

# (Matthew) ch.11:25-12:30

by Zac Poonen

---

*God's word is not for the intelligent and clever, but for babes, and we must come to Jesus with a spirit of helplessness and dependence to receive rest and understand God's word.*

**Duration:** 54:51

**Scripture:** Isaiah 42:1, Hosea 6:6, Matthew 11:28, Matthew 12:1-2, Matthew 12:5-6, Matthew 12:9-14, Matthew 12:25

**Topics:** "Rest In Jesus", "Submission To God"

---

## Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the concept of finding rest in Jesus. He explains that this rest can only be obtained by responding to the call of Jesus and taking His yoke upon ourselves. The preacher uses the analogy of two bullocks under one yoke to illustrate the need to submit to Jesus' authority and give up our own will. He also emphasizes the importance of coming to Jesus as little children in order to receive a revelation of God as Father. Additionally, the preacher highlights Jesus' victory over Satan on the cross and the purpose of God humbling man in His presence.

---

## Transcript

Let's turn today to Matthew chapter 11 and verse 25. We were considering in our last study how Jesus reproached the cities in which most of his miracles were done. As we read in verse 20, those cities were Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum, mentioned in verses 21 and 23.

And he compared the privileges that they had with the privileges of people in Tyre, Sidon and Sodom in the Old Testament. Who, he said, if they had seen the miracles in their cities, in their time, they would have repented in sackcloth and ashes and Sodom would not have been destroyed. But he said that those cities would have a more lenient judgment in the day of judgment than the Israeli cities of Bethsaida, Chorazin and Capernaum.

That teaches us that God's going to judge the heathen by a more lenient standard than the Christians. That's the fundamental message we get from verses 20 to 24. The heathen have not repented and, of course, they deserve judgment for that.

But when Christians commit the same sin that the heathen do, their punishment is going to be many times more, much more. And then Jesus said these words. At that time Jesus answered and said, verse 25, I praise Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou didst hide these things from the wise and intelligent, and didst reveal them to babes.

What things is He talking about? He's speaking about repentance. They did not repent, we read in verse 20. This message of the kingdom of heaven that He had spoken of in verses 11 and 12 of this chapter, which has to be possessed by violence, this message of a new covenant, which only few, verse 14, care to accept, which only few, verse 15, have years to hear, is hidden from the clever and the intelligent people of the earth.

It's revealed to babes. This is the most amazing thing that we read in verse 25. Is there a single book on any subject anywhere in the world concerning which we can say, only babes can understand that, clever and intelligent people cannot.

There is no book on any subject anywhere in the world written like that, for it is impossible to write a book like that. Yet God has written something like that in His word. God's word cannot be understood with human cleverness and intelligence.

It doesn't mean that God's word is against reason, but our reason has been polluted by sin. It's incomplete, it's small, and not able to grasp all of God's wisdom. Our reason and intelligence, we can say, is like a little cup, whereas God's wisdom is like an ocean, and the ocean can never fit into a little cup.

And so if we approach God's word and the wisdom of God with human intelligence, we are bound to go wrong. Our interpretations will be wrong even if we take a concordance and compare this verse with the other verse in scripture. The question is not intelligence, the question is not effort.

The question is one of the spirit with which we come. If it is the spirit of a helpless babe, then we can understand these truths. For the Father has hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent.

And then Jesus used the word there in verse 25, revealed. Revealed means something that brings enlightenment, revelation, which is not something that we get in our mind, but in our spirit. And the spirit is a deeper part of man than his mind.

1 Thessalonians 5.23 says that man is a trinity, just like God is a trinity, body, soul, and spirit. The soul is deeper than the body, and the spirit is deeper even than body and soul. The body and soul are not the same, and the soul and spirit are not the same.

In the body we have five senses, in the soul we have our intellect, our mind, which can be clever and intelligent, the things spoken of here in verse 25. But it's the condition of our spirit that determines whether we get revelation, not the condition of our soul or our mind. In our spirit, if we are like babes, then it does not matter whether our soul is intelligent or not intelligent.

It doesn't mean that if you're intelligent you can't get revelation. The meaning is that you can't get revelation by your intelligence. The condition of your mind is not the important matter in understanding God's Word.

I mean, just like saying that your physical height makes no difference in understanding God's Word. I mean, we know whether a man's five feet tall or six feet tall, that's got nothing to do with understanding God's Word. Neither does the color of his skin have anything to do with understanding God's Word.

A man's color can be black or white, it makes no difference. In exactly the same way with intelligence, his intelligence may be little or much, it makes no difference in understanding God's Word, because it's a matter of the spirit. And just like our physical condition, our physical height, etc., doesn't make any

difference in understanding God's Word, neither does our intelligence quotient, what people call IQ, makes no difference in understanding God's Word.

It's a question of coming like a little babe. This is one of the most important verses that we need to understand if we want to understand God's Word right. What is the spirit of a babe? We're not talking about two-year-old children now, we're talking about little babes carried in their mother's arms, less than a year old.

Little babes who are helpless. It's one of the first things that strikes you about a little babe. It's utterly helpless, dependent on its parents for everything.

It's an attitude of helpless dependence on God, which is the meaning of faith. Faith is a helpless dependence upon God to take care of us. That attitude of humility and faith that confesses one's spiritual helplessness.

Another thing we can say about a babe is that it's so ignorant about the things in the world. What does a six-month-old baby know about anything that's happening in the world? What does it know about maths or physics or English or anything? It knows nothing. It's so ignorant.

It's so helpless and it's so ignorant. And here are two things at least that are true of babes. And if we can come to God with that spiritual sense of helplessness, however clever or not clever we may be, and with that sense of ignorance concerning spiritual things.

If we can say, Lord, I may be quite clever in worldly matters and very shrewd in business perhaps, but when it comes to God's Word, I'm an absolute idiot. I just don't know a thing. I don't know anything about spiritual matters.

I need revelation in my spirit, which my clever mind and my sharp brain cannot grasp. If we come with that humility, then we can understand the Word of God. Very important.

There's no book in the world like the Bible, which is written for those who are babes in their spirits. And the level of their intellect has got nothing to do with their understanding the truth of God. And Jesus didn't just take this as a fact.

He said more than that. He said in verse 25, I praise Thee, Matthew 11, 25, I praise Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have done it like this. Verse 26, Yes, Father, for thus it was well-pleasing in Thy sight.

Why has God done it like this? So that man might be humbled in the presence of God. There is a verse in 1 Corinthians 1 towards the end of that chapter, which says that no flesh should boast in God's presence. That is how God works.

He works in such a way that no flesh, no man, can boast before God. 1 Corinthians 1, 29. In the world, a person who is clever or intelligent has got prominence and acceptance.

Someone who's smart, this personality, clever, is accepted. And God has written His word and given revelation to babes so that all those who are proud of their intellect and their human capabilities can be humbled. And we shall discover it.

It's a sad thing that Christendom hasn't discovered it sufficiently yet, but we shall discover it in the Day of Judgment. That the greatest men of God were not the cleverest people on earth. They were the people who had the humblest spirit and the ones who had the greatest faith, faith meaning a helpless dependence upon God.

They're the ones to whom God gave revelation, particularly concerning Jesus. Jesus said in verse 27, All things have been handed over to be by my Father. The Father has given all authority to Jesus.

He said that later on Matthew 28, 18. All authority in heaven and earth is given to me. The Father has given everything to the Son.

And no one knows the Son except the Father. You can't know Jesus unless the Father reveals to you. Remember, later on Jesus said to Simon Peter, Blessed are you, because flesh and blood did not give you a revelation concerning who I am, but my Father in heaven.

We can't know that Jesus is the Son of God. We can't know that He came in flesh like us apart from revelation. It is impossible to know it by study.

Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son. It's impossible to know God as Father unless the Son. It says anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.

Jesus knows the Father perfectly. That's why His life was so secure in the security of the love of His Father. He says, Jesus says here that He is willing to give that revelation to us.

The Son wills to reveal Him. But to whom is it revealed? Verse 25, To babes. If I can come in that helplessness and acknowledgment of my own ignorance and spiritual things, in humility and brokenness, Jesus can reveal the Father to me and make my life so secure.

The Father can reveal Jesus to me so that I can be a true disciple of His. Apart from such revelation, we shall only have a form of godliness without its power. Let's turn today to Matthew chapter 11 and verse 27.

Jesus says, All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him. And the knowledge spoken of here in verse 27 is a perfect knowledge, an intimate knowledge which is more than theoretical knowledge, a practical experiential knowledge of Jesus and of the Father.

That way we can never know Jesus unless the Father reveals Him to us through the Holy Spirit. And we can never know the Father except through the Lord Jesus Christ. That's very clear in verse 27.

No one can know God as Father except through the Lord Jesus Christ. We can look at creation, the wonders of the universe and know something about God, but we can't know Him as Father apart from the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no other way.

When we come to Jesus Christ and humble ourselves like little babes, as it says in verse 25, then we can get a revelation of God as Father. And that is what we need. That's what many Christians need, to stabilize their life.

And it's in this context that He says in the next verse, 28, Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Now what did Jesus say in verse 27 that He could do? He could give revelation concerning God as Father. And it's in this context that He says, Come to Me.

Let me paraphrase verse 27 and 28, and you'll read it like this. The last part of verse 27, no one can know God as Father, intimately as Father, unless I the Son reveals the Father to such a person. And if you come as babes, verse 25, I'll give that revelation.

But come to Me, those who are insecure, tossed about with so many insecurities and complexes, inferiority complexes, feeling inferior to others, and inferiority complexes which are disguised in a superiority complex, acting bigger than others. Whenever a person acts superior, you can be pretty sure he has a feeling of inferiority and insecurity deep within. That's why he has to assert his superiority.

There is no such thing as a superiority complex, really. It's basically either an inferiority complex or a disguised inferiority complex. And this is what causes so much insecurity and unrest in so many people.

They are not secure. Why are they not secure? Because they don't know God as a Father. Theoretically, all Christians will say, Yes, we pray our Father who art in heaven.

But in a time of trial, they don't believe that God will take care of them. There's so much tension in their lives, so much stress. They are weary and heavy-laden because they don't know God as Father.

They know Him as God, perhaps the great and terrible God, as people in the Old Testament knew Him. But they don't know Him as a Father who feeds the sparrows, who cares for the birds, feeds them, clothes the flowers, takes care of them, who's numbered the hairs on our head, as we studied in Matthew chapter 10. They don't know Him like that.

And so Jesus says, Come to me. There's only one way by which you can get rid of your insecurity and your complexes and your weariness and burdens, and that is by knowing the Father. You need revelation, and I'll give it to you.

And then you'll find that you've come to rest. In other words, you've come to a security in the love of your Father, in the perfect love that the Father has for you, the care, the intensity of care that your Heavenly Father has for you, provided you're one of those who do violence, as we read in verse 12, to enter into the New Covenant. Violence because you're desperate to give up this old covenant way of life, and you want to enter into the full privileges of the New Covenant.

You come like a babe. You don't need any other qualifications. Longing for God's best and a humble attitude, acknowledging your ignorance and your helplessness.

Who cannot have that? All men are equal, and we can come, any one of us, on that basis, and receive revelation. I'll give you rest. I'll make you secure.

Your life will no longer be full of tension and anxiety and stress. There will be pressures, no doubt. In the world you shall have tribulation, Jesus said, but you don't have to have unrest in the midst of that tribulation.

For in the same verse, in John 16, 33, he said, in the world you shall have tribulation, but in me you'll have rest. You'll have peace in the midst of tribulation. Security in the love of the Heavenly Father in the midst of all the stresses of life around us.

And there are so many stresses in life around us, we have to acknowledge, but in the midst of that, Jesus invites us to come to Him so that we can enter into rest. This is what the Old Testament Sabbath was all

about. In fact, we read in Hebrews in chapter 4 that there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, Hebrews 4, verse 9. That rest is the rest that Jesus spoke of here in Matthew 11, 28.

This is the real meaning of the Sabbath. It's not just a question of not working on Saturdays. What is the Sabbath day for the Christian? Is it Saturday or is it Sunday? It's all seven days of the week.

It's neither Saturday nor Sunday. For the Jews, it was the seventh day of the week. It was Saturday.

What did Jesus do? Did He change it to Sunday? No, He changed it to seven days of the week. We can be at rest in that inner spiritual Sabbath rest, seven days of the week. This is the fulfillment of the Old Testament Sabbath, just like Jesus dying on the cross is the fulfillment of the Old Testament sacrifices of the lambs.

If we don't understand this, then we shall be thinking of making much either of Saturday or Sunday, depending on what our convictions are. But when we understand this rest, we discover it's not a question of an inner attitude that we have seven days of the week. But this rest doesn't come if I don't respond to the call of Jesus.

He says, Come to Me and I'll give you rest. And then He goes on to say in verse 29, How you'll get that rest? You've got to take My yoke upon you. And the yoke was a familiar picture for these simple people.

And for those of us who've seen village situations in India, it's very familiar. We've seen two bullocks under one yoke, and they're plowing a furrow through the fields. And a senior bullock, experienced one, can say to a younger bullock, inexperienced one, Take My yoke upon you, and I will teach you to plow a straight furrow, however inexperienced you may be, if you will submit to My yoke.

If My yoke is upon you, you can't wander away in any direction you like. You've got to submit to My authority and come in the direction that I'm going. In other words, give up your will.

And that's the point here. The Lord says, I've got one end of the yoke upon My neck, and you take the other end upon yours. And this is possible because Jesus came in our flesh and was tempted in all points like we are by the same lust that dwell in our flesh.

And He overcame them and plowed a straight furrow without sinning at any time in thought, word, deed, attitude, or motive, or any other way in those thirty-three years. Tempted with the entire range of temptations that man could be tempted by, and became an overcomer. And thus He is now the leader of our faith.

He says, Now fix our eyes on Jesus, or to use another illustration, take His yoke upon us, and walk in the way He walked. That is, deny our will and do His. Just like a bullock puts its left foot forward than the right one, left, right, left, right, in the same way, Jesus walked.

Not My will, but Thy will. Not My will, but Thy will. And we are to walk in the same way.

Father, I deny My will to do Yours. Because He said He was gentle and humble in heart. Learn from Me.

Learn from My example. Take My yoke upon you and learn from My example. For I am gentle and humble in heart.

Jesus was humble, humble enough to deny His own will and do the will of His Father. Humble enough to set aside His own plans to do the Father's plan. Are we humble enough for that? To give up our own ambitions for the future and to say, Lord, I want Your ambition.

I want to give up My plans for the future. I want Your plan. In every area, in a job, marriage, housing, everything, I want Your plan.

And in everything, My desires are to be set aside, Your desires. The desires of My body? No. The desires of God? Yes.

When I am willing to do this, and the Holy Spirit will help us in this, You shall find rest for Your souls. Then You will come into that security. So we see, we need to know God as Father, and we need to walk in the footsteps of Jesus, taking His yoke upon us, denying our own will.

And the strength of our will is primarily found in the lusts that dwell in our flesh. What are lusts? Strong desires to satisfy ourselves and our bodily longings. And to deny those desires, to deny our will and those desires where they contradict the will of God, will lead us into rest, if we take the yoke of Jesus and say, Lord, I want to do Your will.

And His yoke is easy. Why are we weary and heavy-laden? Because we don't have His yoke. We either have our own, fulfilling our lusts, which lead us to be weary and heavy-laden and insecure, or a legalistic attitude towards obedience to the commandments, like the Old Testament people.

Then, of course, it's weariness and heavy. But when we come into the Spirit of the New Covenant, we find obedience is a joy. And if obedience has not become a joy for us, we can be sure we haven't entered into the Spirit of the New Covenant.

If we receive this word from Jesus, we can enter the New Covenant and the Kingdom of God. Let's turn today to Matthew's Gospel and chapter 12. At that time Jesus went on the Sabbath through the grain fields, and His disciples became hungry and began to pick the heads of grain and eat.

But when the Pharisees saw it, they said to Him, Behold, Your disciples do what is not lawful to do on a Sabbath. And later on we read in verses 9-14 about another incident that occurred on the same Sabbath day, where Jesus healed a man with a withered hand in the synagogue. And both these instances, in the first part of Matthew chapter 12, appeared to be a violation of the Old Testament Sabbath law in the eyes of the Pharisees.

And it's very interesting to see that these incidents occurred immediately after Jesus spoke in Matthew 11-28 about giving rest to those who came to Him. He spoke about rest in verse 28 and in verse 29. And as we considered in our last study, the rest that Jesus spoke about in Matthew 11-28 and 29 was a fulfillment of that Old Testament Sabbath that Moses gave according to God's commandment, which was fulfilled in that inner rest that was the New Covenant.

And if we don't understand this rest that Jesus spoke of in Matthew 11-28 and 29, then we shall think much again even today about the external Sabbath-keeping that was commanded under the Old Testament. People may say, But keeping the Sabbath was one of the commandments among the Ten Commandments. How can we cancel out one of those Ten Commandments and say that that doesn't apply to us when we keep the other nine? The reason is that after giving the Ten Commandments, God gave a commandment to the Israelites, saying in Exodus chapter 31 and verses 12-17, it's a very

interesting and important point, that passage, if we are to understand that commandment which spoke about keeping the Sabbath.

In fact, it is because people have not understood this passage in Exodus 31, nor Hebrews chapter 4, that they make much of the Sabbath today. The Lord spoke to Moses, Exodus 31-12, saying, As for you, speak to the sons of Israel, these are to the Jewish people who have come out of Egypt. You shall surely observe My Sabbaths, for this is a sign between Me and you Israelites.

It's not between Me and all the people of the world. That's why we Christians don't keep the Sabbath, because we're not Jews, we're not Israelites. It was a sign between God and the Israeli people throughout their generations, that they may know that He was the Lord who sanctified them.

Therefore, you Israelites, Exodus 31-14, are to observe the Sabbath, and the one who does not observe it must be put to death. There's no other punishment. If you don't observe the Sabbath, you are to be put to death.

For six days work may be done, but seven days, the Sabbath of complete rest, and it spoke about physical rest, holy to the Lord, and again a repetition of that punishment. If anyone does work on the Sabbath day, it's not just that he's got to be put out of the church or the synagogue, he's got to be put to death. If you're a Jew, you're an Israelite, that's the only thing to do.

So again a repetition, not the sons of men or the sons of Adam, but the sons of Israel, Exodus 31-16, shall observe the Sabbath. It does not apply to people who are not the sons of Israel, to celebrate the Sabbath throughout their generations as a covenant between God and them. We're not in that covenant.

And again a repetition, it is a sign between God, Exodus 31-17, between me and the sons of Israel alone, the sons of Israel forever. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, seven days ceased from labor and was refreshed. And although the creation applies to all humanity, and God has made a seven-day week, yet the original seventh day when God rested is only between God and the Israeli people.

It's a sign. That's the reason why that one commandment is different, and that's why in the entire episodes of the New Covenant you never find a single word telling us to keep the Sabbath. On the contrary, we read in Colossians 2, let no one judge you, it says in Colossians 2-16 concerning the Sabbath day, which is a mere shadow, verse 17.

Colossians 2-16 and 17 says the Sabbath day was a shadow and don't let anybody judge you today concerning keeping that or not keeping it, because the body belongs to Christ. You've come into the New Covenant now. And Jesus was inaugurating the New Covenant.

The Pharisees, of course, did not have years to hear this message. They were not men of violence who were willing to do violence to traditions contrary to God's word. And so when Jesus' disciples were picking the heads of grain and eating, as we read in Matthew 12, verse 1, the Pharisees were upset.

They were offended. They told Jesus, Your disciples are disobeying God's commandment. They're not keeping the Sabbath.

And Jesus defends His disciples and says to the Pharisees in Matthew 12, verse 3, Have you not read what David did when he was hungry? He and his companions, he entered the house of God and ate the consecrated bread, which was kept on the table of showbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, nor for

those with him, but for the priests alone. Was it God's will that David should die of hunger? No. One can keep the letter of the law and not understand its spirit and become a Pharisee.

In fact, this is the way the Pharisees became Pharisees, by keeping the letter of the law, not understanding its spirit. Verse 5, What about the law itself? Jesus said, On the Sabbath, the priests in the temple break the Sabbath by working on the Sabbath day in the temple, but they are innocent. He quotes two examples from their old covenant itself and says, Would you say that the priests or David broke the Sabbath or did something wrong? No, I say to you, he says in verse 6, Something greater than the temple is here.

Jesus was greater than that old covenant. The new covenant is greater than the old covenant. Something greater than that Old Testament temple and that old covenant law is here now.

But, he said, You can understand this only if you know the meaning of what God said in Hosea 6, verse 6, I desire compassion and not a sacrifice. If you had understood the meaning of that, you would not have condemned the innocent. In other words, Jesus was saying that the disciples were innocent in picking the grain field.

Of course, picking it from a field was permitted under the old covenant law. What was left over after the harvest had been cleaned. What was left over, the bits here and there, God said, leave it for the poor to come and take.

The question in the Pharisees mind was only whether it was right to pick it on the Sabbath day. And Jesus says that his disciples were innocent because he said, The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath. You see, in another context, he said the Sabbath was made for man.

Man was not made for the Sabbath. The question is, was man made because God wanted someone to keep his commandments or were the commandments made because he wanted man to inherit the glory? It is very clear the commandments were made for man, not man for the commandments. The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.

And the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath. He is the Lord who appointed the Sabbath. And he explains to us here the real meaning, the spirit behind the Sabbath.

What he had said earlier in Matthew 11, 28 and 29 as well, that inner rest that he wants to give us. Then he went into the synagogue and they questioned him again. Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath? All right, you say that it is lawful to pick grain from the fields on the Sabbath.

What about healing on the Sabbath? They wanted to accuse him. And he said, If someone of you has a sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will you lift it out or let it die there? You people have not understood the meaning of God desires compassion more than sacrifice, of how much more value is a man than a sheep. If a man has fallen into a pit on a Sabbath day, will you lift him out? Definitely.

Then it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath. Not to do work does not mean that you do not do good to anyone. And he said to the man, Stretch out your hand.

And he stretched it out and was restored to normal like the other. Mark chapter 3 tells us of the similar incident that Jesus was angry, Mark 3 verses 1 to 6, the parallel passage. He was angry with the Pharisees for having this attitude, this legalistic attitude, that they would not even do good, apparently to

keep the commandment.

There can be a righteousness which is apart from goodness, and that righteousness is a counterfeit. If our righteousness is a righteousness that does not have goodness in it, it is a counterfeit. The Pharisees were so angry with Jesus for doing this and for exposing their hypocrisy and their form of godliness without power that it says in Matthew 12, 14 that the Pharisees went out and counseled together against Him as to how they might destroy Him.

Notice, the Pharisees were upset with Jesus, not because He preached purity, but because He exposed them as hypocrites, because He destroyed their unscriptural traditions. It is when we stand against unscriptural traditions that even today the Pharisees can be upset. But Jesus was willing, in order to establish the new covenant, to expose the hypocrisy of religious leaders and to point out the hollowness of their traditions.

Let us turn today to Matthew 12, 14. But the Pharisees went out and counseled together against Jesus as to how they might destroy Him. As we considered in our last study, we can ask ourselves why did the Pharisees want to kill Jesus? The word used here is destroy, annihilate Him, get rid of His memory altogether.

They were so furious. They were furious because He helped to heal a poor man with a withered hand. And there you can see the evil that there was in these Pharisees, despite all their religion, that when a poor, helpless man was healed of his withered hand, just because that went against their religious traditions, they were furious.

We can see that the righteousness of the Pharisees was a righteousness which had no element of goodness in it. It was a legalistic keeping of the external commandments of the law for the honor of men. And when righteousness does not have the element of goodness in it, when our righteousness is not saturated with goodness, we can be absolutely sure that that righteousness is a counterfeit.

The true righteousness of God is a righteousness which is saturated with goodness. And the easiest way to become a Pharisee today is to pursue after righteousness without pursuing after goodness. Pursue after goodness first, otherwise your righteousness can make you into a Pharisee.

And so we see here that when Jesus asked this man to stretch out his hand, verse thirteen, and He stretched it out and was healed, it exposed the Pharisees as having a religion that was powerless. They had never been able to heal this man, though this man had sat in their synagogue for many years, and their powerlessness was exposed. Their hypocrisy was exposed.

All their teaching on the Sabbath was exposed as being with a wrong spirit, and they were humiliated in the eyes of others in the synagogue, and it was that humiliation that made them furious. Jesus would never have been crucified if He had only preached love and humility and being good, etc. It is when He exposed hollow, empty traditions of religious leaders and exposed the hypocrisy of those religious leaders that they crucified Him.

The servant is not greater than his master, and the disciple is not above his Lord. If we are true disciples of Jesus, we will find that religious leaders can be upset when their hypocrisy is exposed and when the hollowness of their traditions which are contrary to the word of God are also revealed. And this is where we find the diplomat and the compromiser is different from the prophet.

The diplomat and the compromiser will not say anything that will offend or expose the hollowness or emptiness of religious traditions that are contrary to God's word, but the prophet will do that. And so the diplomatic preacher, who is the equivalent of the false prophet of the Old Testament, will never be crucified. The true prophet will be.

And that's why a true prophetic ministry is not popular and it is rare. People do not want it because they are not willing to pay the price for it. But Jesus was a true prophet of God, and He exposed their hollow traditions because He was interested in helping people and setting them free.

We are to follow Jesus here to set people free from the withered state there is in their lives. And we are not to be afraid of religious leaders who have a righteousness without goodness, who understand the law without understanding its spirit. And of course when they tried to destroy Him, Jesus withdrew from there.

Jesus did not have a hollow idea of courage to say, No, I shall stand here. He Himself had taught His disciples. When we studied Matthew chapter 10, we saw that in verse 23 of Matthew 10, When they persecute you in this city, flee to the next one.

Don't stay in that city and try to prove that you are a courageous person. That's foolish. When they are persecuting you in one city, go to the next one.

And when they wanted to destroy Jesus, it says in Matthew 12, 15, Jesus is aware of this, withdrew from there. Jesus was not a person who sought honor for His courage. He would not jump off the pinnacle of the temple to prove that He was brave.

Neither would He go where people were trying to kill Him just to prove that He was brave. He did that. Later on we read in John's Gospel chapter 11, because He sensed in His spirit that the time had come.

But now that time had not yet come. It's quite different when you read in John chapter 11, verse 7, when He said to His disciples, Let us go to Judea again. And the disciples said, They are seeking to stone you, and you are going to go there again? Yes, the time had come.

And He went, and they crucified Him. But He was not going to take unnecessary risks without a leading of the Spirit. And here there was no leading of the Spirit.

And so He withdrew from that place where they wanted to kill Him. And many followed Him, we read in Matthew 12, 15, and He healed them all. It was the most unique healing ministry that this world has ever seen.

There are a lot of healing ministries today where less than one percent get healed. But Jesus' healing ministry was of an altogether different category. It was of a different type.

It had a different spirit. Jesus never took a collection in His healing meetings. And He healed everyone.

And this is why we see that the type of healing ministry that Jesus had is not seen anywhere on earth today. Very often people take a collection in healing meetings today. Jesus never did, the apostles never did.

It's quite a different type of healing meeting today. And He healed them all. It was genuine healing.

And He did not need any medical reports to verify the fact that people were healed. People knew that they were healed. Everybody else around knew it as well.

We are to beware of counterfeits in the healing ministry today. Notice how it was with Jesus. He did not take a collection.

He healed them all. And after He healed them, in verse 16, He told them not to make Him known. He did not publish testimonies of the people who were healed through His ministry.

That was not His business. He came to preach the gospel to the poor, how they could be free from sin and partake of God's nature. And so He warned them not to make Him known, in order that what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, Behold My servant whom I have chosen.

This is a prophecy from Isaiah chapter 42, verse 1 onwards, referring to Jesus, the servant of Jehovah. Behold My servant whom I have chosen, says the Lord, My beloved, in whom My soul is well pleased. Never was there a servant in the Old Covenant like this, with whom God was completely well pleased.

I will put My Spirit upon him, and he shall proclaim justice, judgment, even to the heathen nations, not just to Israel, to all the nations. He will not quarrel. He will not get into an argument.

A wonderful example for us to follow, if we want to be servants of the Lord. Never quarrel. Never get into an argument.

He will not cry out, nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets, or in today's language, He will not advertise Himself. That's the meaning of He will not cry out or proclaim His voice in the streets. Jesus did preach in the streets, so obviously it's not referring to that.

We read of times when He lifted up His voice and cried out, as we read in John chapter 7, on the last day of the feast. Jesus stood and cried out, John 7, verse 37. So it's not referring to not raising our voice, but He didn't project Himself.

That's the meaning here. He did not advertise Himself. Here is the great healer from Nazareth who has come.

This is not how Jesus went around in His ministry. Neither did John the Baptist do that. It is an altogether different spirit that projects a man and advertises a man.

It is another spirit. Jesus didn't do that. It is the fulfillment of this that we read in Matthew 12, 16, that He warned people not to make Him known, not to project Him, not to advertise Him.

God would take care to bring to Him those who had years to hear. He did not need advertisement for that. A battered reed, He will not break off.

Wonderfully encouraging words to those who are discouraged. That even if you are like a battered reed, this servant of Jehovah, the Lord Jesus Christ, has time for you. He will not break it off saying it's already half broken or 90% broken or 99% broken.

He will take that battered reed and repair it. A smoldering wick He will not put out, even if it is 99% dead. He will work on that 1% and bring it up to 100%.

This is how Jesus works. He is gentle, as we read in Matthew 11, 29, gentle of heart. No wonder the prophecy goes on to say, as we read in Matthew 12, 21, in His name the nations will hope.

The word Gentiles means nations. The nations will trust in such a person. In what person? Not a person who advertises himself and projects himself and does great miracles, but the one who is gentle to repair the battered reed and to fan to a flame the smoldering wick.

This is the Jesus prophesied in Isaiah and that we see in the Gospels. And if we are to project this image of Jesus, we are to be like that ourselves. That we don't quarrel, we don't cry out, project ourselves or advertise ourselves, but seek to repair the battered reeds and fan to a flame the smoldering wicks.

Then the nations will trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. Let's turn today to Matthew's Gospel, chapter 12, and verse 22. Then there was brought to Jesus a demon-possessed man who was blind and dumb, and He healed him so that the dumb man spoke and saw.

In an earlier chapter, when we studied Matthew 9, verse 33, we saw the case of a man who had a demon, and when the demon was cast out, the dumb man began to speak, teaching that some dumbness is caused by demons. Not all of it, but some of it. Here we see something more, that a demon could make a man whose physical organs were otherwise perfectly normal, could make such a man both blind and dumb, so that when the demon was cast out with a word by the name of Jesus, his sight was restored, and he could speak as well.

This was not a case of ordinary blindness. There were cases of ordinary blindness where there were no demons that Jesus healed. There were cases of ordinary deafness that Jesus healed, and ordinary inability to speak, dumbness, that Jesus healed.

But this was a case caused by demons, and Jesus had the gift of discerning of spirits, and so He knew this was a case of demon possession. And He cast out the demon, and the blind man, the dumb man, both spoke and saw. And all the multitudes were amazed, and they began to say, This man cannot be the son of David, can he? They began to wonder, Is this the son of David? But the Pharisees were out to destroy him, and were out to deny every miracle that he did.

And when they saw a miracle that they couldn't deny, they said, Well, he does cast out demons, but he casts out demons because he has contact with Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons. Beelzebul means the lord of flies. Demons were like flies, and Beelzebul was the lord of the flies, and Jesus had contact with Beelzebul, according to the Pharisees, and cast out the demons.

That's what they said. They were unwilling to acknowledge the truth. They had so hardened themselves, because they were offended with Jesus exposing them.

And Jesus knew their thoughts. There, the Holy Spirit revealed to Him, just like the Holy Spirit revealed to Peter about the thoughts that were going on in Ananias and Sapphira's mind, the Holy Spirit revealed to Jesus as a man the thoughts that went through the minds of these Pharisees. And He said to them, Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and any city or house divided against itself shall not stand.

And if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then shall his kingdom stand? Satan has got a united kingdom under his headship. There is no demon in Satan's kingdom fighting against Satan's purposes.

This is an amazing thing. Jesus spoke here about Satan's kingdom being a united kingdom. It's a challenge and rebuke to the Christian church concerning this matter of unity.

Of course, we cannot be united with those who do not accept the truth of God's word, so we're not talking about unity with all who call themselves Christians, but a unity based on truth, a unity based on the acceptance of the truth of God's word. Jesus never sacrificed truth for the sake of unity. On the basis of truth, we are to be united.

But that's just in passing. Here He's speaking about Satan's kingdom being united. He says, Any kingdom divided against itself will be laid waste.

And the devil knows that. And that's why he seeks to infiltrate groups of believers to divide them against each other. Any city or house divided against itself will not stand.

If a house is divided against itself, it will not stand, even if it calls itself a church. Unity in the true church of God is as important as purity. Both are founded on truth, a purity founded on truth and a unity founded on truth.

But in Satan's kingdom, there is no division. Jesus made it clear, Satan can't cast out Satan. How then shall his kingdom stand? And then He says these words, so that we get it in the right perspective.

If I cast out demons, verse 27, by Beelzebul, Jesus says, by whom do your sons cast them out? Consequently, they shall be your judges. In other words, there were people in Israel casting out demons, but it was not by the power of the Holy Spirit like Jesus was. And even today, there are exorcists who cast out demons, but not in the name of Jesus Christ or in the power of God.

We can then ask ourselves, how is that? Here we need to understand the balance. Is Satan divided against Satan? Is it Satan casting out Satan? No. And yet, we see two statements here.

One, that Satan's kingdom is united. And the other, that there are people who are casting out demons, and yet not in the power of the Spirit of God. Here we see one of Satan's masterpieces of deception, that he allows some of his demons to possess a man, and then, through another one of his own agents, apparently, casts out that demon out of that man and tells those demons to vacate that man's body, so that this exorcist gets honor as a man of God.

But it's not Satan casting out Satan. It's Satan deceiving people by entering a person as a demon, through a demon, and then leaving that person in order to lift up an exorcist as a servant of God, when he's actually a servant of Satan. It is a counterfeit, designed to dupe people who don't know the Word of God.

And that was happening in Israel. It's happening even today. In the midst of all this, Jesus was carrying on His ministry of casting out demons also.

And that was by the power of the Spirit of God. He said in verse twenty-eight, I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, and if I do that, then you know the kingdom of God has come upon you. This is one of the manifestations of the kingdom of God.

In the kingdom of God, we have authority in the name of Jesus to cast out demons. They have no power, because particularly now, every one of those demons have been conquered on Calvary. When you see a violent, furious, demon-possessed person, you can ask yourself this question, is there any demon inside

this man that was not conquered on Calvary? Not one.

Demons have all been conquered on Calvary. Jesus Christ is victor. That's why in that name of Jesus, the weakest believer has power to cast out demons.

If he has faith that Jesus has conquered Satan and all his hosts on Calvary, if we don't have faith, then of course we can't come to that place. There was a time when Jesus said to His disciples that a certain kind of demon would not be cast out unless you had prayed and fasted. It's not the praying and fasting that cast out the demon, it's faith in the name of Jesus, but that faith may not come until we have prayed and fasted and come to a place of assurance that Jesus has indeed conquered these demons.

And that strength of faith in the name of Jesus casts out demons who have all been conquered already on Calvary. Verse twenty-nine. How can anyone enter the strong man's house and carry off his property? Until he first binds the strong man, then he will plunder his house.

The strong man is, of course, Satan. His property are all those people who are the race of Adam who have given themselves to the devil. And in a greater or lesser measure, every person born of the race of Adam is the devil's property.

But Jesus has come to take that which is the devil's property and make it God's property. But you can't do that, He says, until you first bind the strong man, and the strong man is Satan. And that's why Jesus overcame Satan on the cross.

Then He could take away his property. Now, if we don't believe that, or we are not convinced, Jesus said in John sixteen, when the Holy Spirit is come, He will convince the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment. Which judgment was that? Not the judgment of the world when Jesus returns again.

Not that. Not the judgment of the great white throne at the end of the millennium. No.

The judgment that Jesus spoke of was the judgment where the prince of this world has been judged. John sixteen, verse eleven. In other words, the Holy Spirit is going to convince the world that Satan is being judged.

If we are convinced of that, we have faith in that, then we can carry off Satan's property. And in this context, Jesus said, verse thirty, He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters. In other words, you can't say, I'm neither on the side of the devil nor on the side of Jesus.

If you are not with Jesus, you're against Him, even if you do nothing. You can't be neutral in this battle. If you are with Jesus, then you are on His side.

If you are neutral, you're actually on the side of the devil. He who is not with me is against me. And if you don't gather with Jesus, you're scattering.

You may say, well, I'm not scattering, I'm just doing nothing. Well, if we are not gathering along with Jesus to build a kingdom, if we are not doing everything, cooperating with Jesus to build the church as the body of Christ, then we are scattering. We can scatter just by doing nothing.

This is an amazing statement. Many people think, well, I'm doing nothing, so I can't be hindering the work of God. It's the people who do nothing who hinder God's work, as much as the people who actively scatter.

So, in other words, Jesus said that in this battle of Christ versus Satan, there is no such thing as a neutral position. You have to be actively on Jesus' side to avoid being on the devil's side. Let me say that again, so that you understand it clearly, all of us understand it clearly.

We have to be actively with Jesus to avoid being against Him. We have to be actively gathering together to build the kingdom of God and build the body of Christ to avoid scattering. We have to be actively on Jesus' side to avoid being on the devil's side.

And that's why there is no neutral position. We are either for the Lord or against Him. God grant that we'll understand this, so that we shall be actively for Jesus in all situations in life.

---

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/8/SID8310.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/zac-poonen/matthew-ch1125-1230/>

# *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](http://www.sermonindex.net)**