that. Other people just blindly thought that the Pharisees were spiritual people.

But Jesus not only exposed the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, He exposed the doctrinal error, the wrong interpretations of the scriptures that the Sadducees held. Jesus' holiness is seen in the fact that He never sought to be popular in His preaching. It's a tremendous temptation when you're a preacher to seek to be popular, particularly if you want to receive money for your preaching.

If you preach things that offend people, you won't get gifts, you won't get invited. But then you won't proclaim God's word faithfully. All who proclaim God's word must proclaim it prophetically as the mouthpiece of God.

That's part of holiness. Our holiness is to be seen not only in our life, but in our words. We must be absolutely true to God.

Holiness is manifested in not seeking to please men, but to please God. There was a time when even His enemies told Him, as we read in Matthew 22 and verse 16. Matthew 22 and verse 16 in the Living Bible it says like this.

We know, Teacher, that You are very honest and You teach the truth regardless of the consequences, without fear or favor. Those of you who preach, if you are a preacher, I want to ask you a personal question. Can it be said of your preaching, Matthew 22, 16 in the Living Bible, You are honest and You teach the truth regardless of the consequences and without fear and without favor.

That is the type of preacher India needs to hear in every church. That's how Jesus was. And if we look at Jesus, we will see that we have to be like Him in this area.

Jesus had a tremendous zeal for the purity of God's house. You know when people beat Him, pulled the hairs out of His head, out of His face, His beard, and ill-treated Him in so many ways, called Him the Prince of devils, He never got angry. He never said anything.

He just accepted it. You could do anything to Jesus personally and He would never say anything. He would just forgive you.

But when He saw God's house being defiled by people trying to make money in the name of religion, Oh, then He was a different person. It says He made a whip and He scourged, drove them all out of the temple. We read in John chapter 2 verse 15 and He said, Stop making My Father's house a house of business.

Then His disciples remembered what it was written in the scriptures in the Old Testament. Zeal for Your house will consume Me. Righteous anger burned in Him.

Do you know the meaning of that verse in Ephesians 4.26 where it says, Be angry but do not sin. What's the meaning of that? There's a command there to be angry. And we've always thought that anger is a sin.

Anger is a sin in certain situations. In certain other situations, it says in Ephesians 4.26, we must be angry. How to know the difference? Well, we can know the difference in the life of Jesus.

When was it He was not angry? When they insulted Him, spoke evil of Him, slapped Him, beat Him, pulled the hairs from His beard, spat on Him, crucified Him, He was never angry. He said, Father, forgive them. When was He angry? He was angry when God's house was being defiled, when poor people were being exploited, when a man with a withered hand, the Pharisees and the elders of the synagogue would not

allow him to be healed on the Sabbath day.

So we see the type of anger that we need to have is when we see God's house and God's name being dishonored. When we see poor people being exploited. And when is it we should never be angry? When people insult us, harm us, exploit us and do all types of evil to us and speak all types of evil to us.

So in anything concerning ourselves, we should never be angry. But when it concerns the purity of God's house and the way people exploit others, then we need to be angry. Unfortunately, in the world, it's the other way around.

It's tragic. But people in the world get angry when it concerns themselves. And when they see God's name being dishonored in the church, they're not angry.

That's exactly the opposite of how it was with Jesus. Jesus was angry only when it concerned God's house. There is an anger that is holy and there is an anger that is sinful.

And when Jesus used the whip that day in the temple, he was not bothered whether people misunderstood him. He was not bothered what even his disciples thought about him. He was only concerned about the purity of God's house.

He didn't lose control of himself. He was in perfect control of himself. But he was not diplomatic.

He didn't go to those people who were changing money and say, will you gentlemen please move your tables. He never said anything like that. He turned their tables and made the coins run here and there and chased the sheep and the oxen and the birds all out of the compound.

Yeah, that wasn't a very gentlemanly thing to do. But when it came to the purity of God's house, Jesus was fiery. He came to bring a sword.

And he used it unsparingly. It cut, it wounded, and it hurt. And thus the Father's glory was manifested.

So holiness in the life of Jesus brought him a lot of misunderstanding, opposition, persecution. It's the same in the world today. You're not going to be popular if you live a holy life.

I mean if you're only thinking in terms of paying your taxes and washing people's feet and doing what is right and never exposing sin in Christendom, then you may be popular. But then you're diplomatic. But if you follow Jesus all the way, your holiness will lead you to expose sin.

The Bible says we must by our life expose and rebuke the works of darkness. Ephesians 5. Jesus' life was the most beautiful, the most orderly, the most peaceful, and the happiest life this world has ever seen. Because he was only interested in pleasing God.

He was not interested in pleasing a single human being. He didn't care about people's opinions. Do you know that you and I can live such a life? Do you long for such a life? Why don't you bow your heads right now as you're listening and pray a simple prayer.

Say, Lord Jesus, I've been trying to please men too much. Forgive me. Help me to follow you and seek to please you alone.

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