

Following Jesus as a Young Person

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen emphasizes the importance of bearing the yoke of Jesus from a young age to fulfill God's purpose in life.

Duration: 53:49

Scripture: Matthew 11:29

Topics: "Youth Ministry", "Christian Obedience"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of bearing the yoke of Jesus from a young age, highlighting the need to humble oneself, endure difficulties, and keep a spirit of humility and obedience. It stresses the significance of learning from Jesus' example of obedience and faithfulness in everyday life, even in challenging family situations. The message encourages young individuals to trust in God's unique plan for their lives, to be content with how God has made them, and to live a life of gratitude and faithfulness.

Transcript

Let me turn to a verse in Lamentations, in chapter 3. It says in verse 27, It's good for a man that he should bear the yoke in his youth. Let him sit alone and be silent since he has laid it on him. Let him put his mouth in the dust, perhaps there is hope.

When God allows a child to be born in the world, he also has a plan and purpose for that child. You must believe that God has a plan for your life, which was determined before you were born. The way you respond to what God is speaking to you in your young days will determine whether that plan will be fulfilled or not.

God wants us to be available to Him right from the time we are young. Jesus said, take my yoke upon you. And here it says, it's good for a person to bear that yoke when he is young.

And one result of that bearing that yoke will be, you may go through some difficulties and sufferings in our younger days. And if you want God's plan to be fulfilled, we have to humble ourselves under that yoke. So it says here, let this young person, verse 29, put his mouth in the dust.

And if he is smitten by somebody, verse 30, let him give his cheek to the smiter. It's alright even if you are reproached, let him be filled with reproach. Because ultimately the Lord will fulfill his plan for his life.

When Jesus spoke about taking the yoke in Matthew 11 and verse 29, He said, take my yoke upon you and learn from me, because I am gentle and humble in heart, and you shall find rest for your souls. So taking the yoke of Jesus upon us, we have to learn from Him the way He humbled Himself in different circumstances when He was young. So from your earliest youth, you must seek to make Jesus your example.

You see, we read in John chapter 7 that he had brothers who did not believe in him. Jesus had four brothers and two sisters in His house. And it says in John 7 verse 5, his brothers did not believe in him.

Now God the Father planned the entire education of Jesus on this earth. And that plan was that He should go through all this difficult type of situation in His home. You see, God could have arranged Jesus to be in a home where maybe He was the only child of Mary.

And life would have been very easy, where you know, you do what you like and you get everything you want because you are the only child. But when you have to share your small little house with many other brothers and sisters, and you may like to eat a lot of food, but you have to share it with your brothers and sisters. So you have to eat very little.

And when there are many children, you can't, parents can't spend too much money on luxuries. And so, God allowed Jesus to be born in such a home. Because He was preparing Him for the most fantastic ministry that any man ever had.

So, if God has planned a ministry for you, He is going to take you through all types of difficult circumstances first. And He is going to see whether you accept those circumstances. You see it as the yoke of Jesus, that means Jesus also went through those circumstances and you learn from His example.

You know how a yoke is, two bullocks. So, the Lord will never ask you to do something which He has not already done. That is a great encouragement to me.

That any temptation I face, He has already faced it. So, whatever you may be facing in your home, or from your parents, or anywhere, the comfort you can get is that Jesus already faced it. So, it's good for a young man to bear the yoke of Jesus.

And a young sister to say, Lord, this difficult circumstance I'm going through is part of the yoke of Jesus. And what is the meaning of that verse we read, let him put his mouth in the dust. That means, let him not complain about anything.

When you put your mouth in the dust, you don't open and complain about anything. People do all types of things and behave in a bad way towards us. But if you keep your mouth in the dust, you don't complain, you say, okay.

God has allowed that. And it may look as if the others around you are having an easier time and you're having a very difficult time. And that is how God has arranged it for a Christian.

Those who go through a difficult time, they are the ones who become more spiritual. And those who go through a very easy time, usually end up as very worldly and carnal. So, if you find in your life certain things that you're not very happy with, some of those things you can never change.

And the devil wants you to always be unhappy about it. So that he spoils your life. We have to accept whatever God has allowed in our life.

That's the meaning of taking the yoke when we are young and keeping our mouth in the dust. You don't have to do it. You can shake off that yoke and say, I don't want any of this.

And you don't keep your mouth in the dust, but open it and complain and all that. You can do that if you want. Then God won't be able to fulfill the ministry he has for you.

And you may not realize it, because you may still live a good life on earth. But think one day when you stand before Jesus in heaven at the end of your life. And the Lord shows you the plan that he had made for your life.

You know, just think of it like this. At the end of your life you stand before Jesus. And he shows you a video of your life, how it would have been if you had taken his yoke and submitted bread from your youth.

And you see in that video what a useful life you could have had. How you could have lived on earth and been a tremendous blessing to so many people. But instead of that, you see how your own life was, grumbling, complaining about your circumstances.

Not believing that God cares for you. And you watch the video of your real life. And you will feel so sad in that day.

You will feel like saying, Lord, please give me one more chance to go and live on this earth so I can live properly. Do you think God can send us back to the earth a second time? No, you have only one chance to live on this earth. And God has given us his word to show us the right way to live.

In the old testament they only had the word. But now God has given us his word and he has also given us an example in Jesus how he lived. So you can't say, I didn't know how I was supposed to live.

But look at Jesus, that's the way you are supposed to live. And you know why Jesus had to be born in a cow shed? Now many of us come from very poor villages. I don't know who is here from the poorest village.

But among all of you, maybe one of you is the poorest home. Maybe you live in a mud house. And you are very, very poor.

You ask your parents if they have ever heard of anybody who was born in a cow shed, even among the poor people. I have never heard of it in all my life. Why did almighty God, who could plan the birth of his son for thousands of years, plan it like that? You see how when a mother is going to deliver her child, how her parents will take care of her? Because they know the time is coming near and all the parents will do something to take care of her delivery.

They won't arrange a cow shed for her to deliver her baby. Why did God Almighty, who has all powers, plan it like that? Why did almighty God allow his son to be born in a cow shed? And it was such a dirty place. The Bible says there was no room in all the hotels in Bethlehem.

Even an ordinary MLA can arrange a room in a hotel. God will take his influence. Particularly if he has plenty of time to book it in advance.

Imagine almighty God who had thousands of years to plan this birth. And God could have delayed that census which Caesar said must be done. He could have just delayed it by another six months and Jesus would have been born in a good house in Nazareth.

That would have been very easy for God. But this is the most amazing order that I have ever heard in my life. That when you take a census of the number of people, everybody has got to go to their home village.

In India also they take census every ten years or so. Can you imagine if they told everybody to go to their home village when they take their census? There will be absolute confusion. And what is the need to go to your home village when you are just counting the number of people? But Caesar made that rule.

You know why? Because there was a prophecy that Jesus was to be born in Bethlehem. And Joseph and Mary were living in Nazareth. We could say, well why didn't God choose some young girl in Bethlehem? I think God looked all over Israel for some young seventeen year old girl who would be whole hearted.

You know just like today also he looks for seventeen year old boys and girls who are whole hearted. And he looked all over Israel and he found one only in Nazareth. So what to do? There is no whole hearted girl in Bethlehem.

The only whole hearted girl who is fit to be the mother of Jesus is in Nazareth. And when she was there, God had to make some way by which you got to get this girl to Bethlehem when she delivers. So that was God who arranged that amazing plan where Caesar said all the people must go to their home town.

And that has to be at the time when Mary has to deliver. So that they will go there and they will find all the hotels are booked because everybody has come to their home village for census. Otherwise there would have been plenty of room in the hotel.

But God planned it. There should be no room in the hotel. And when Mary was travelling on that donkey from Nazareth, I think God made that donkey walk a little slower.

So that they will be late. And then the only place is the cow shed. Because that was God's plan.

Because there is a principle in Christian ministry. That if you want to serve other people, you have to go underneath all of them, then only you can serve them. You can't serve them if you are on top of all of them.

See like many Christian leaders like bishops and popes and all, they are sitting in some palace and trying to serve people. That is not the spirit of Christ. Jesus came underneath people to help them.

So I want all of you young people to understand this right from the beginning. You want God to use you. You must say, Lord, I never want to be above anybody.

I want to be underneath everyone, then only I can lift them up. How can I be above them and be an example? See there are so many poor people in the world who are in very very difficult circumstances. And Jesus took a birth in such a low position so that nobody can say, you don't understand my difficulty.

I am trying to tell you what it means to take the yoke of Jesus and put our mouth in the dust. And then he grew up in a home where he had four brothers and two sisters who didn't believe in him. And they must have irritated him in so many ways in thirty years.

And Jesus never sinned. You try and picture this in your mind. See Joseph was a very poor carpenter.

And if you want to know the type of village, house that Jesus lived in, just look at one of the village houses in India, you'll understand the type of house Jesus lived in. A very simple house. They didn't have any concrete roof or anything like that.

Very simple house. Very ordinary floor. And a small house where these four, where these seven children had to sleep.

And all the difficulties and situations that came in that home. When you face difficulties in your home and you're tempted to complain to your parents, think of this verse. It's good for a young person to bear his yoke and his yoke.

And don't complain. Keep your mouth in the dust. And say, Lord, you're preparing me for something.

And these people, my brothers and sisters are irritating me. Help me not to behave like them. They don't want the yoke of Jesus, that's okay, but I want the yoke of Jesus.

Do you know the sorrow that those people will have when they stand before the Lord? It will be tremendous sorrow. And you can escape that if you humble yourself now. In all those situations, Jesus never sinned.

He never complained. No matter how his brothers treated him, how his sisters treated him. You know, in India, we know that older brothers are entitled to some respect.

We don't even call them by their name. We always add a title of respect. And Jesus was the eldest brother there.

They never treated him with respect. They despised him. And it says here, they didn't believe in him at all.

Mary would tell the other children, this elder brother, he's not born like all of you, he's the son of God. I don't think Jesus would have ever said, listen, I'm the son of God. He wasn't like that.

But Mary would have told the other children, you must respect him, he's the son of God. You know, actually, he's your creator who has come in human form. They would have laughed at it.

They would have said, my mother Mary has gone off her head. She's talking such nonsense. If somebody told you that your brother was the son of God, what would you think? He's the creator of the universe.

And he looks just like you, behaves like you, he has to go, he's even got to go to the toilet like you. This is the creator of the universe, look at him. That is how much Jesus humbled himself.

Looked just like us, behaved like us. He never wanted to show that I'm better. And they didn't believe in him at all.

Now you may not be the creator of the universe. But if you're born again, you're a son of God. You're a daughter of God.

And the other people in your home may not be children of God. So, in a sense, you're also like Jesus in that home. And you got to behave like he behaved.

The other people can behave as they like. But if you're a child of God, you have to behave in a different way. That's where you can take the example of Jesus.

Because your brothers and sisters may also make fun of you. Ah, what do you think you're a son of God? Who do you think you are? Then think of how they made fun of Jesus. He never got irritated with them.

That is our example. And you know the result of that? After more than 30 years, some of his brothers came to faith. You know there are two books you have at the end of your Bible by James and Jude.

They are the brothers of Jesus. So, if you are faithful, faithful for so many years, one day your relatives will come to faith. Ultimately, they would have been convicted.

In his entire life, they didn't get convicted. After his death, then only they believed in him. They must have felt so sorry.

We never gave him the respect that it was due to him. And there we have an example of Jesus who took a yoke when he was young and kept his mouth in the dust. And I'm sure that even Joseph and Mary never understood him in many situations.

And your parents also may not understand you in certain situations. Because your parents may not have faith. Who is going to be your example then? Again, Jesus.

And because Jesus was so faithful for 30 years, we see these wonderful words that God spoke about him in Luke 3.22. This is before Jesus preached any sermon or did any ministry. This is before Jesus preached any sermon or did any ministry. Luke 3.22 says, I am pleased with you, my beloved son.

What pleased the Father? If you have preached in many places, brought many souls to God, and if you have such a testimony, then it is because of this that the Father is pleased. Some of you are watching me. I have been preaching in conference halls for years.

So, because I preach, God is pleased with Brother Zach. happy with me. See this God said this about Jesus when he got baptized.

Read that in the previous verse. He had never even preached one sermon till that time. Never did any ministry.

If you had asked Jesus what have you been doing all these 30 years? Well I stayed at home. I helped my mother. I helped my younger brothers and sisters.

I worked very hard as a carpenter and earned money to support my family. Because Joseph died some years ago. The burden came upon me because my mother was a widow.

We were very poor and I had to take care of all my seven younger brothers and sisters. Okay okay but what ministry did you do? That is my ministry. You mean your ministry is just working as a carpenter and taking care of your family? That's right.

What does God think about this? God says I am very pleased. What an example for you. Can God be pleased with you when you have never preached in a sermon once? Maybe you have not even given out a tract till today.

How can God be pleased with you? How was he pleased with Jesus? Because he obeyed Joseph and Mary at home. He respected his earthly parents and he spent his time studying the Bible. Even though he didn't have a Bible at home like this, nobody had Bibles 2000 years ago.

There was no printing. People had to copy the Bible with hand. Imagine if you had to copy just Matthew chapter 1. What a long time that will take.

They used to copy the whole Bible like that. Very few copies of it, one will be in the synagogue. When you go there you can listen to it.

Jesus knew just by listening, he listened so carefully that he knew the Bible by the time he was 12 years old. You read in Luke chapter 2, when he was 12 years old he was sitting in the temple talking to some of the great 70 year old Bible scholars. He was listening to them verse 46.

He asked them some questions, questions which they did not know the answer. He said why does it say like this in this verse and like this in this verse? They didn't know. Then he said okay, I'll explain to you.

And he explained and they said, oh that's right, we never thought about that. And it says here in verse 47, they were absolutely amazed at his understanding and his answers. How old was he? 12 years old.

That's younger than all of you sitting here. And he didn't have a Bible at home. He listened, listened, listened, listened carefully.

So what I want to say to you is, that's why the father was pleased with him. He didn't preach, but he lived a life and he knew the scripture. So I want to encourage you to take the yoke of Jesus upon you.

Whenever you have some spare time, don't read novels, read the Bible. Don't read the Bible. That's more important.

That novel will not help you to be a spiritual person. The Bible will change your life. And your friends may go and see movies.

Let them go and see that. They don't want to fulfill God's purpose. But you say Lord, I don't want to see those movies.

I want to keep myself pure. And God will preserve you for himself. So we see here, that this is how God, it also says about him that when he went down to Nazareth, verse 51, he obeyed Joseph and Mary.

And because he did that, he grew in favor with God, it says in verse 52. And God was very happy with him. So God was watching Jesus growing up.

And I want to say, God is watching you as you grow up. And then at a particular day, God said, okay, now you can go out. And in three and a half years, he had the most fantastic ministry that any person ever had.

But that is after 30 years of preparation. So I want to say to you, that in your younger days, allow God to prepare you so that by the time you are 30 years old, you can have a fantastic ministry. You brothers and you sisters, I want you to believe that God has got a fantastic ministry ahead of you, to serve him in this land, to glorify his name.

And I want to encourage you to believe that God will fulfill that. And you pray to God, and if you made a mistake in the past, just humble yourself and say, Lord, I'm sorry, I don't want to do that again. And say, Lord, I want to fulfill your plan for my life.

Lord, I know you've got a plan, I want you to fulfill it. Don't disappoint God. Because there are so many other young people just like you, who have not taken the yoke of Jesus in their younger days.

They waste their lives. Let me show you a verse in Psalm 139. Psalm 139.

Lord, it says in verse 13, you found my inward parts and woke me in my mother's womb. This is David. David says, when I was inside my mother's womb, you formed me.

And I am wonderfully made, verse 14. Wonderful are your works and my soul knows it well. Now, I want to ask you, when you look in a mirror, and you see your face, are you happy with the way God wove you inside your mother's womb? Or you look at the mirror and say, Lord, I think you should have given me a little better color than this.

Or my nose should not have been like this, Lord, you made a mistake. Or these ears should not be like this. So many people have a complaint about the way God made them.

Lord, you made me too short, or you made me too tall, or you made me too fat, or you made me too thin. But not David. He says, your works are wonderful.

That's one of the first things you have to do. I want you to do that sometime. You go in front of a mirror, and look at your face, and say, Lord, your works are wonderful.

You have done it perfectly. You gave me the absolute correct height, size, shape, face, color, everything. God doesn't make a mistake.

I started losing my hair when I was 22 years old. I think most young people, if they start losing their hair when they are 22, they will get into a panic. Yeah, initially I tried some cream and all, nothing worked.

So I said, okay, God, maybe 5-6 months I tried, it didn't work, I said, forget it. God wants me to be like this. And God had a purpose.

You may wonder, what is the purpose in God making a young fellow bald? God has a purpose in everything, even if you don't know the reason. So, one of the things God had given me was the gift of preaching, even when I was young. When I was about 23 years old, I was preaching to 5,000 people.

And they would look at my bald head, and they would think, oh, this chap must be about 35 years old, let us listen to him. If they knew that I was only 23, they would not have listened to me. They would say, oh, this young fellow, what does he know? So, I see that God had a purpose.

And I will tell you something, everything about your appearance and everything, God has got a purpose. You may not know it, but He doesn't make a mistake. He says, you wove me in my mother's womb.

And not only that, Lord, verse 16, you wrote a book with my name on it. And all the days I have to live on earth were written in that book. From the first day to the last day, like a diary.

You know, you can write in a diary. Okay, 5th of May, I went to Nunniland. God also has got a diary.

The only thing, He has written it before it happens. This is where I want him to go on so and so day and this is what I want him to do. Imagine, if you believe that, David believed it.

God, this boy has to become the king of Israel at the age of 30. David didn't know that when he was a young boy. He was only after sheep.

But he feared God and he was praising God. So, I want to say to you, in your young age, believe that God has written a diary with a plan for your life. He did not make any mistake in the way He made your body.

He did not make any mistake in the type of parents He gave you. He did not make any mistake in the type of intelligence He gave you. Do you think God makes everybody equally intelligent? No, Paul was very intelligent and Peter, I don't know whether Peter used to come 40th in the class or something like that.

A person gets 40th rank in the class, can God use him? Sure, Peter was not a very clever person. God couldn't use him to write the type of Romans and Ephesians and all that Paul wrote. But Peter had a tremendous ministry.

So, it doesn't matter, God can use an intelligent person or a person who is not very educated. God can use an intelligent person or a person who is not very educated. That's the way God used Paul and Peter.

So, I want to encourage you, whatever your intelligence, color, skin, God has got a plan for you. So, you say, Lord, I want to fulfill that plan for me. In your younger days, learn one thing.

To give thanks to God for everything. Not to complain or murmur about anything in your life. Whenever I speak to young people, this is the main thing I tell them, what I told you today.

And I keep on repeating it. Because there are new young people growing up in our churches. Who haven't heard these things.

And I want you to know that. And even if you have heard it 3-4 times before, maybe God is telling you again, because you are not gripped by it. He wants you to be gripped by it today.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, apply these truths to our lives. I pray these young people will really be gripped.

And in their young age, filled with the Holy Spirit, so they can live for you. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/AdUGMlcfmbg.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/zac-poonen/following-jesus-as-a-young-person/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net